HHH Remarks to Minnesota AFL-CIO Convention - Radisson Hotel, St Paul September 19, 1977

You never can tell, some of this time you may have to pay for - you ought not to be wasting it on unnecessary applause. I think I know how you feel and I know how I feel about you and that i those clear this morning, where by your wonderful reception and I hope it's first to you as to how I feel about our Minnesota AFL-CIO. And in fact this is the first public appearance that I have made since my surgery, which, by the way, wasn't that long ago, a little over four weeks ago. I get so restless I think it was four years ago. And also the fact that I brought along Muriel. (Applause)

> See, Muriel is my nurse. She threatens to quit about twice a day because I get a little ornery, a little restless. But she's stuck with me now for better than 41 years of married life through health and sickness and through good times and less than good times. And we wanted to be together with you today. In fact she said to me this morning, is it alright if I come along. I said it's not only Dave Rowe (?) is of to alright, if you don't come along they/might not let me in, because I happen to know how Dave feels about Muriel.

Let me just hurriedly pay my respects to all the offices of our Minnesota AFL-CIO. Particularly to Dave and to Neal and to Leonard; the offices of COPE, because they do such a good job. And all of you that represent the many locals, the different internationals that are here. This is to me an experience that has taken place so often that somebody might say well, isn't it sort of just a routine to go through? And I happen to respond no, that it is an experience of refreshment, of renovation, of revitalization. And you'll find out as we go through this speech that I may start out a little wobbly but I'm going to end up damned good and strong. (Applause)

Now I went off without my glasses, without my kleenex. I'm a little more sentimental after some period of what you might call physical trauma, than usual. But I guess we'll make it through anyway. It's been a bad weekend. I don't know, I used to like VESS (?). with Then I first thought Saturday night Nour fourth win, we had to put them through fifteen innings. And we lost by one. And then took a double-header from us yesterday. Even that I could tolerate even though it was $\frac{\partial u | (?)}{\partial u | (?)}$. But to have that Roger Stalbach run that touchdown in that sudden death, that's too much. I can hardly wait until we can get at them again! And that we will before this year is out! (Applause) I'm a Viking fan. I thought our boys played a good game yesterday. We'll get it all together. We had some injuries, had a few bad breaks, but so did the other side. It was something to watch and I thought well that's all . I got to do what I used to do when I'd be campaigning and I'd get down and out. I'd say well where's the labor crowd. I'd go over to a labor hall or I'd go UP on the iRon Range. Or I'd come over to the trades and labor center or I'd go over to the central labor union. And I'd see my friends and I'd get all pumped up again and forgot that something might have been wrong the day before. And that's the way we're going to do it today.

I picked up the morning paper and I see that Wendy at long last had a big story in the MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE. I want to compliment you, Wendy. (Applause and laughter) Wendy is my esteemed colleague, more significantly he is my dear, loyal and long-time friend and he is doing a magnificent job in the United States Senate. It's not easy to come in, new, not easy to come on in when you've got a senior Senator that seems to want to hog the headlines. It's not easy to break in and to make your mark. But in a few months, since January, and to this month of September, Wendell Anderson has established himself as a strong, effective United States Senator of whom we can be proud in the State of Minnesota. (Applause)

Now Wendy I want to keep you a junior Senator -- I think you ought to know that. (Applause) I see we've got all kinds of bills about how we're going to have a session in case there's an opening in the Senate. But don't anybody depend on it for a few years. (Applause)

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It's alright to look ahead, and I think you should because I long ago announced that this term would finish my so-called Senatorial public career. And I've given Jimmy Carter assurance so that he has no fear I will not run for President. I told him that. Which, by the way, calmed him down. HAnd you should know, and I want you know that our relationships are the very best. I hear from him two or three times a week. We discuss many things and we've been very busy on the telephone these past two weeks. I've been on the telephone with my colleagues -- Wendy has made arrangements for me in the Senate to talk to a number of my colleagues. He gives me the names of some of those who want to talk with me, there are others that I just pick up the phone and talk to. I talk to our Majority Leader about our agenda, I work with him, consult with him as to what we ought to be doing. Simply because I'm out here in Minnesota does not mean that I'm not trying to take care of our business in Washington. I have a Minnesota office, it's a good office. We're answering the mail and I'm reading a lot of it. We're dictating those letters, I'm on the telephone dictating statements. I'm not about ready to have somebody cover me up, I'm not about ready to get lost, I'm about ready, if you please, to be found once again. (Applause) And you've going

Now, I saw Mayor Latimer when I came in. I'm not going to take all morning here just to thank these fellows, but the Mayor has done a great job for St. Paul. (Applause) And Warren Spannus. You look sneaking great, Warren. You're a fine Attorney General, I have a suspicion that one of these days you'll make a fine judge. (Applause) Boy do they have a battle going on out here as to who's going to succeed. And I saw my friend, also that's here, Don Fraser. Congressman Fraser's been an extraordinary good Congressman representing his district with courage and with leadership in the 5th Congressional District. I don't know where Don is but I want to say this -- Don? I don't know how many members are here, is Bruce here, Bruce Vento who we used to be so proud of and Jimmy Oberstar and Rick Nolan. We've got a great gang down there representing us and we work together all of us. And I think we've got one of the finest delegations that was ever sent to Washington.

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Now Dave you mentioned this coalition for labor, law reform. I'm the co-chairman. When I first went to Washington one of the reasons I got there was because the AFL-CIO helped get me there. Old Bill Green was president of the AFL-CIO back in 1948. William Green. A.F. Whitney was the president of the Railroad Brothers and that infamous Taft-Hartley had just been passed. And this young fellow who was Mayor of Minneapolis was out on the road point out what this Taft-Hartley law was going to mean to the workers of America. And it has been an impediment to organization, make no mistake about it. And it has been enabled to be turned to the disadvantaged of the labor movement, make no mistake about.

Now it's hard administration and those of us that are the leaders in Congress have agreed upon a package of labor law reform. So that when the people want to organize. So that when a <u>recalibrant</u> employer like the Stevens Company, for example, in the south, cannot buy all kinds of legal actions and dilitory tactics prevent people from getting a chance to join a union. And I'm proud to be the co-chairman and I predict to this audience that we will pass the labor law reform which the Administration will be sending to Congress which we will mobilize to get enacted. So get behind it. (Applause)

Now I told Dave and Wendy, I said gee, you know you're lucky, I'm not feeling as strong as I ordinarily do. I really don't. It's been a little more difficult this time kind of getting back together. So IAmost likely won't be as long as usual. Well that was self-conception. (Laughter and applause). Not only that, you wouldn't feel right about it. (Laughter) Some of you go home and whisper, I don't know about ol HHH. Hold it for an hour! But I can't because I've got to go to the University to get one of those treatments and the doctors won't wait that long.

But I do have a few things I want to say to you. The first thing I want to say to you as individuals and as a group. If you're going to be something, you're going to do something. You have to be proud of yourself. And you have to be proud of your heritage as a labor movement just as you are proud of your family or of your religion or whatever else it may be.

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And I've always been associated with the labor group. I told the President of the United States at a private luncheon we had not long ago, I said Mr. President, you just have to understand in our discussions there are just a couple things that I'm being slightly prejudiced on, Amongst others. But I said I never would have been in the United States Senate had it not have been for my friends in the labor movement. And please don't ever ask me to do anything that will in any way injure or cripple or weaken that movement.

Secondly, I said I've got to tell you I've had a lot of help from my friends in the Jewish community. They've been generous, they've been my friends. And please don't ask me to do anything that will betray their legitimate interests and their deep concern for their role in American life, American politics and in the state of Israel. I said other than that, you can ask for almost anything. But I have some loyalities and I have some priorities. And one of my loyalities has been to this great movement. And I'll tell you why. Not because you're perfect, not because there hasn't been a scoundrel now and then. Because not of us are perfect. We've all made mistakes and God only knows, some of us have made too many. But we judge a movement like this by its overall record and we judge the labor movement on what it has done to lift the standard of living for millions and millions and millions of plain American citizens who today have their own home, who today have decent working conditions, who today can send their children to a good school and that is particularly true here in the State of Minnesota, Wendy, where you and the labor movement and others in this State helped improve the educational system of Minnesota until today it stands as the wonder of the nation! It never could have happened without you. Be proud of it, dear friends. (Applause) Be preudof it.

Look at this. Mom said they'll take your picture if you'll wipe your eyes with a kleenex. Well, that's all right, take it. A fellow that doesn't have any tears doesn't have any heart. (Applause)

Now the history of the labor movement needs to be taught in every school in this land. We need to know our roots, as they say. We learned about roots, didn't we, in 1976. We need to know who we are, what we are, where we come from, what we got here. You've heard me say this before. It is imperitive. It is a part of American history. This great nation wasn't built because

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somebody sat behind the table and finagled. They needed finance, important as finance is and it is important, `Important as planning is, and it is important, Important as a design is, and it is important. Ultimately it's the worker. It was the worker that built the railroads, that dug the tunnels, that dredged the rivers, that built the ports, that built the huge skyscrapers, put in the highways, and built the homes.

America is a living testimonial to what free men and women organized in free democratic trade unions can do to make a better life and we ought to be proud of it. Just remember that! (Applause)

The first thing that any authoritarian/any two-bit dictator does is to abolish free labor. That's the first thing. Long before they get the exappropriation of land, long before they get to even putting in the jail, the so-called political prisoners, they abolish the free labor movement. I'm a student of history and I've been a college teacher and I've taught every one of my students that. That's the first sign, and in America, thank God. Instead of abolishing our labor movement we're going to strengthen it. And workers today that are not organized, many of them particularly in the deep south, workers today that do not have the working conditions that they ought to have, are going to have a better chance. Nobody's going to give it to them on a platter, it's not going to be easy. But they're not going to have everything set against them. They're going to have a chance once we get this labor reform bill passed. So that when they have a vote in their plant and the vote is taken and if the union wins the union is recognized. And there's none of this nonsense of delay, litigation, and obstruction such as its prevention. (?) The labor movement of the United States is with its legitimate growth... Oh, what have you done with free organized labor. Collective bargaining, better wages, high inflation. Every time anybody gets a little better wage somebody says in-fla-tion. (Laughter) Right away. The bank arranges the interest rates, they say sound monetary policy. (Laughter)

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(Applause)

One of the main items of inflation has been the cost of money. But for some reason or another we have been duped into believing that if a worker who puts in a full days work gets a low pay raise that it's going to have a bad or ill effect on the economy. But finagle the if somebody can somehow or another make=a/discount rate (?) or if the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board can raise the prime rate or sometimes he doesn't raise it, but the private banks get together and raise the prime rate, that's what you call sound monetary management.

I served as Chairman for two years of the Joint Economic Committee and I'm Vice Chairman now and I want to tell you something. They're not pulling the wool over my eyes. I learned a great deal and they know it.

I'll never forget the day that Arthur Burns told me that his first objective, (Chairman Burns is a delightful gentleman, may I with say, a conservative gentleman/whose philosophy I do not find myself in agreement but personally, I like him.) Arthur Burns said, you know, Senator, our first obligation is to save the banks. I said, I understand the importance of that. But I said, I want to tell you something. There won't be any money in the banks if we don't save the country. And interest rates, and credit firms have a lot to do with what's going to happen to this country. And every one of you in this audience and all of you across this land have should have a great interest in and a great concern about it. Those interest rates, those discount rates and all the other hocus-pocus that goes on in the so-called monetary system of ours as they have in your wages.

Thank God for collective bargaining. What it's meant to the income of our families. What it's meant for working conditions. What it's meant for grievance procedures. What it's meant for job security. What it's meant for recreation and vacation so that families can get together and travel across this country. What it's meant for pensions, and what it's meant for health.

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Millions of Americans today had health care not because the governments passed it, because we haven't had the guts to do it. But because negotiators sat down at the tables with their employers and worked out a health and welfare pension program commonly called fringe benefits -- which makes it possible for you as a union member to have good health care with the best of doctors, go in the best of hospitals and not have to/broke carrying the whole process. Isn't that a marvelous thing! (Applause)

Now who does that hurt? See we need to tell people about this. The doctors get their money, the hospitals get their money, the family still survives, the community is better off. What's all this nonsense about that when you get a little wage increase for a worker, and of course by the way you generally negotiate three-year contracts, and when they put it in the paper they put the whole three-year contract in as if it was all the first year. (Applause) The three-year contract is the first year to catch up with what you just lost. The second year is to try get a little bit ahead, and the third year is to try to maintain even. So you just are really battling hard.

But the American worker is the most productive worker in the world, the most effective worker in the world! (Applause) I can hear someone say ah, you can expect that from Humphrey. Don't expect it from me -that's the official record. We have the best labor relations in the world, fewer work stopages than any other industrialized country. Not bad. We have a responsible labor movement. Look at this state. Look at the leadership of the labor movement in this state. It's a responsible labor movement.

Enough of that. Now what's ahead. (Mom, I got to see that doctor, don't I.) Let's take a look at what's ahead.

I talked about the reform of the labor laws. And one of the things that's got to be done is for the government of the United States by official declared policy to state that the goal and the objective of all the policies of the government of the United States is full employment and economic growth. And that is what the Humphrey-Hawkins bill is all about. (Applause)

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The Humphrey-Hawkins bill, and I want you to get the literature about it, I don't want you to be deceived by these letters to the editors. I don't want you to be fooled by these uninformed editorials that appear from time to time. I want you to take a look at what we're really trying to do. What we're trying to do is to first of all to bring together the Bureau of the Budget, the Federal Reserve, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Cabinet, into a program of a plan of economic action that will be presented to the Congress as a conserted well-developed plan year by year. And the President will present to the Congress his goals, his economic goals for each year; the goal for production, the goal for income, the goal for employment. We're not going to eliminate unemployment in one year. We're not a11 going to get over our problems/in one year. But if we don't plan, 🗲 we don't look ahead, if we don't have something to measure our efforts by, if we don't have any idea of where we want to go or how we're going to get there, we're going to be spinning our wheels and you're going to constantly read that the economy is slipping or sliding or moving or falling and nobody knows why.

The whole purpose of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill is to utilize the resources of the government in coordination with private enterprise to maximize private enterprise, to see that private enterprise has the credit, the money, the resources, the trained workers that are necessary to keep this economy of ours growing so that as the labor force grows we can absorb the new ones and that we can pick up the millions that have been left behind.

The second part of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill is better than what we're doing today, but not enough. Emergency public works. The Comprehensive Educational Training Program. The special aid to our cities. The job corps. The youth employment program of which I was a co-author, as was Wendy. But we need to do more of it.

Ladies and gentlemen, the greatest entity America has today is the fact there are 7 million people capable of working, that ought to be working, that are unemployed and of those 7 million, 3 million are youth, between the ages of 16 and 22. And many of them have never had a job, many of them have known work discipline, many of them know nothing of the therapy that comes from work, and they've learned how to live off the streets. And I'm here to tell you that as long

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as you have that many people unemployed you'll never cut the crime rate, you'll never know protection, you never saw the social and economic problems which you read about which plague our cities, and move into our country-side.

Solving problems of unemployment is not only an economic necessity, it is a social necessity. We wage war on unemployment. We need to have the same commitment to it, but we move on it, even now even though we're doing five times better than we did. We move slowly. Take a look at how long it has taken us to even set up a job corps center. So many people you've got to kick at, and we have to go through so many different little rules and regulations.

Let me tell you, Franklin Roosevelt set up the Civilian Conservation Corps back in the 30's -- you remember some of you, the old CCCs. He put one man in charge. He called them in in March and he said to those gentlemen, by the end of June I want 500,000 young men in camps, in the forests, at work, clothed, with the tools and ready to go to work. From March until June. And by June 30th, <u>530,000</u> young men were at work, in the camps, out in the forest doing the job. It can be done. You've just to make up your mind to do it.

Did you know that Roosevelt never had a welfare program? No, the welfare was taken care of by the local county he had a work program. If you didn't have a job, there was a job offer. Work. We've got things to do in this country. And we've gone along here piddling along and we've been spending billions and billions and billions, we've never made up our mind that America needed something; forests to be replanted, cities to be rebuilt, railroads, my goodness, railroads! that need modernization and rebuilding. Hundreds of thousands, over 30,000 bridges in America that are out of date, that slow up our transportation system. Ports that are too old and too small to take care of modern shipping. The list is unlimited. We're fifteen years behind in reforestation. It isn't only the elm disease.

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And by the way, we ought to have an urban reforestation program, too, to plant trees in our cities, just as do in our countryside. We've got things to do in this country! I want the labor movement to start demanding that they be done. And that's the way we get things done! (Applause)

Conserve our water, conserve our land. You remember shelter belt program that was done in the 30's that prevented soil erosion, farmers were asked to plant trees all across America to break up the wind, erosion. Some

were planted. You know what's happened in the last three years? Over 30 billion of them have been bulldozed out. Why? So you had a few more acres to plant wheat. And today we've got billion and one hundred million bushels of surplus wheat that we don't know what to do with. We not only got more wheat than we know what to do with --driving down the prices of wheat for the farmers, causing them great economic distress, but we have wrecked 40 years of planting. Because we got a little greedy!

Dear friends, I know we have an energy shortage and time doesn't permit -- not only do we need energy conservation, energy development and all sorts of things which we're working on -- solar energy and other forms of energy. But one of the greatest dangers this country faces is the lowering of its water cable for the long term.

You see, we've got to look ahead. Grandpa Humphrey had no right to just use up the inheritance that came to me and leave nothing for my grandchildren. And we have been doing that. We've been using up our land. We've been using up our water. We've been using up our oil. We've been fowling up our air. And now we're asking ourselves can we afford to do anything about it?

Let me ask you something. If the Soviet Union were to attack us or some other country, and we knew that they were going to conquer large areas, do you think we'd stand back and say, do you think we can afford to defend ourselves? You know what would happen!

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This country would rally; pray God, soon enough. And we'd wage a battle as if there had never been to the very last person, if need be.

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We wouldn't ask if we could afford it. You didn't hear anyone say during World War II, do you think we can afford to fight Hitler? And by the way, we financed World War II with scarcity of money, scarcity of commodities, scarcity of supply with two-percent interest. Two-percent money! Because we had a precedent then. (?) We had an economic philosophy that said it could be done. Conservation on every front.

We've got a job to do to clean up our cities. We can't afford to let them fall apart. I know, Wendy, that you address yourself to many of these questions. But those cities are never going to be cleaned up if you just rely on the yearly appropriation from Congress.

The farmers of America have never been able to develop America, they just depended on each session of Congress as to whether or not they were going to get any land. We passed the Homestead Act, gave every new farmer 160 acres and said, go to it. Every new immigrant. My grandfather got one. We passed the Federal Land Bank Act to finance the purchase of land for the farmers. And the farmers today own the Federal Land Bank. We passed the Production Credit Act so that farmers could get money for production loans and today the PCAs are owned by the very people that bought it from them!

We passed the Cooperative Banking Act so that the Farmers Union GTA and others could be established. We know how it works. During the great depression when there was trouble and they couldn't get money to save their railroads and their businesses, we put up the RFC, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Did it lose the tax-payers any money? It made millions! It made millions and millions of dollars. It save the railroads, saved business, saved God knows only what. Now we've got a bank, a world bank.

Listen, I handled all this legislation. I handled 9 billion worth dollars/of it this year for what we call international financial institutions. A world bank for the world. The International Development Association for very soft loans, 40 year loans with little or no rate of interest for the poorest of the poor countries. . .

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for their ghettos and their harlems and their hovels.

We passed the Inter-American Development Bank. We passed the International Finance Corporation. Nine billion dollars of USA government money, your money, which I think was needed for economic development and for world peace. But we understood the importance of having credit available at reasonable terms and reasonable interests on long-term basis for the building of a free world. When are we going to wake up? If we can have a world bank that can loan money to killing. If we can have a world bank that can loan money to Afghanistan -- and then you know where it is -- (?) then we ought to be able to have a national domestic development bank that can loan money to Minneapolis and St. Paul and New York and Rochester and Los Angeles and San Francisco! (Applause)

I've talked about it, it's coming around. I've only been at now this/for about 15 years. But most everything I've ever been at and got it passed took about that long. But it's got to come. Because we've got to save those cities. Because the people that live in those cities have to be saved. And it does no good just to pass out food stamps. That's temporary palliative. It does no good just to see that they get a little food now and then. You have to look at it from a point of compassion. God's will be expressed, yes. But what we need is development. What we need is modernization. What we need is rebuilding those cities. We need to tear out whole sections.

We need to build parks and playgrounds and modern transportation. We need industrial centers. And as I said we need to modernize ports and dredge rivers and all of this requires work, and we're not going to go broke doing it. No nation ever went bankrupt building!

You go bankrupt in wars. No nation ever lost its fight trying to save life. You lose your life when you take life, and I ask the labor movement to really once again become the idealistic conscience of American politics.

Too many people in politics today are <u>afraid</u>. They're afraid, they say, oh they won't go for this. Well I knew they wouldn't go for civil rights in 1948. I knew they wouldn't go for medicare in

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1949. I knew that they wouldn't go for the Peace Corps in 1958, and I knew they wouldn't go, if you please, for the Arms Control Disarmament Agency in 1959. But ultimately they did! If you're going to be a man in politics, you have to be like a soldier of the battlefield. You know there are risks. There's no guarantee in your life, but as somebody once said, I'd rather live fifty years like a tiger than a hundred years like a chicken.

Thank you very much.

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Phone Message

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

20th Constitution Convention Minnesota AFL-CIO

> St. Paul, Minnesota September 19, 1977

I WANT TO SAY HELLO TO ALL OF MY FRIENDS IN THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO AS YOU MEET IN YOUR 20TH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED MY PARTICIPATION IN YOUR CONVENTION AS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR, I AM SO SORRY I CAN'T BE THERE WITH YOU IN PERSON THIS MORNING, BUT, YOU ALL KNOW THAT MY THOUGHTS ARE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES AS THEY SHALL ALWAYS BE.

THROUGHOUT OUR NATION'S HISTORY THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT HAS BEEN THE CUTTING EDGE FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY IN EVERY GENERATION. LABOR HAS BEEN AND IS TODAY A STRONG AND STEADY VOICE, NOT ONLY FOR THE AMERICAN WORKER AND HIS FAMILY, BUT ALSO FOR THE POOR, THE ELDERLY, THE YOUNG, THE DISABLED AND THOSE WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE.

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Nowhere in the nation has the Labor movement BEEN MORE RESPONSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE THAN IN MINNESOTA. IN OUR STATE, YOUR ACTIONS HAVE MADE POSSIBLE THE FINEST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN AMERICA, A PROSPEROUS STATE WITH A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING WITH DECENT NEIGHBORHOODS AND REASONABLY GOOD HOUSING. OUR CITIES ARE CLEAN AND MODERN AND OUR LABOR LEADERS ARE AMONG THE MOST RESPECTED CITIZENS OF OUR STATE. I KNOW THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER AS WE HAVE DONE SO WELL FOR SO LONG TO MEET THE CHALLENGES THAT STILL CONFRONT US -- FULL EMPLOYMENT, THE RESTORATION OF ALL OUR CITIES, REFORM OF OUR OUTDATED AND INEQUITABLE LABOR LAWS, THE PROVISION OF A DECENT MINIMUM WAGE, AND THE RENEWAL OF A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT.

I HAVE COMPLETE FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN THE GREAT MINNESOTA AFL-CIO. I KNOW THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO REFLECT THE VALUES, HOPES AND DREAMS OF ALL OUR WORKING PEOPLE AND THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AHEAD WITH ENERGY, ENTHUSIASM, INGENUITY AND EXCELLENCE.

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