

# Hubert H. Humphrey's Speech On Civil Rights

I realize that I am dealing with a charged issue—with an issue which has been confused by emotionalism on all sides. I realize that there are those here—friends and colleagues of mine, many of them—who feel as deeply as I do about this issue and who are yet in complete disagreement with me.

My respect and admiration for these men and their views was great when I came here.

It is now far greater because of the sincerity, the courtesy and the forthrightness with which they have argued in our discussions.

Because of this very respect—because of my profound belief that we have a challenging task to do here—because good conscience demands it—I feel I must rise at this time to support this report—a report that spells out our democracy, a report that the people will understand and enthusiastically acclaim.

**Let me say at the outset that this proposal is made with no single region, no single class, no single racial or religious group in mind.**

All regions and all states have shared in the precious heritage of American freedom. All states and all regions have at least some infringements of that freedom—all people, all groups have been the victims of discrimination.

The masterly statement of our keynote speaker, the distinguished United States senator from Kentucky, Alben Barkley, made that point with great force. Speaking of the founder of our party, Thomas Jefferson, he said:

"He did not proclaim that all white, or black, or red, or yellow men are equal; that all Christian or Jewish men are equal; that all Protestant and Catholic men are equal; that all rich or poor men are equal; that all good or bad men are equal.

**"What he declared was that all men are equal; and the equality which he proclaimed was equality in the right to enjoy the blessings of free government in which they may participate and to which they have given their consent."**

We are here as Democrats. But more important, as Americans—and I firmly believe that as men concerned with our country's future, we must specify in our platform the guarantees which I have mentioned.

Yes, this is far more than a party matter. Every citizen has a stake in the emergence of the United States as the leader of the free world. That world is being challenged by the world of slavery. For us to play our part effectively, we must be in a morally sound position.

We cannot use a double standard for measuring our own and other people's policies. Our demands for democratic practices in other lands will be no more effective than the guarantees of those practiced in our own country.

We are God-fearing men and women. We place our faith in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God.

**I do not believe that there can be any compromise of the guarantees of civil rights which I have mentioned.**

In spite of my desire for unanimous agreement on the platform there are some matters which I think must be stated without qualification. There can be no hedging—no watering down.

There are those who say to you—we are rushing this issue of civil rights. I say we are 172 years late.

There are those who say—this issue of civil rights is an infringement on states rights. The time has arrived for the Democratic party to get out of the shadow of state's rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights.

**People—human beings—this is the issue of the 20th century. People — all kinds and sorts of people—look to America for leadership—for help—for guidance.**

My friends—my fellow Democrats—I ask you for a calm consideration of our historic opportunity. Let us forget the evil passions, the blindness of the past. In these times of world economic, political and spiritual—above all, spiritual crisis, we cannot—we must not, turn from the path so plainly before us.

That path has already led us through many valleys of the shadow of death. Now is the time to recall those who were left on that path of American freedom.

For all of us here, for the millions who have sent us, for the whole two billion members of the human family—our land is now, more than ever, the last best hope on earth. I know that we can—I know that we shall—begin here the fuller and richer realization of that hope—that promise of a land where all men are free and equal, and each man uses his freedom and equality wisely and well.

This is the text of the address of Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey of Minneapolis, Minn., delivered before the Democratic National Convention at Philadelphia, Pa., Wednesday, July 14, 1948, supporting his civil rights amendment to the party platform.

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Yes, this is far more than a party matter. Every citizen has a stake in the emergence of the United States as the leader of the free world. That world is being challenged by the world of slavery. For us to play our part effectively, we must be in a morally sound position.

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This photo should be captioned "Life Misses a Beat". Apparently preoccupied with "bosses" in the Democratic Party, Life Magazine is oblivious to history being made in the foreground.



FOUR OF THE PARTY'S OLD BOSSES SIT DISCONSOLATELY ON THE ROSTRUM. FROM LEFT: FLYNN (BRONX), LAWRENCE (PITTSBURGH), KELLY (CHICAGO) AND FARLEY

## OLD BOSSES AND NEW DEALERS WATCH THEIR POWER IN PARTY SLIP AWAY

All through the convention observers were struck by the signs of decay in the party. Ed Kelly, the once mighty boss of Chicago, had a back seat in the Illinois delegation. Jim Farley was still popular but not very potent. The old bosses were losing their steam. The young New Dealers who once whizzed through

convention hotel rooms were either missing or in disfavor. The labor crowd, once in the thick of party councils, was now on the fringe. And the Southern revolt was no mere show of temper, as the Democrats soon learned. At a frenzied rump convention in Birmingham July 17 rebels from 13 Southern

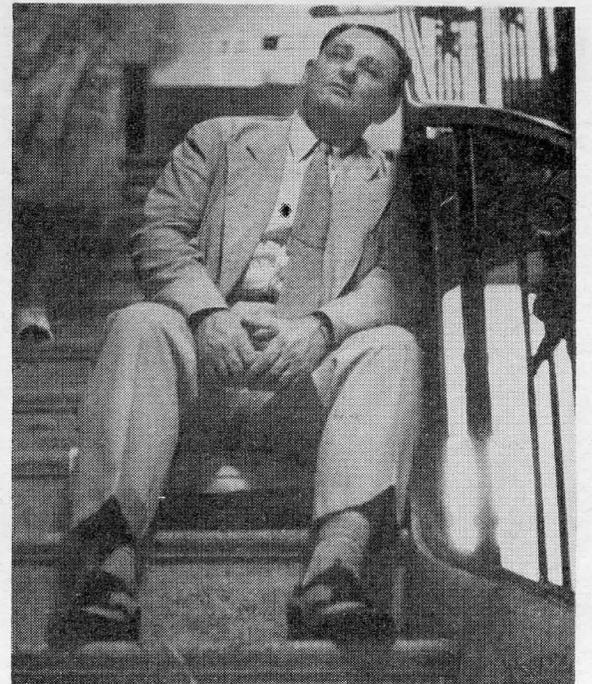
states (among them the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith) nominated South Carolina's Governor J. Strom Thurmond for the presidency. Even President Truman's fighting speech at the regular convention (*opposite page*) could not hide the fact that there was very little hope for the Democratic party in 1948.



**C.I.O. GROUP** looks down on banners from hotel room. From left are Jim Carey, John Green, Willard Townsend.



**BOSSE HAGUE**, no longer the undisputed king of New Jersey, idly scratches his nose during the speechmaking.



**NEW DEAL STALWART** Leon Henderson, who tried to oust Truman, slumps on a stairway as convention ends.



**AFTER THE WALKOUT** the angry Mississippi delegates stand outside Convention Hall waving their banners and shouting rebel yells as they wait for taxis to help them

vanish into the night. Behind them they left empty seats and a dead silence when the name of Mississippi was reached on roll calls to nominate and vote for the candidates.

# Memo

*From*

DARRELL D. SMITH  
ASST. TO DIRECTOR  
CIO-PAC

Hyah, folks:

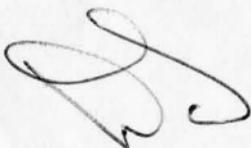
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sorry about the delay on this. I haven't been able to catch up with anything this year.

The missing page (your substitute for page 5) is somewhere in your files. You needed it at the time because it was the only copy available of the amendment text.

I'm sure the kids will have reason some day to exhibit these mementos with great pride. I am proud of my temporary custody.

Regards to all



Darrell

# HUBERT HUMPHREY SPEAKS OUT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

I realize I am dealing with a charged issue — with an issue which has been confused by emotionalism on all sides. I realize that there are here today — friends and colleagues of mine, many of them — who feel as deeply and keenly as I do about this issue and who are yet in complete disagreement with me.

My respect and admiration for these men and their views was great when I came to this convention.

It is now far greater because of the sincerity, the courtesy, and the forthrightness with which many of them have argued in our prolonged discussions in the Platform Committee.

Because of this very great respect and because of my profound belief that we have a challenging task to do here — **because good conscience demands it** — I feel I must rise at this time to support a report that spells out our democracy, a report that the people of this country can and will understand and a report that they will enthusiastically acclaim on the great issue of civil rights.

Let me say this at the outset that this proposal is made for no single region. Our proposal is made for no single class, or no single racial or religious group.

All regions of this country — all states have shared in our precious heritage of American freedom. All states and all regions have seen at least some of the infringements of that freedom — all people — white and black — all groups — all racial groups — have been the victims of vicious discrimination.

The masterly statement of our keynote speaker, the distinguished United States Senator from Kentucky, Alben Barkley, made that point with great force. Speaking of the founder of our party, Thomas Jefferson, he said this:

“He did not proclaim that all the white, or the black, or the red, or the yellow men are equal; that all Christian or Jewish men are equal; that all Protestant and Catholic men are equal; that all rich and poor men are equal; that all good and bad men are equal.”

‘What he declared was that all men are equal; and the equality which he proclaimed was the equality in the right to enjoy the blessings of free government in which they may participate, and to which they have given their consent.’

Now these words of Senator Barkley are appropriate to this convention of the oldest, the most truly progressive political party in America. From the time of Thomas Jefferson, the time when that immortal American doctrine of individual rights under just and fairly administered laws — the Democratic party has tried hard to secure expanding freedoms for all citizens.

Oh yes, I know other political parties may have talked more about civil rights, but the Democratic party surely has done more about civil rights.

We have made progress — we have made great progress. In every part of this country, we have made great progress in the South. We have made it in the West and in the North and in the East.

But we must now focus the direction of that progress towards the realization of a full program of civil rights to all. This convention must set out more specifically the direction in which our party efforts are to go. We can be proud that we are guided by the courageous trail blazing of two great Democratic presidents.

We can be proud of the fact that our great and beloved, immortal leader, Franklin Roosevelt gave us guidance and we can be proud of the fact that Harry Truman has had the courage to give to the people of America the new emancipation proclamation!

It seems to me that the Democratic Party needs to make definite pledges of the kind suggested in the minority report to maintain the trust and the confidence placed in it by the people of all races and all sections of this country.

Surely, we are here as Democrats, but my good friends, we're here as Americans. We're here as the believers in the principle and ideology of democracy, and I firmly believe that as men concerned with our country's future, we must specify in our platform the guarantees which we have mentioned in the minority report.

Yes, this is far more than a party matter. Every citizen in this country has a stake in the emergence of the United States as a leader in a free world. That world is being challenged by a world of slavery. For us to play our part effectively, we must be in a morally sound position.

We cannot use a double standard. There's no room for double standards in American politics, for measuring our own and other people's policies. Our demands for democratic practices in other lands will be no more effective than the guarantee of those practices in our own country.

Friends, delegates — I do not believe that there can be any compromise on the guarantees of the civil rights which we have mentioned in the minority report. In spite of my desire for unanimous agreement on the entire platform, in spite of my desire to see everybody here in unanimous agreement, there are some matters which I think must be stated clearly and without qualification. There can be no hedging. The newspapers are wrong. There will be no hedging — no watering down — of the instruments and the principles of the civil rights program.

To those who say that we are rushing this issue of civil rights — I say to them, **we are 172 years late!**

To those who say that this bill of rights program is an infringement of state rights — I say this — **the time has arrived in America for the Democratic party to get out of the shadows of states rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights.**

People — human beings — this is the issue of the Twentieth Century people, all kinds and sorts of people are looking to America for leadership, and they're looking to America for precepts and examples.

My good friends, my fellow Democrats — I ask you for a calm consideration of our historic opportunity. Let us do forget the evil passions, and the blindness of the past. In these times of world economic, political and spiritual — above all, spiritual crisis — we cannot, and we must not turn from the path so plainly before us. That path has already led us through many valleys of the shadow of death. Now is the time to recall those who were left on that path of American freedom.

For all of us here, for the millions who have sent us, for the whole two billion members of the human family — our land is now, more than ever before, the last best hope on earth. I know that we can — I know that we shall — begin here the fuller and richer realization of that hope — that promise of a land where all men are truly free and equal, and each man uses his freedom and equality wisely and well.

I ask my party — I ask the Democratic party to march down the high road of progressive democracy, I ask this convention to say in unmistakable terms that we proudly hail and we courageously support our President and leader, Harry Truman, in his great fight for civil rights in America.

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY'S 1948

SPEECH ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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(MORE)

(MORE)

SPEECH ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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My friends - my fellow Democrats - I ask you for a calm consideration of our historic opportunity. Let us forget the evil passions, the blindness of the past. In these times of world economic, political and spiritual - above all, spiritual crisis, we cannot - we must not, turn from the path so plainly before us.

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DEMOCRACY AT WORK  
Official Report of Democratic  
Convention - 1948

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

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have fought firmly for their principles, but, ladies and gentlemen, they are asking you in the submission of this states' rights plank to put something into this platform that is meaningless, because the plank, in reference to civil rights, makes reference to constitutional provisions and constitutional changes.

We have a Supreme Court of the United States in this country that will protect the states of the south and I will point out to you that one of the greatest changes that was made, economically, one of the greatest economic changes was the National Recovery Act.

It took the people of America from the depths of the depression and by 1935 doubled the national income and brought prosperity to everyone of the 48 states of this Union.

But that was declared unconstitutional, and ladies and gentlemen, I submit to you that as Democrats, if we want to keep this great Party together, and to make possible the wonderful provisions of the Platform that you have just had read to you by the able Senator Myers, those great provisions that mean so much to America, provisions reiterating all of the gains since 1932, gains for every one of the 48 states of the Union.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, if we want to enact those provisions into law, we as Democrats have to win. We cannot recede from the 1944 plank, states' rights has not appeared in any platform since 1928, and I say to you fellow delegates of this Convention, from the 48 states and the possessions, we are all Americans and under the law all Americans are entitled to their legal rights, regardless of race, regardless of creed, regardless of color (applause) and we should as Democrats work to perpetuate the great economic gains that have brought prosperity to the American people, yes, my State of Massachusetts, the great states of the south and the great states of the west.

For the good of America, I plead with my fellow delegates to this convention to leave the platform as it is. (Applause.)

HON. FRANCIS J. MYERS: I now yield ten minutes to a delegate to this Convention, a member of the Committee on Resolutions, the Mayor of Minneapolis, the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey.

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,  
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

HON. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY: Mr. Chairman, fellow Democrats, fellow Americans:

I realize that in speaking in behalf of the minority report on civil rights as presented by Congressman Biemiller of Wisconsin, that I

am dealing with a charged issue, with an issue which has been confused by emotionalism on all sides of the fence.

I realize that there are here today friends and colleagues of mine, many of them who feel just as deeply and keenly as I do about this issue, and who are yet in complete disagreement with me.

My respect and admiration for these men and their views was great when I came to this Convention. It is now far greater because of the sincerity, courtesy and the forthrightness with which many of them have argued in our prolonged discussions in the Platform Committee.

Because of this very great respect, and because of my profound belief that we have a challenging task to do here, because good conscience, decent morality demands it, I feel I must rise at this time to support a report, the minority report, a report that spells out our democracy.

It is a report that the people of this country can and will understand and a report that they will enthusiastically acclaim on the greatest issue of civil rights. (Applause.)

Let me say this at the outset: That this proposal is made for no single region. Our proposal is made for no single class, for no single racial or religious group in mind. All of the regions of this country, all of the states, have shared in our precious heritage of American freedom. All of the states, and all of the regions of the country have seen at least some of the infringements of that freedom.

All people, and get this; all people, white and black, all racial groups, have been the victims at times in this nation of vicious discrimination. The masterly statement of our keynote speaker, the distinguished United States Senator from Kentucky, Alben Barkley, made that plank with great force.

Speaking of the founder of our Party, Thomas Jefferson, he said this, and I quote from Alben Barkley: "He did not proclaim that all of the white or the black or the red or the yellow men are equal, that all Christian or Jewish men are equal, that all Protestant and Catholic men are equal, that all rich and poor men are equal, that all good and bad men are equal, but what he declared was that all men are equal, and the equality he proclaimed was the equality in the right to enjoy the blessings of free government in which they may participate, and to which they have given their support." (Applause.)

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Democratic Party has tried hard to secure expanding freedoms for all citizens.

Oh, yes, I know, other political parties may have talked more about civil rights, but the Democratic Party has surely done more about civil rights. (Applause.) We have made great progress in every part of this country. We have made great progress in the South and we have made it in the West and in the North and in the East, but we must now focus the direction of that progress towards the realization of a full program of civil rights to all.

This convention must set out more specifically the direction in which our Party efforts are to go. We can be proud that we can be guided by the courageous trail-blazing of two great Democratic Presidents, and we can be proud of the fact that our great and beloved immortal leader, Franklin Roosevelt, gave us guidance, and we can be proud of the fact that Harry Truman has had the courage to give to the people of America the new emancipation proclamation. (Applause.)

It seems to me that the Democratic Party needs to make definite pledges of the kind suggested in the minority report, to maintain the trust and confidence placed in it by the people of all races and all sections of this country. Sure, we are here as Democrats, but, my good friends, we are here as Americans; we are here as the believers in the principles and the ideology of democracy, and I firmly believe that as men concerned with our country's future, we must specify in our platform the guarantees which we have mentioned in the minority report.

Yes, this is far more than a party matter. Every citizen in this country has a stake in the emergence of the United States as a leader in a free world. That world is being challenged by the world of slavery. For us to play our part effectively, we must be in a morally sound position.

We cannot use a double standard. There is no room for double standards in American politics. For measuring our own and other people's policies, our demands for democratic practices in other lands will be no more effective than the guarantee of those practices in our own country. (Applause.)

Friends, delegates, I do not believe that there can be any compromise on the guarantees of the civil rights which we have mentioned in the minority report. In spite of my desire for unanimous agreement on the entire platform, in spite of my desire to see everybody here in unanimous agreement, there are some matters which I think must be stated clearly and without qualification. There can be no hedging. The newspaper headlines are wrong.

There will be no hedging, and there will be no watering down, if you please, of the instruments and the principles of the civil rights program.

My friends, to those who say that we are rushing this issue of civil rights, I say to them, we are 172 years late. (Applause.)

To those who say that this civil rights program is an infringement on States' Rights, I say this, that the time has arrived in America for the Democratic Party to get out of the shadows of States' Rights and to walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights. (Applause.)

People, human beings, this is the issue of the 20th century. people of all kinds, and these people are looking to America for leadership and they are looking to America for precepts and example.

My good friends and my fellow Democrats, I ask you for a calm consideration of our historic opportunity. Let us not forget the evil patience and the blindness of the past. In these times of world economic, political and spiritual, above all spiritual crisis, we cannot, and we must not, turn from the paths so plainly before us.

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My good friends, I ask my Party, and I ask the Democratic Party, to march down the high-road of progressive democracy. I ask this Convention to say in unmistakable terms that we proudly hail and we courageously support our President and leader, Harry Truman, in his great fight for civil rights in America. (Applause.)

HON. FRANCIS J. MYERS: We have several more speakers on this subject of civil rights and States' rights.

Will the delegates please proceed to their chairs.

HON. FRANCIS J. MYERS: I now yield five minutes to Mr. Aaron L. Jacoby of the State of New York.

#### REMARKS OF AARON L. JACOBY, A DELEGATE FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

MR. JACOBY: Mr. Chairman and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Convention: The Platform Committee labored long and industriously and indefatigably and has presented a document to this Convention that invites the admiration and respect of all in this company. It has presented a document embodying high and compelling principles.

Mr. Chairman - Fellow Democrats - Fellow Americans -

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"He did not proclaim that all white, or black, or red, or yellow men are equal: That all christian or jewish men are equal: That all protestant and catholic men are equal: That all rich or poor men are equal: That all good or bad men are equal. What he declared was that all men are equal: And the equality which he proclaimed was equality in the right to enjoy the blessings of free government in

which they may participate, and to which they have given their consent."

We are here as Democrats -- But more important as Americans -- And I firmly believe that as men concerned with our country's future, we must specify in our platform the guarantees which I have mentioned. Yes, this is far more than a Party matter. Every citizen has a stake in the emergence of the United States as the leader of the free world. That world is being challenged by the world of slavery. For us to play our part effectively, we must be in a morally sound position. We cannot use a double standard for measuring our own and other people's policies. Our demands for democratic practices in other lands will be no more effective than the guarantee of those practices is in our own country.

We are God-fearing men and women. We place our faith in the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God.

I do not believe that there can be any compromise on the guarantees of civil rights which I have mentioned. In spite of my desire for unanimous agreement on the platform, there are some matters which I think must be stated without qualification. There can be no hedging -- no watering down -- (a wonderful platform)

There are those who say to you we are rushing this issue of civil rights -- I say, we are 172 years late.

There are those who say -- this issue of civil rights is an infringement of states rights.

The time has arrived for the Democratic Party to get out of the shadow of states rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights.

People -- Human beings, this is the issue of the 20th century people -- all kinds and sorts of people -- look to America for leadership -- for help -- for guidance.

Mr. Chairman - I call upon this convention to adopt this report

A MINORITY REPORT TO THIS CONVENTION ON THE PLATFORM PLANK  
PERTAINING TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION OF OUR PLATFORM

C The Democratic Party is responsible for the great civil rights gains made in recent years in eliminating unfair and illegal discrimination based on race, creed or color.

O The Democratic Party commits itself to continuing its effort to eradicate all racial, religious and economic discrimination.

P We again state our belief that racial and religious minorities must have the right to live, the right to work, the right to vote, the full and equal protection of the laws, on a basis of equality with all citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Y We highly commend President Harry Truman for his courageous stand on the issue of civil rights.

We call upon the congress to support our President in guaranteeing these basic and fundamental American principles -- the right of full and equal political participation; the right to equal opportunity of employment; the right of security of person, and the right of equal treatment in the service and defense of our nation.

My friends, my fellow Democrats -- I ask you for a calm consideration of our historic opportunity. Let us forget the evil passions, the blindnesses of the past. In these times of world economic, political and spiritual -- above all, spiritual crisis, we cannot, we must not turn from the path so plainly before us. That path has already lead us through many valleys of the shadow of death. Now is the time to recall those who

were left on that path of American freedom.

For all of us here, for the millions who have sent us, for the whole two billion members of the human family -- our land is now, more than ever, the last best hope on earth. I know that we can -- I know that we shall -- begin here the fuller and richer realization of that hope-- that promise of a land where all men are free and equal, and each man uses his freedom and equality wisely and well.

I ask my party -- the Democratic Party to march down the high road of progressive democracy -- I ask this convention to say in unmistakable terms that we proudly hail and courageously support our President and leader, Harry Truman.

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