

STATEMENT OF
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
DORT MALL SHOPPING CENTER, FLINT,
MICHIGAN

Wednesday, September 11, 1968
8:45 p.m.

Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

VOICES: We want peace.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: And we want quiet.

(Applause)

VOICES: We want peace.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Now, I want to thank our young friends from Ann Arbor that chant.

(Applause)

Mr. Mayor, Mayor Floyd McCree, Mrs. McCree, Mrs. Humphrey and I are most grateful tonight for your reception, for your greetings, but we are most grateful for the fact that you are Mayor of this great City of Flint and I want to compliment the people of this city.

(Applause)

And I must say to my friends, Bill Blue, he sure does put on spontaneous demonstrations.

(Applause)

And as a former Golden Gopher, you can imagine what it feels like to see that sign that says "Go Blue" up there.

(Applause)

But my good friends, if you do as well in this election as the University of Michigan has done on that -- what is that, that old jug that we are always fighting over, I tell you, that old brown jug, that fellow, that Republican that is in office, he will be sipping back home, don't think he won't.

(Applause)

I come here tonight for the express purpose of proclaiming that Denny McClain will win 30 games or more.

(Applause)

And I want my friend the Mayor, to know that since Jerry Cavanaugh wouldn't give me any tickets, I would like about 50 tickets for the World's Series.

(Applause)(Laughter)

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to try to outshout my young friends over here. I am only going to say to you --

VOICES: Peace now. Peace now.

VOICES: We want Humphrey. We want Humphrey..

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: A long time ago, a long time ago I learned that the problems of this country and this community, the problems of this nation and this world, will never be settled by those who have the loudest voices but better by those who have the warm hearts.

(Applause and shouts)

I come here tonight to talk with you, not to talk at you. I believe in the right of free speech and I believe in the right of every man to be heard

(Applause and shouts)

There are some very precious rights in this country, my fellow Americans. One of them is the right of peaceful assembly, and let's make sure that that right is never disturbed either by government or by a mob.

(Applause)

There is another precious right and that precious right is the right of free speech, and let's be sure that that right is never denied either by government or those who would shout down a speaker.

(Applause)

And, then, there is a very precious right which I hope you will exercise and you can exercise it privately, secretly, with only your conscious as your guide, and that is the right to vote, and I hope that you will exercise that right in November.

(Applause)

And, I hope when you do it, that you will elect this fine young man, Bill Blue, to Congress for the 7th District.

(Applause)

Now, my dear friends, I want to talk to you in this wonderfully large crowd for a little while about the essentials of this campaign. We are here not to demonstrate. We are here to think. We are here, may I say, as free Americans, to think aloud, to think to ourselves, and to make our judgments.

I come here representing one of the two major parties and I am well aware that there are three, at least three candidates in this election. One of them represents the spirit of separatism in this country, and there is no room in America for a divided America. There is only room in America for one America, a united America.

(Applause)

A second candidate is much more silent on this issue, but his silence indicates his unwillingness to take his stand.

This is no time for evasion. This is no time for silence on the fundamental issue of our time, the issue of human rights and human opportunity, and I don't intend to be silent about it.

(Applause)

This great City of Flint, Michigan, has demonstrated that we are one people, that we are not north and south, that we are not black and white, that we are not rich and poor, but, rather, that we are one America, a one family of people, of one spirit, dedicated to one purpose, a better life for every American without regard to his race, his color, his creed or his last name.

(Applause)

And that is the central issue. All other issues pale into insignificance, the issue of seeing whether or not we can make a decision in 1968 that will forward in this nation the spirit of community and of understanding, the spirit of fellowship and brotherhood, whether or not this nation is to be torn by conflict, whether or not this nation is to be rent by those who seek to tear it apart or whether or not this nation is to have a sense of unity and of common purpose for the goals that this country stands for.

(Applause)

Now, I want in the few minutes that you have given me, to talk to you about what I believe are some of the concerns of this country.

We judge a candidate and we judge a party not by their words but we judge them more, if I may say, by their record, and we need to take a look tonight at that record.

I was reading the Republican platform the other day and when I read

it, I said to myself, this has been the greatest mass conversion of reactionaries to progressives that I have ever heard of or ever hope to see because when I read the platform, I read such things as this.

The Republican platform this year promises vigorous efforts nationwide to transfer and transform the blighted areas of our cities, Mr. Mayor, and I know that must have given you encouragement when you heard that platform read by that sonorous voice from Illinois, my good friend, Senator Dirksen, and he said to you that there will be a determined effort, he said a vigorous effort, nationwide, to transform the blighted areas of our cities, and I said to myself, halleluia, they have seen the light.

(Laughter and applause)

And, then, I looked at their record and the light went out.

Listen to this. That same party that promises this mayor in this city that they are going to do something for this city through Federal programs, that same political party, the Nixon Republicans in the Congress, voted 89 per cent against the Model Cities bill that would help the city of Flint and they voted 80 per cent to eliminate all funds under the bill, Mr. Mayor.

I will tell you what they did. They gave you a lot of soothing syrup but they didn't give you much medicine for what you really need.

(Applause)

Now, that GOP platform went on with some other pleasant thoughts. These are the kinds of thoughts that you can go to bed with. They are comforting. They are tranquillizing, they are soothing. They said of the elderly people, elderly Americans desire and they deserve independence and dignity, and when I read it I said, we have waited a long time for this, but they have seen the light. And, then, I saw that they turned off the lights.

93 per cent of the Nixon Republicans and their Dixiecrats pals voted against Medicare and 65 per cent voted against the 1967 increased benefits under Social Security. The Nixon-Agnew-Strom Thurmond combination in Congress wouldn't have given our elderly Americans Medicare and you know it and that is their record.

(Applause)

And, then, they said they wanted fairness for all consumers. Now, we have had truth in lending, truth in packaging. We have had more consumer legislation passed the last four years than in the preceding 50. But I took a look at their record when they said fairness to consumers and I said, well, now, that is a noble thought.

Let's see how they voted. 68 per cent of the Nixon Republicans voted to kill Truth in Packaging and 83 per cent voted against the Meat Inspection Act. They didn't even want their baloney that they are trying to feed you to be pure.

(Laughter)

And, then, I read again in that platform and they said that they believed in an equitable minimum wage and I said, well, that is news. I was in Congress when they were thinking about minimum wage, when some of them were going to vote on it, and I took a look at the record. I said they have seen the light in their platform, and then, I found out they had closed off the lights in Congress.

71 per cent, Bill, 71 per cent of the Republicans in Congress voted to kill the bill that would have provided a \$1.60 an hour for a minimum wage. Now, a \$1.60 an hour is not a rich man's wage but the Republicans, Nixon Republicans, said no go. No go. It is too much.

Now, my friends, that is just part of the record. There is much more.

This nation of ours is concerned about education and it should be. Every parent in this audience knows that one of the great needs of our country is better schools, better paid teachers, more modern educational opportunities. Every person here knows that a person that lives in poverty has little or no chance of getting out without a chance of a good education. And we have tried in these last few years to do something about education, and we put in more of the Federal resources in the last five years than in the preceding 20.

And, what happened on the votes? On higher education, and by the way, higher education helps every university and college across this land --

VOICES: Hooray.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: That is right.

(Applause and whistles)

Well, 95 per cent, 95 out of every 100 members of the Congress that bear the Republican label, voted against the Higher Education Act. 73 per cent voted against the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That one bill alone provides a better education for over nine million deprived children.

65 per cent voted against the Teachers Corps. Mind you, 64 per cent of the Republicans even voted against Project Head Start. It wasn't enough they should be against grandfather and grandmother. It wasn't enough they should be against the sick. They even had to take out against the little ones. 64 per cent voted against Project Head Start funds, one of the finest programs that we have in America for pre-school. Now, that is their record.

(Applause)

And finally, my friends, for those that have this sense of social concern, 90 per cent of our Republican friends voted to kill the extension of the War on Poverty, voted to kill every program, the Job Corps for our young people, the Project Head Start for our little ones, the Community Action Programs. They voted against them.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, that is the record. When you hire somebody you try to find his references. You try to see what can be done, what he will do for you, and I submit that with all the soft talk, with all the new polish of the new Nixon, the old Republican record is still there and beware, my friends, beware.

(Applause)

Now, we heard tonight the voices rise from this audience for peace and there isn't a man --

(Applause)

-- I didn't know I plugged in so quickly.

VOICES: We want peace..

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Now, my young friends, I surely have a high regard for your expression and your idealism and what you say, but I want to tell you, you don't have to go to the university to learn how to chant we want peace. You can save the money.

(Applause and whistles)

And, there isn't a decent person, there isn't a public official in this country, and I don't think there is a person in this room that doesn't want peace with all the passion of his soul and his heart.

(Applause)

Let me say if it is my privilege to serve as the President of this nation, I will make it my first duty and my first commitment to seek every known honorable way to bring peace to that trouble part of the world known as Southeast Asia and Vietnam.

(Applause)

And I will do it, but it will not be done, but it will not be done by slogans,

it will not be done by demonstrations, it will not be done by placards.

I would remind this audience what the Scriptures say. "Blessed are the peace makers". Not the talkers, not the walkers, not the paraders.

(Applause)

Now, my friends, I noticed the other day where my opponent on the Republican ticket had some doubts about a great peace measure. It is known as the Treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, because nuclear weapons are the greatest threat to the survival of mankind that we have ever known. The dangerous arms race, the escalation of these new super weapons of mass destruction, 80 countries have already signed a treaty to prevent the spread of those weapons. Our country has that treaty before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Congress of the United States. The Government of the United States has recommended its ratification as a forward step in seeking a more peaceful world. Leaders of both political parties in the past have spoken out in support of it, but the other day the leader of the Republican Party in this campaign reverted back to style.

In 1956 Mr. Nixon called Adlai Stevenson's proposal for a nuclear test ban treaty catastrophic nonsense and a cruel hoax. In 1963 John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey and a few others saw to it that a nuclear test ban treaty between ourselves and other nations became a fact and today the nations --

(Applause)

-- and today the nations of the world feel that much more secure.

I don't think that it was a cruel hoax when we signed the nuclear test ban treaty in 1963 and I don't think it was a cruel hoax when we took the world one step forward from the threat of nuclear disaster, and I don't think it was catastrophic nonsense when the test ban treaty started cutting down on the radio activity in the atmosphere that was threatening the lives of children yet unborn. And I disagreed with Mr. Nixon in 1956 and I disagree now with the same Mr. Nixon, not the new Mr. Nixon, the same Mr. Nixon in 1968, who asks you once again to have doubts, who asks you to slow up, who asks you to hold back on the ratification of one of the most important peace measures that the countries of this world have ever designed, the nonproliferation treaty on nuclear weapons. So, let's talk some peace.

I ask Mr. Nixon tonight where does he stand on the confirmation of Mr. Fortas, the man that has been recommended as Chief Justice of the United States. He says he is a fine man. He says he is a good citizen. He has all the sweet generalities of a gentleman. But that confirmation lies in Congress. That nomination rests in Congress today under a threat of a Republican Dixiecrat filibuster, and Mr. Nixon's men are the ones that are engaging in that filibuster.

Now, if Mr. Nixon believes that the filibuster is wrong and undemocratic as I do, if he believes it blocks the right of the majority to be heard and to exercise its will, if he believes that the filibuster is both politically and morally wrong as he has said in the past, then I ask Mr. Nixon from this platform tonight to call on his Republican friends to cut out the nonsense and vote up or down Mr. Fortas's nomination.

(Applause)

These are just a few of the many issues that divide us. Tonight I want to appeal to your sense of reason, to your sense of confidence in this country, to your sense of fair play.

I do not appeal to your fears. There have been others here that have done that, appealing to your fears, black against white, appealing to your fears that they label law and order. I appeal tonight to your thinking

processes, not to your glands. I appeal to your reason and not to your muscle. I ask you tonight as fellow Americans, not just as Democrats, I ask you tonight as fellow citizens that love this country and all that it stands for, I ask you to vote your hopes in 1968 and don't vote your hates. Vote your hopes.

(Applause)

I ask you to join with me --

VOICES: McCarthy. McCarthy.

VOICES: We want Humphrey. We want Humphrey.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We won the shouting contest now. We won the shouting contest.

(Applause)

Now, listen. I am for the 18-year-old vote. Don't destroy people's confidence in it.

(Applause and laughter)

Well, I will tell you this, you do give a fellow a work out, that is one thing.

(Laughter)

And, may I say, I hope you do the same for every candidate. They all need it.

(Laughter)

Now, I want you to join with me tonight, I ask you to join with me tonight in a renewed expression of faith in the essential goodness of this country because it is there, and in the essential greatness of this country.

Ladies and gentlemen, the voice of America is not the voice of those who shout the loudest. The voice of America is the gentle voice of people who rear their families, who pay their taxes, who serve this country in every conceivable way.

The voice of America is a voice of decency, of fair play, not the voice of hatred but the voice of fellowship.

(Applause)

And, I ask you to join me tonight in your dedication to helping to build a better America, an America in which we can reason together, an America in which we can have an education for every child, in which we can have peace in neighborhoods for every family, an America in which every man and woman that wants a job and is capable of working, can have that job at decent pay, and meaningful work. I ask you to help me -- to join me in helping to build America so strong and so free that no one, and I mean no one, will ever be able to tear it down or shout it down. Speak up for America.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

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