

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL TELETHON

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

JULY 26, 1975

Thank you very much

Last year, you may recall, I hosted the telethon for most of the twenty-two hours. I loved every minute of it and we raised a lot of money. But I understand there was one serious problem. Apparently, needlepointing was sweeping the country at the time of last year's telethon and there's been a glut of Hubert Humphrey needlepoint pillows ever since --- caused mostly by my wife, Muriel, and Rosey Grier.

Anyway, to rescue the needlepoint pillow market, I decided it might be prudent this year to cut my twenty-two hours in half --- to two.

But, in many ways, this year's telethon is much more important than last year's. It takes real courage these days for a political party to gamble the money needed to produce a show like this. We all know that most families have to count every dollar in this time of recession and inflation.

So, the wiser course might have been to forget about the telethon this year --- don't risk the money --- just play it safe.

I can tell you that National Chairman Bob Strauss and the state Democratic chairmen never considered that possibility for a moment. And for a very good reason.

The telethon was started four years ago because Democrats believed there had to be a way to clean up financing of politics in America --- a way to give individuals a voice in the system --- a way to break the stranglehold that special interests had in financing our parties. Nothing like the 1972 telethon had ever been attempted before.

It was a high risk venture then, but it worked. And because we were willing to run that risk, the entire structure of campaign financing has been changed.

Now, in 1975, the widespread disillusionment toward government that many people feel makes it more essential than ever to go forward - - because it is only through your active involvement and support that we will have a government serving the people's interests.

The man who explained most clearly why this is so was that great American and great Democrat, Harry Truman. "Our political parties," he once said, "are the means through which our people make the choice of going forward or backward, of having government for the people, or a reactionary government for special interests ... The Democratic Party is the party ... that tries to serve all of the people, not just a few of them."

Well, that's what this 1975 telethon is all about --- a high risk venture by the Democrats so that we can once

again have a government that serves all of the people,
not just a few of them.

We are presenting this telethon because for Democrats
there is no alternative but to trust the people --- and
to place our future in the people's hands.

If you are ready to join with us, we will have taken
the first, and by far the most important, step in changing
public apathy and cynicism into confidence and hope for
a brighter future.

Please join us.

Please Answer America.

And now, it is my great personal pleasure to introduce
someone who truly believes in America's future --- who
this year proved her faith by becoming a citizen of this
country -- a very special performer and very special friend
--- Ms. Helen Reddy.

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FOR MOST OF THE TWENTY-TWO HOURS. I LOVED EVERY MINUTE
OF IT AND WE RAISED A LOT OF MONEY. BUT I UNDERSTAND
THERE WAS ONE SERIOUS PROBLEM. APPARENTLY, NEEDLEPOINTING
WAS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY AT THE TIME OF LAST YEAR'S
TELETHON AND THERE'S BEEN A GLUT OF HUBERT HUMPHREY
NEEDLEPOINT PILLOWS EVER SINCE --- CAUSED MOSTLY BY MY
WIFE, MURIEL, AND ROSEY GRIER.

ANYWAY, TO RESCUE THE NEEDLEPOINT PILLOW MARKET,
I DECIDED IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT THIS YEAR TO CUT MY TWENTY-
TWO HOURS IN HALF --- TO TWO.

BUT, IN MANY WAYS, THIS YEAR'S TELETHON IS MUCH
MORE IMPORTANT THAN LAST YEAR'S. IT TAKES REAL COURAGE
THESE DAYS FOR A POLITICAL PARTY TO GAMBLE THE MONEY
NEEDED TO PRODUCE A SHOW LIKE THIS. WE ALL KNOW THAT
MOST FAMILIES HAVE TO COUNT EVERY DOLLAR IN THIS TIME OF
RECESSION AND INFLATION.

SO, THE WISER COURSE MIGHT HAVE BEEN TO FORGET
ABOUT THE TELETHON THIS YEAR --- DON'T RISK THE MONEY ---
JUST PLAY IT SAFE.

I CAN TELL YOU THAT NATIONAL CHAIRMAN BOB STRAUSS
AND THE STATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMEN NEVER CONSIDERED THAT
POSSIBILITY FOR A MOMENT. AND FOR A VERY GOOD REASON.

THE TELETHON WAS STARTED FOUR YEARS AGO BECAUSE
DEMOCRATS BELIEVED THERE HAD TO BE A WAY TO CLEAN UP
FINANCING OF POLITICS IN AMERICA --- A WAY TO GIVE
INDIVIDUALS A VOICE IN THE SYSTEM --- A WAY TO BREAK THE
STRANGLEHOLD THAT SPECIAL INTERESTS HAD IN FINANCING OUR
PARTIES. NOTHING LIKE THE 1972 TELETHON HAD EVER BEEN
ATTEMPTED BEFORE.

IT WAS A HIGH RISK VENTURE THEN, BUT IT WORKED.
AND BECAUSE WE WERE WILLING TO RUN THAT RISK, THE ENTIRE
STRUCTURE OF CAMPAIGN FINANCING HAS BEEN CHANGED.

NOW, IN 1975, THE WIDESPREAD DISSILLUSIONMENT
TOWARD GOVERNMENT THAT MANY PEOPLE FEEL MAKES IT MORE
ESSENTIAL THAN EVER TO GO FORWARD --- BECAUSE IT IS ONLY
THROUGH YOUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT THAT WE WILL
HAVE A GOVERNMENT SERVING THE PEOPLE'S INTERESTS.

THE MAN WHO EXPLAINED MOST CLEARLY WHY THIS IS SO
WAS THAT GREAT AMERICAN AND GREAT DEMOCRAT, HARRY TRUMAN.
"OUR POLITICAL PARTIES," HE ONCE SAID, "ARE THE MEANS
THROUGH WHICH OUR PEOPLE MAKE THE CHOICE OF GOING FORWRD
OR BACKWARD, OF HAVING GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE, OR A
REACTIONARY GOVERNMENT FOR SPECIAL INTERESTS ...

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS THE PARTY ... THAT TRIES TO SERVE
ALL OF THE PEOPLE, NOT JUST A FEW OF THEM."

WELL, THAT'S WHAT THIS 1975 TELETHON IS ALL ABOUT ---
A HIGH RISK VENTURE BY THE DEMOCRATS SO THAT WE CAN ONCE
AGAIN HAVE A GOVERNMENT THAT SERVES ALL OF THE PEOPLE,
NOT JUST A FEW OF THEM.

WE ARE PRESENTING THIS TELETHON BECAUSE FOR DEMOCRATS
THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TRUST THE PEOPLE --- AND
TO PLACE OUR FUTURE IN THE PEOPLE'S HANDS.

IF YOU ARE READY TO JOIN WITH US, WE WILL HAVE TAKEN
THE FIRST, AND BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT, STEP IN CHANGING
PUBLIC APATHY AND CYNICISM INTO CONFIDENCE AND HOPE FOR
A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

PLEASE JOIN US.

PLEASE ANSWER AMERICA.

AND NOW, IT IS MY GREAT PERSONAL PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE
SOMEONE WHO TRULY BELIEVES IN AMERICA'S FUTURE --- WHO
THIS YEAR PROVED HER FAITH BY BECOMING A CITIZEN OF THIS
COUNTRY -- A VERY SPECIAL PERFORMER AND VERY SPECIAL FRIEND
--- MS. HELEN REDDY.

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