

OPENING STATEMENT FOR SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
URBAN CRISIS HEARINGS
ST. LOUIS, MO., JUNE 28, 1971

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the initial public hearing on the urban crisis conducted by the Democratic Policy Council of the Democratic National Committee.

As chairman of the Democratic Policy Council, I am especially pleased that Mayor Al Cervantes of St. Louis, chairman of the Urban Crisis planning group of the Policy Council, will be conducting these public hearings across the country in the next year . . . for there is no subject of greater importance to the future of America . . . and there is no better way to find the answers than to go directly to the people.

You should know that the information developed in these hearings will be vital in writing the Democratic Party platform that will be adopted by the 1972 Democratic National Convention when it convenes more than one year from today. This is the earliest that a political party has actively started the process of platform-writing . . . but this is precisely what present conditions demand. I cannot recall a time when Americans were so concerned with the performance of government at all levels . . . and more anxious to participate personally in the process of solving the critical problems that dominate our newspapers and TV screens. And so it is to the people that we of the Democratic Party turn for guidance, constructive criticism, and the specific ideas that will bring us through this period of national crisis.

It is urban America that draws together the inter-twined problems of inadequate housing and education, unemployment and poverty, law enforcement, transportation, the problems of health and sanitation, air and water pollution, welfare, and, underlying all of these, a ^{revenue} ~~financial~~ crisis that has brought some of America's greatest cities to the brink of bankruptcy and financial chaos. And so, today, we ask the question: "Can the cities survive?"

We know, of course, that the cities must survive. Because the death of the American city would mean, inevitably, the death of America, as we know it. The problem we face is one of summoning the energy, the vision, and the courage to provide the human and material resources to do the job.

That is precisely what you must help us do today. You must tell us honestly and openly of your experiences in the battle to save urban America. And you must tell us how to win this struggle.

Again, I commend Mayor Cervantes for his leadership in this important undertaking of the Democratic Policy Council. And I thank each of you for taking the time to participate in this first national hearing on the urban crisis.

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