

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

Washington, D.C.

July 18, 1974

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you today. I consider it a distinct privilege that I was invited to speak to such an outstanding group of men and women committed to the prevention and elimination of discrimination in America.

The agencies and official bodies for whom you work have been charged with one of the most important functions that government in America possesses: the safeguarding of human rights. Your work has so much to do with the fulfillment of democratic ideals.

If you fail, if you slacken in your efforts, or if you do not have the necessary tools to do your job, then the foundation of our democratic system is jeopardized. This nation simply cannot afford to lessen its resolve to root out prejudice and destroy discrimination wherever it exists.

At a time when the American people have become skeptical about the integrity and commitment of their government to the needs of the people, we must redouble our efforts to insure full equality of opportunity and treatment. We can do no less.

I come to you today to speak candidly and openly about human rights in America.

I do not accept the proposition that most Americans believe that two centuries of racial injustice have somehow vanished from this land. Nor do most Americans believe that discriminatory practices based on sex, age, religion, creed or national origin are not prevalent in America.

All of us here today have a heavy responsibility to remind our fellow citizens of an unfinished agenda of human rights that still confronts this nation. The struggle to eradicate these living denials of justice and freedom continues. We must face directly the kind of tough political problems that we faced many years ago.

It is fashionable in some circles to suggest that white politicians no longer have much to offer in this struggle; that blacks, Chicanos, Indians and women have now taken over the full burden of organizing the political forces to end the racial abuses that offend us all.

While it is certainly true that a great deal of the responsibility has shifted to those who personally suffer under these wrongs, I flatly reject the notion that this burden is theirs alone. I do so for two reasons.

First, I still believe that racial injustice and prejudice is as much a white problem as it is a black, brown, or red problem. And if that is so, I am unable to understand how the problem can be solved without full and active participation by whites - public officials and private citizens alike.

Second, real progress will be achieved only when the overwhelming majority of Americans are committed to action and are prepared to communicate this message to their elected representatives in cities and states, in the Congress and in the White House.

We look back at the civil rights battles of the fifties and sixties with an air of nostalgia. In those years, the legislative goals were well-defined: the removal of a host of legal barriers to civil equality and equal opportunity. More than this, the legal barriers existed primarily in one section of the country, so that the lives of most Americans, it seemed, would be unaffected by whatever reforms we might achieve in Congress.

We were, in a sense, working with a civil rights agenda that was uniquely suited to legislative remedy. We now look back on those times as the easy days of the civil rights struggle.

But, in fact, they were not easy. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, these initial steps were insufficient for the remaining problems of the 1960's: equal job opportunity, equal access to public accommodations, greater protection of the right to vote, and the non-discriminatory use of Federal funds.

The legislative outlook in 1963 for a broader civil rights bill was as dismal as it had been ten years earlier. The dramatic events in Birmingham, the decision by President Kennedy to seize the legislative initiative, his tragic assassination, and the total objectives produced a more hospitable legislative climate.

But even then, the outlook in the Congress was grim. Our eventual triumph was not pre-ordained, by any means. At numerous points in the 75-day battle to break the filibuster, the legislation could have been compromised irretrievably. That none of this happened was due almost entirely to the political strategy that had been mapped out and was followed even in the most difficult moments of debate.

These retrospective remarks have had only one purpose: to suggest again that the struggle for civil rights in Congress has never been easy and that, in many respects, our present difficulties are no more insuperable than the barriers we faced in the "good old days." They are different, to be sure, but not insuperable.

We must continue the progress of the 1960's. But in order to do so, we must devise a political strategy to achieve our goals in this decade of the 70's.

I begin with this proposition: unless we can agree on a strategy that will attract a majority coalition in the Congress and the Nation at large, we can look forward to little in the way of concrete result.

It will avail us nothing to beat our chests in righteous indignation with a sense of moral consciousness about the inequities and injustices, unless we have a program of action and the important forces to put it to work. This lesson is as true today as it was 20 years ago. Between the two extremes of empty appeals to the Nation's moral consciousness and premeditated violence and intimidation, lies a broad field for constructive political action, not so dramatic maybe, but effective; and it is in this area that we must begin to think more creatively.

We often hear people say that the national constituency in support of continued progress in the fields of human rights has vanished. Political analysts say that the momentum of the 1960's toward greater racial justice has given way to retrenchment and disquiet in the 1970's.

Despite this conventional wisdom, the evidence from numerous national polls and statistics indicates that integration of Black Americans into our educational, social and political structure has moved forward in a significant manner.

We now are in a peculiar but vitally important period of our national life when our lack of direction in the civil rights arena is no greater than the lack of direction generally. The American people and their elected leaders are confused and ambivalent about where we should be heading as a nation and deeply divided about our short-range objectives. Goals and priorities are literally untabulated and unknown. The 1972 elections did little to clarify this situation.

It is within our power to break out of this impasse and to begin the mobilization of the political resources that can restore the positive momentum of the 1960's, not only for human rights, but for a total national agenda.

How can this be done? I am not sure that any of us have all the answers, and I surely do not. But I can point up several facts that should be kept in mind.

First, I subscribe to the thesis that President Nixon or any other President has within his grasp an extraordinary opportunity to move to the forefront of the struggle for racial justice and human rights. It is within his power -- despite all of his present difficulties -- to move ahead and forge a bipartisan coalition in favor of affirmative action now in the field of human rights.

Watergate certainly has hampered this President and his administration. But history also will render a harsh indictment of the Nixon Administration for its failure to lead the United States in a most critical area of domestic concern: human rights.

Presidents, however, do not operate in a vacuum, no matter how much they seek to seal themselves off from public opinion. I propose that we devise a political strategy that will assist - yes, insist and propel the President to make this kind of affirmative decision.

There is good historical precedent for this approach.

We may forget that the early 1960's was a time of convincing President Kennedy that he should adopt a more aggressive posture in support of civil rights legislation that had been pending in the Congress for many years. We forget that his initial Civil Rights proposals in 1963 were judged inadequate by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. It was only after those tragic and dramatic events in Birmingham that the Kennedy Administration became fully and totally committed to the legislative package that eventually became the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

As we devise this strategy, I contend that the entire concept of the civil rights movement must be broadened to include the rights and opportunities that should be more available to other disadvantaged groups in America.

I am thinking of the physically handicapped, for example, or the mentally retarded who are discriminated against in the most cruel and inhumane ways; or the elderly, who are frequently locked up in what we call Senior Citizens Housing Projects, oftentimes forgotten and isolated.

All these people must face many of the same barriers and misunderstandings and prejudices that confront blacks and other minority citizens. Injustice knows no race, and it knows no age.

We are also in a period where the issue of women's rights and women's political power must be included in a broader definition of civil rights.

As I see it, we must identify the struggle for civil rights as an all-embracing struggle for the rights and privileges and duties of all American. In the political arena, there are not enough blacks, there are not enough Chicanos and Indians and Puerto Ricans to form an electoral majority. We must create a climate of identity of interests between the needs, the hopes, and the fears of the minorities and the needs and the hopes and the fears of the majority.

In simple language this means identifying the cause of civil rights with quality education for all children. Millions of parents, white and black, feel that the present educational system is not satisfying the needs of their children.

We must identify civil rights with the right of every American to good health care. It is not only blacks or Chicanos that have inadequate health care. There are millions of Americans white as well as black or brown or red who are either victims of inadequate health care or unable to pay for what care is available.

We must find some new, common denominators, mutual needs, mutual wants, common hopes and fears, and use them to bind together a coalition of people representing the hopes and the fears of the majority.

Out of this coalition we can then fashion a new Bill of Rights that will belong to all Americans and, because it does, will have tremendous force:

-- The right to a meaningful life, free from poverty.

There are more whites in poverty than there are blacks. Unite the people today who are the victims of poverty.

-- The right to full and equal protection of the law.

All people find today that justice delayed is justice denied. The people who live in the ghetto are the victims of crime much more than the people who live in the suburbs. But all people have the right to equal protection of the law.

-- The right to productive and gainful employment.

Unemployment knows no race. It stands as a constant threat to the life and the well-being of millions of families.

-- The right to economic, political, and social opportunity free from the obstruction of discrimination based on race, creed, or sex.

The right to move up in the social structure; not just the right to a job, but the right to be a manager as well as a worker. The right to be on a board of directors as well as to be a customer. Not only the right, but the realization of the right.

-- The right to a clean and decent neighborhood.

-- The right to life free from violence and terrorism.

-- The right to privacy free from official or private invasion.

-- The right to safety, including protection of person and property.

-- The right to quality education at all levels free from segregation.

Quality education is integrated education. If we can learn together, we can live together. But if we learn separately, we are apt to pursue separate courses.



-- The right to live in good health under a system of comprehensive insurance providing and assuring modern health care for all.

-- The right to be free from hunger.

-- The right to recreation and leisure.

-- The right to a clean and wholesome environment.

These rights belong to the American people; they are not just for blacks or Chicanos or Indians, but for the blue-collar worker, the poor white, the student, the farmer, the worker in the office or the shop. Without these rights alive and well and vital, without these rights applicable and accepted, there are no real civil rights.

We now have the formalities of law, the legal protection, but we have not had the social acceptance that is required. The new dimensions of civil rights are to be found in the living and working and playing conditions of our people.

But, you ask, do we have time enough? How can we expect black Americans, Chicanos, Indians, and other deprived minorities to postpone for one day longer their full and fair participation in American life? The answer is simple: you can neither expect nor ask them to be patient. On the other hand, one of the factors that always amazed me throughout my years of public life has been the degree of faith in the American system that has been retained by blacks and other minorities. In many respects, they have kept the democratic faith far more than some of our more affluent and fortunate white Americans who have benefited so fully from the system.

I ask you to join me not in a child-like optimism but in a resolve to put together in this country the coalition of economic and political forces that can move mountains. We have done much, but what we have done is only an indication of what we can do and what we must do.

There is no time for self-pity; no time for recriminations: no time for looking back.

In light of the political developments in this country, everyone in this room has a special obligation to be a leader and to be a cooperator; to remind those who hold high office that they hold it, not for themselves, but solely for the fulfillment of the highest purposes of this Nation.

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JULY 18, 1974

Mrs Vivian Caver - President  
- Sterling Tucker  
✓ James Baldwin  
Martin Luther King III  
Mr Geo. Garcia  
2 V.P.  
Sam Richardson

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU TODAY. I  
CONSIDER IT A DISTINCT PRIVILEGE THAT I WAS INVITED TO SPEAK  
TO SUCH AN OUTSTANDING GROUP OF MEN AND WOMEN COMMITTED TO  
THE PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION IN AMERICA.

THE AGENCIES AND OFFICIAL BODIES FOR WHOM YOU WORK HAVE  
BEEN CHARGED WITH ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS ~~THAT~~

GOVERNMENT! ~~IN AMERICA POSSESSES:~~ THE SAFEGUARDING OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS. YOUR WORK HAS SO MUCH TO DO WITH THE FULFILLMENT  
OF DEMOCRATIC IDEALS.

IF YOU FAIL, IF YOU SLACKEN IN YOUR EFFORTS, OR IF YOU  
DO NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO DO YOUR JOB, THEN THE  
FOUNDATION OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS JEOPARDIZED. THIS  
NATION SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD TO LESSEN ITS RESOLVE TO ROOT OUT  
PREJUDICE AND ~~DISCRIMINATION~~ DISCRIMINATION WHEREVER IT EXISTS.

At a time when the American people have become skeptical about the integrity and commitment of their government to the needs of the people, we must redouble our efforts to insure full equality of opportunity and treatment. We can do no less.

I come to you today to speak candidly and openly about human rights in America.

I do not accept the proposition that most Americans believe that two centuries of racial injustice have somehow vanished from this land. Nor do most Americans believe that discriminatory practices based on sex, age, religion, creed or national origin are not prevalent in America.



ALL OF US HERE TODAY HAVE A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY TO REMIND  
OUR FELLOW CITIZENS OF AN UNFINISHED AGENDA OF HUMAN RIGHTS THAT  
STILL CONFRONTS THIS NATION. THE STRUGGLE TO ERADICATE THESE  
LIVING DENIALS OF JUSTICE AND FREEDOM CONTINUES. WE MUST FACE  
DIRECTLY THE KIND OF TOUGH POLITICAL PROBLEMS THAT WE FACED  
MANY YEARS AGO.

IT IS FASHIONABLE IN SOME CIRCLES TO SUGGEST THAT WHITE  
POLITICIANS NO LONGER HAVE MUCH TO OFFER IN THIS STRUGGLE; THAT  
BLACKS, CHICANOS, INDIANS AND WOMEN HAVE NOW TAKEN OVER THE  
FULL BURDEN OF ORGANIZING THE POLITICAL FORCES TO END THE  
RACIAL ABUSES THAT OFFEND US ALL.

WHILE IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT A GREAT DEAL OF THE  
RESPONSIBILITY HAS SHIFTED TO THOSE WHO PERSONALLY SUFFER UNDER  
THESE WRONGS, I FLATLY REJECT THE NOTION THAT THIS BURDEN IS  
THEIRS ALONE. I DO SO FOR TWO REASONS.

h FIRST, I STILL BELIEVE THAT RACIAL INJUSTICE AND PREJUDICE  
IS AS MUCH A WHITE PROBLEM AS IT IS A BLACK, BROWN, OR RED  
PROBLEM. h AND IF THAT IS SO, I AM UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW  
THE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED WITHOUT FULL AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION  
BY WHITES - PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS ALIKE.

h SECOND, REAL PROGRESS WILL BE ACHIEVED ONLY WHEN THE  
OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AMERICANS ARE COMMITTED TO ACTION  
AND ARE PREPARED TO COMMUNICATE THIS MESSAGE TO THEIR ELECTED  
REPRESENTATIVES IN CITIES AND STATES, IN THE CONGRESS AND IN  
THE WHITE HOUSE.

h WE LOOK BACK AT THE CIVIL RIGHTS BATTLES OF THE FIFTIES AND  
SIXTIES WITH AN AIR OF NOSTALGIA. h IN THOSE YEARS, THE LEGISLATIVE  
GOALS WERE WELL-DEFINED, namely THE REMOVAL OF A HOST OF LEGAL  
BARRIERS TO CIVIL EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

*it was said*

h MORE THAN THIS, THE LEGAL BARRIERS EXISTED PRIMARILY IN ONE

SECTION OF THE COUNTRY, SO THAT THE LIVES OF MOST AMERICANS,

IT SEEMED, WOULD BE UNAFFECTED BY WHATEVER REFORMS WE MIGHT

ACHIEVE IN CONGRESS.

h WE WERE, IN A SENSE, WORKING WITH A CIVIL RIGHTS AGENDA

THAT WAS UNIQUELY SUITED TO LEGISLATIVE REMEDY. h WE NOW LOOK

BACK ON THOSE TIMES AS THE EASY DAYS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE.

h BUT, IN FACT, THEY WERE NOT EASY. h AFTER THE PASSAGE

OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1957, THESE INITIAL STEPS WERE

INSUFFICIENT FOR THE REMAINING PROBLEMS OF THE 1960's: EQUAL

JOB OPPORTUNITY, EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC ACCOMODATIONS, GREATER

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE, AND THE NON-DISCRIMINATORY USE

OF FEDERAL FUNDS.

*the early 1960s*

L THE LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK IN ~~1955~~ <sup>1965</sup> FOR A BROADER CIVIL RIGHTS

BILL WAS AS DISMAL AS IT HAD BEEN TEN YEARS EARLIER.

DRAMATIC EVENTS IN BIRMINGHAM, THE DECISION BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY

TO SEIZE THE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE, HIS TRAGIC ASSASSINATION,

~~AND THE TOTAL ON JACOB'S~~ PRODUCED A MORE

~~LEGISLATIVE CLIMATE~~

*favorable  
for Civil Rts legislative*

BUT EVEN THEN, THE OUTLOOK IN THE CONGRESS WAS GRIM.

OUR EVENTUAL TRIUMPH WAS NOT PRE-ORDAINED, BY ANY MEANS.

L AT NUMEROUS POINTS IN THE 75-DAY BATTLE TO BREAK THE

FILIBUSTER, THE LEGISLATION COULD HAVE BEEN COMPROMISED

IRRETRIEVABLY. *L* THAT NONE OF THIS HAPPENED WAS DUE ALMOST

ENTIRELY TO THE POLITICAL STRATEGY THAT HAD BEEN MAPPED

OUT AND WAS FOLLOWED EVEN IN THE MOST DIFFICULT MOMENTS

OF DEBATE.

THESE RETROSPECTIVE REMARKS HAVE HAD ONLY ONE PURPOSE:

TO SUGGEST AGAIN THAT THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN CONGRESS

HAS NEVER BEEN EASY AND THAT, IN MANY RESPECTS, OUR PRESENT

DIFFICULTIES ARE NO MORE INSUPERABLE THAN THE BARRIERS WE

FACED IN THE "GOOD OLD DAYS." THEY ARE DIFFERENT, TO BE SURE,

BUT NOT INSUPERABLE.

WE MUST CONTINUE THE PROGRESS OF THE 1960's. BUT IN

ORDER TO DO SO, WE MUST DEVISE A POLITICAL STRATEGY TO

ACHIEVE OUR GOALS IN THIS DECADE OF THE 70's.

I BEGIN WITH THIS PROPOSITION: UNLESS WE CAN AGREE

ON A STRATEGY THAT WILL ATTRACT A MAJORITY COALITION IN

THE CONGRESS AND THE NATION AT LARGE, WE CAN LOOK FORWARD

TO LITTLE IN THE WAY OF CONCRETE RESULTS.



IT WILL AVAIL US NOTHING TO BEAT OUR CHESTS IN

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION WITH A SENSE OF MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

ABOUT THE INEQUITIES AND INJUSTICES, UNLESS WE HAVE A

PROGRAM OF ACTION AND THE IMPORTANT FORCES TO PUT IT TO

WORK. THIS LESSON IS AS TRUE TODAY AS IT WAS 20 YEARS AGO.

BETWEEN THE TWO EXTREMES OF EMPTY APPEALS TO THE NATION'S

MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND PREMEDITATED VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION,

LIES A BROAD FIELD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE POLITICAL ACTION, NOT SO

DRAMATIC MAYBE, BUT EFFECTIVE; AND IT IS IN THIS AREA THAT WE

MUST BEGIN TO THINK MORE CREATIVELY.

WE OFTEN HEAR PEOPLE SAY THAT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY

IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUED PROGRESS IN THE FIELDS OF HUMAN

RIGHTS HAS VANISHED.

4 POLITICAL ANALYSTS SAY THAT THE MOMENTUM OF THE 1960'S TOWARD  
GREATER RACIAL JUSTICE HAS GIVEN WAY TO RETRENCHMENT AND  
DISQUIET IN THE 1970's.

{ DESPITE THIS CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, THE EVIDENCE FROM  
NUMEROUS NATIONAL POLLS AND STATISTICS INDICATES THAT  
INTEGRATION OF BLACK AMERICANS INTO OUR EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL  
AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE HAS MOVED FORWARD IN A SIGNIFICANT  
MANNER.

2 WE NOW ARE IN A PECULIAR BUT VITALLY IMPORTANT PERIOD  
OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE WHEN OUR LACK OF DIRECTION IN THE CIVIL  
RIGHTS ARENA IS NO GREATER THAN THE LACK OF DIRECTION GENERALLY.

4 THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR ELECTED LEADERS ARE CONFUSED AND  
AMBIVALENT ABOUT WHERE WE SHOULD BE HEADING AS A NATION AND  
DEEPLY DIVIDED ABOUT OUR SHORT-RANGE OBJECTIVES.

h GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE LITERALLY UNTABULATED AND UNKNOWN.

THE 1972 ELECTIONS ~~DID LITTLE TO CLARIFY THIS SITUATION~~

h IT IS WITHIN OUR POWER TO BREAK OUT OF THIS IMPASSE AND  
TO BEGIN THE MOBILIZATION OF THE POLITICAL RESOURCES THAT CAN

RESTORE THE POSITIVE MOMENTUM OF THE 1960's, NOT ONLY FOR

HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT FOR A TOTAL NATIONAL AGENDA.

h HOW CAN THIS BE DONE? I AM NOT SURE THAT ANY OF US  
HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, AND I SURELY DO NOT. h BUT I CAN

POINT UP SEVERAL FACTS THAT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND.

FIRST, I SUBSCRIBE TO THE THESIS THAT PRESIDENT NIXON  
~~OR ANY OTHER PRESIDENT~~ HAS WITHIN HIS GRASP AN EXTRAORDINARY  
OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE TO THE FOREFRONT OF THE STRUGGLE FOR  
RACIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

IT IS WITHIN HIS POWER -- DESPITE ALL OF HIS PRESENT  
DIFFICULTIES -- TO MOVE AHEAD AND FORGE A BIPARTISAN COALITION  
IN FAVOR OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION NOW IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

h WATERGATE CERTAINLY HAS HAMPERED THIS PRESIDENT AND  
HIS ADMINISTRATION. BUT HISTORY ~~WILL~~ <sup>ALSO</sup> WILL RENDER A HARSH  
INDICTMENT OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION FOR ITS FAILURE TO  
LEAD THE UNITED STATES IN A MOST CRITICAL AREA OF DOMESTIC  
CONCERN: HUMAN RIGHTS.

PRESIDENTS, HOWEVER, DO NOT OPERATE IN A VACUUM, NO  
MATTER HOW MUCH THEY SEEK TO SEAL THEMSELVES OFF FROM

PUBLIC OPINION. h I PROPOSE THAT WE DEVISE A POLITICAL

STRATEGY THAT WILL ASSIST - YES, INSIST AND PROPEL <sup>this President and</sup> THE <sup>next</sup>

PRESIDENT TO MAKE THIS KIND OF AFFIRMATIVE DECISION.

THERE IS GOOD HISTORICAL PRECEDENT FOR THIS APPROACH.

WE MAY FORGET THAT THE EARLY 1960'S WAS A TIME OF  
CONVINCING PRESIDENT KENNEDY THAT HE SHOULD ADOPT A MORE  
AGGRESSIVE POSTURE IN SUPPORT OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION  
THAT HAD BEEN PENDING IN THE CONGRESS FOR MANY YEARS. WE  
FORGET THAT HIS INITIAL CIVIL RIGHTS PROPOSALS IN 1963 WERE  
JUDGED INADEQUATE BY THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL  
RIGHTS. IT WAS ONLY AFTER THOSE TRAGIC AND DRAMATIC EVENTS  
IN BIRMINGHAM THAT THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION BECAME FULLY  
AND TOTALLY COMMITTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE THAT EVENTUALLY  
BECAME THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964.

As we devise this strategy, I contend that the entire  
concept of the civil rights movement must be broadened to  
include the rights and opportunities that should be more available  
to other disadvantaged groups in America.



I AM THINKING OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED, ~~FOR EXAMPLE,~~

~~OR~~ THE MENTALLY RETARDED WHO ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN THE

MOST CRUEL AND INHUMANE WAYS; OR THE ELDERLY, WHO ARE

FREQUENTLY LOCKED UP IN WHAT WE CALL SENIOR CITIZENS HOUSING

PROJECTS, OFTENTIMES FORGOTTEN AND ISOLATED.

ALL THESE PEOPLE MUST FACE MANY OF THE SAME BARRIERS AND

MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND PREJUDICES THAT CONFRONT BLACKS, *chicanos*

*Indians* OTHER MINORITY CITIZENS. INJUSTICE KNOWS NO RACE, AND IT

KNOWS NO AGE, **IT KNOWS NO SEX.**

WE ARE ALSO IN A PERIOD WHERE THE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S

RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL POWER MUST BE INCLUDED IN A

BROADER DEFINITION OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

As I SEE IT, WE MUST IDENTIFY THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL  
RIGHTS AS AN ALL-EMBRACING STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS AND  
PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF ALL AMERICANS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA,  
THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH BLACKS, THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH CHICANOS  
AND INDIANS AND PUERTO RICANS TO FORM AN ELECTORAL MAJORITY.

SO WE MUST CREATE A CLIMATE OF IDENTITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN  
THE NEEDS, THE HOPES, AND THE FEARS OF THE MINORITIES AND THE  
NEEDS AND THE HOPES AND THE FEARS OF THE MAJORITY.

IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE THIS MEANS IDENTIFYING THE CAUSE OF  
CIVIL RIGHTS WITH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN.

MILLIONS OF PARENTS, WHITE AND BLACK, FEEL THAT THE PRESENT  
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS NOT SATISFYING THE NEEDS OF THEIR  
CHILDREN.

WE MUST IDENTIFY CIVIL RIGHTS WITH THE RIGHT OF EVERY  
AMERICAN TO GOOD HEALTH CARE. IT IS NOT ONLY BLACKS  
OR CHICANOS THAT HAVE INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE. THERE  
ARE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHITE AS WELL AS BLACK OR BROWN  
OR RED WHO ARE EITHER VICTIMS OF INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE OR  
UNABLE TO PAY FOR WHAT CARE IS AVAILABLE.

WE MUST FIND SOME NEW, COMMON DENOMINATORS, MUTUAL NEEDS,  
MUTUAL WANTS, COMMON HOPES AND FEARS, AND USE THEM TO BIND  
TOGETHER A COALITION OF PEOPLE REPRESENTING THE HOPES AND THE  
FEARS OF THE MAJORITY.

OUT OF THIS COALITION WE CAN THEN FASHION A NEW BILL OF  
RIGHTS THAT WILL BELONG TO ALL AMERICANS AND, BECAUSE IT DOES,  
WILL HAVE TREMENDOUS FORCE:

4-- THE RIGHT TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE, FREE FROM POVERTY.

THERE ARE MORE WHITES IN POVERTY THAN THERE ARE BLACKS.

UNITE THE PEOPLE TODAY WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF POVERTY.

4-- THE RIGHT TO FULL AND EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW.

ALL PEOPLE FIND TODAY THAT JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED.

THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE GHETTO ARE THE VICTIMS OF CRIME MUCH MORE THAN THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE SUBURBS. BUT ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW.

4-- THE RIGHT TO PRODUCTIVE AND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT.

UNEMPLOYMENT KNOWS NO RACE. IT STANDS AS A CONSTANT THREAT TO THE LIFE AND THE WELL-BEING OF MILLIONS OF FAMILIES.

4-- THE RIGHT TO ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY

FREE FROM THE OBSTRUCTION OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACE, CREED, OR SEX.

THE RIGHT TO MOVE UP IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE; NOT JUST THE  
RIGHT TO A JOB, BUT THE RIGHT TO BE A MANAGER AS WELL AS A WORKER.

THE RIGHT TO BE ON A BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS WELL AS TO BE A  
CUSTOMER. NOT ONLY THE RIGHT, BUT THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT.

L-- THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN AND DECENT NEIGHBORHOOD.

L-- THE RIGHT TO LIFE FREE FROM VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM.

L-- THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY FREE FROM OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE INVASION.

L-- THE RIGHT TO SAFETY, INCLUDING PROTECTION OF PERSON AND

PROPERTY.

L-- THE RIGHT TO QUALITY EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS FREE FROM  
SEGREGATION.

QUALITY EDUCATION IS INTEGRATED EDUCATION. IF WE CAN LEARN  
TOGETHER, WE CAN LIVE TOGETHER. BUT IF WE LEARN SEPARATELY, WE ARE  
APT TO PURSUE SEPARATE COURSES.



h -- THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN GOOD HEALTH UNDER A SYSTEM OF  
COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE PROVIDING AND ASSURING MODERN HEALTH CARE  
FOR ALL.

h -- THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM HUNGER.

-- THE RIGHT TO RECREATION AND LEISURE.

-- THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN AND WHOLESOME ENVIRONMENT.

THESE RIGHTS BELONG TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE; THEY ARE NOT JUST  
FOR BLACKS OR CHICANOS OR INDIANS, BUT FOR THE BLUE-COLLAR  
WORKER, THE POOR WHITE, THE STUDENT, THE FARMER, THE WORKER IN THE  
OFFICE OR THE SHOP. WITHOUT THESE RIGHTS ALIVE AND WELL AND VITAL,  
WITHOUT THESE RIGHTS APPLICABLE AND ACCEPTED, THERE ARE NO REAL  
CIVIL RIGHTS.

h WE NOW HAVE THE FORMALITIES OF LAW, THE LEGAL PROTECTION, BUT  
WE HAVE NOT HAD THE SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE THAT IS REQUIRED. THE NEW  
DIMENSIONS OF CIVIL RIGHTS ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE LIVING AND  
WORKING AND PLAYING CONDITIONS OF OUR PEOPLE.

BUT, YOU ASK, DO WE HAVE TIME ENOUGH? HOW CAN WE EXPECT BLACK  
AMERICANS, CHICANOS, INDIANS, AND OTHER DEPRIVED MINORITIES TO  
POSTPONE FOR ONE DAY LONGER THEIR FULL AND FAIR PARTICIPATION  
IN AMERICAN LIFE? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE: YOU CAN NEITHER EXPECT NOR  
ASK THEM TO BE PATIENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT  
ALWAYS AMAZED ME THROUGHOUT MY YEARS OF PUBLIC LIFE HAS BEEN  
THE DEGREE OF FAITH IN THE AMERICAN SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN  
RETAINED BY BLACKS AND OTHER MINORITIES. IN MANY RESPECTS,  
THEY HAVE KEPT THE DEMOCRATIC FAITH FAR MORE THAN SOME OF OUR  
MORE AFFLUENT AND FORTUNATE WHITE AMERICANS WHO HAVE BENEFITED  
SO FULLY FROM THE SYSTEM.

I ASK YOU TO JOIN ME NOT IN A CHILD-LIKE OPTIMISM BUT  
IN A RESOLVE TO PUT TOGETHER IN THIS COUNTRY THE COALITION  
OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FORCES THAT CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS.

WE HAVE DONE MUCH, BUT WHAT WE HAVE DONE IS ONLY AN INDICATION  
OF WHAT WE CAN DO AND WHAT WE MUST DO.

THERE IS NO TIME FOR SELF-PITY; NO TIME FOR RECRIMINATIONS; NO  
TIME FOR LOOKING BACK.

IN LIGHT OF THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY,  
EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM HAS A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO BE A LEADER  
AND TO BE A COOPERATOR; TO REMIND THOSE WHO HOLD HIGH OFFICE THAT  
THEY HOLD IT, NOT FOR THEMSELVES, BUT SOLELY FOR THE FULFILLMENT  
OF THE HIGHEST PURPOSES OF THIS NATION.

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