

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

URBAN LEAGUE BACK-TO-SCHOOL RALLY

Washington, D.C.

August 25, 1966

Comm Duncan - Atty Gen Ramsey Clark

We are here tonight to kick-off the 1966 "Stay-in-School" campaign.

We are undertaking this very important campaign so that our country will not suffer the terrible loss in human resources of the estimated 900,000 young Americans who are expected to turn their backs on school during the coming year.

[If the present drop-out rate continues, by 1975 there will be 32 million adults in the labor force who lack even a high school education.

More Playgrounds
More Parks
More Jobs

Stirling Tucker

Urban League
Youth Incentive
Program
a future for Jimmy

And in an age when automation and technology demand greater knowledge than ever before, education is the key to the full development of our economic advancement, and the key to a freer and more wholesome life.

One day recently I visited an old couple living in a southwestern city. I noticed a piano in the corner of their old-fashioned living room.

"Does anyone ever play on that piano?" I asked.

The old man replied: "No, no one plays on it now . . . but there is a heap of fine music in there . . . if you could just get it out."

I am reminded of that piano and that old man's words as I think of the young people in Washington and other American communities. There is a heap of fine young talent in these young people -- if we can only get it out.

I am here to suggest ways and means of discovering, developing and utilizing the talents of our young people.

And make no mistake about it, youth power is the key to the future. That's the kind of power I'm interested in.

In outlining these ways and means, I would like to touch briefly on four points: (1) individual self-determination; (2) the dollar value of an education; (3) increasing new opportunities for youth; and (4) the cooperative roles of the school, home, and government.

Let us take up the first point -- Individual responsibility and self-determination.

Every young man or woman must answer these questions: Where am I headed? Where do I want to go in life? How do I get there?

These questions are much harder for Negro Americans to answer than they are for most other Americans.

For too long, most Negro Americans have been forced to live in a state of social, spiritual and economic depression.

↳ They have been told they are inferior; they have been told they could go only so far in the world-of-work. ↳ Beyond this, jobs simply did not exist for them, regardless of their education and ability.

↳ I come to tell you that America has no group of people which is inferior because of race, creed, color, or economic or social background. —

↳ As your Vice President, I come to tell all the young people of America that there is a place in the world-of-work for you -- an honorable place based on your education and training, on your hard work and determination to succeed.

↳ As a part of this responsibility for self-determination, I want each of you to begin a personal course of knowing yourself . . . to learn and become more aware of your interests , and your talents.

Take the initiative to explore the local and national job market . . . find out what skills and training you will need to get the job you want. And then get that training so you will qualify for the job.

A major gap in our educational system has been the lack of communication between the school and the world-of-work. We are working to solve this problem, by having special vocational guidance seminars for school counselors, so that they will know what is going on currently in the job market.

This brings us to the second point -- the dollar value of an education.

~~First~~, I want to ask a question: How many of you here are interested in getting a good job and earning as much money as possible? (I notice that a few young ladies didn't raise their hands. I suggest that they get those hands up, because I understand the first thing a fellow now asks about a young lady is: Where does she work?)

Those who are interested in getting a good job and earning a good salary -- in living a fuller, more rewarding life -- listen closely:

Those who learn more, earn more. I repeat, those who learn more, earn more.

How do I know? I have done some personal research. According to facts and figures from the Department of Labor, the average lifetime income for a person who leaves high school before graduation is 212,000 dollars. And the estimated average lifetime income for a high school graduate is 247,000 dollars -- a difference of 35,000 dollars -- the cost of a fine home or of several college educations.

For a person who completes one to three years of college, the average lifetime earning is 293,000 dollars . . . and for a college graduate, 417,000 dollars. The message is clear -- those who remain in school NOW will be worth thousands of dollars more in the future.

↳ But getting good training for a job in school has its real purpose when there are job opportunities available to you. This brings us to point number three.

↳ I recently sent President Johnson a report on the Summer Youth Opportunity Campaign, stating that for the second straight summer, we have been able to find jobs for one million young Americans who otherwise would have been without summer jobs.

↳ This summer's campaign exceeds our goal of one million by more than 48 thousand. All but 50 thousand of these more than one million jobs were provided by private industry. This was a grand achievement. Next year we are going to do even better.

↳ Yes, we are going to have a long, busy winter, ~~expanding~~ and improving our program to go wherever there is a need -- and that is in just about every community in the country.

As successful as our Youth Opportunity Campaign has been in expanding job opportunities, we are deeply concerned about one troubling fact. Even in the midst of increasing job opportunities for young people, Negro young people still suffer a high unemployment rate.

One of the reasons is this: Half of the Negro young people in the labor force last year had not graduated from high school, compared with only 30 per cent of white young people.

Racial discrimination is still a factor in this situation, but it is declining rapidly in importance. We have special programs -- like Plans for Progress, which involves the top leadership of industry -- not only to open more doors of opportunity, but to help our young people walk through these doors.

The Doors are open -
~~So get that~~

Our Youth Opportunity Campaign will begin in the next few weeks to help prepare young people before next spring for jobs next summer.

Finally, in our national effort to prevent about 900,000 boys and girls from quitting school during the 1966-67 year, we need the support and active assistance of all segments of the community -- the home, school, business, labor, the church and the press.

I would like to emphasize the role of the home. In many instances, the hopes our young people have for their future reflect the thinking of their parents. If parents have little or no interest and enthusiasm in keeping their children in school, in having them learn and prepare for a more productive life, our Stay-in-School campaign will fail.

No government program, no social service, no speech by a public official is a substitute for interest at home . . . inspiration at home . . . or for encouragement at home.

*under parents
brother sisters*

L We want parents in every community in this nation to take an active part in the Stay-in-School drive.

L At the same time, we are going to urge our schools throughout the country to improve their courses and train our young people for the jobs of the future. It does not make sense for students to be taught skills that will be obsolete before they are graduated.

L Too often it is not a question of dropouts -- but pushouts, because of the defects of our education system. It is sad but true that *some* ~~many~~ of our schools . . . *some* ~~many~~ of our teachers . . . and many of the courses in our schools are simply not stimulating enough to hold young people who desperately need education.

L To correct this, we have passed legislation and instituted special programs designed to help local communities improve the quality of public school education. *now later*

L Despite the problems involved in getting a good education, it is worth the investment of your time and effort.

↳ Your education will be the strongest asset you can have throughout all of your life. = *Money in the Bank!*

President Johnson recently told the part that education played in his life. "Education," he said, "was the instrument which took a boy from the countryside of Texas, and opened to him the boundless dreams and opportunities of American life. And I not only learned, but I taught, and I saw for myself how the light of learning could brighten the path of the humble."

(#) next page - then back to here

↳ I truly hope, my young friends, that you will stay in school to brighten your path by the light of your learning . . . and may your learning be such that it will cast enough light to take you from where you are now into the sunlight of a brighter tomorrow.

The President and I recently discussed our Youth Opportunity Program, and I am prepared to make a commitment for him and for me: We will not only remember our young people, but we will do everything in our power to help you.

But you must do your part -- and your part is to stay in school and do your best.

#



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org