

STATEMENT BY VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Yesterday the Republicans in the Senate refused to permit a vote on the equal-time bill. At first glance this appears to have denied the American public the chance for a face-to-face debate among the contenders for the Presidency and the Vice Presidency.

Senator Muskie and I still believe that the people have the right to hear and see the issues debated by the principal candidates.

We have, therefore, agreed today to guarantee the cost of the debates.

I propose that Mr. Nixon and Mr. Wallace both appear with me on two debates, and that Governor Agnew and General LeMay both appear with Senator Muskie in a third debate.

We have commenced negotiation with one of the networks this morning for an hour of prime time on Sunday night, October 20, with a debate among Mr. Nixon, Governor Wallace and myself.

And at the same time we are asking Democrats, Republicans and Independents throughout the nation to help pay for the debates.

Naturally, we hope that Mr. Nixon and Mr. Wallace will agree to share the costs of the debates.

But if they do not, we are prepared to pay the entire cost-with the help of those Americans who want to see and hear discussion of the vital issues of the campaign.

We do not intend to allow our opposition to evade a direct face-to-face discussion of these issues--including Vietnam, the arms race, civil order, and human rights in America.

Mr. Nixon wrote in his book, "Six Crises," that "joint TV appearances of candidates at the presidential level are here to stay, mainly because people want them and the candidates have a responsibility to inform the public on their views before the widest possible audience."

I ask him to stand by that statement.

The people have a right to know. We mean to see that they do know before casting their votes on November 5.

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