

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY
March 1, 1950
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
452 Senate Office Building

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EXCERPTS FROM SPEECH BY
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY (D., MINN.)
TESTIMONIAL DINNER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS CHAMPIONS UNDER AUSPICES OF
PHILADELPHIA FELLOWSHIP COMMISSION, PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 1, 1950

The most vital issue facing the American Congress today is that of civil rights. The preservation of human rights is the paramount issue of our generation. The extension and the guarantee of human rights and civil rights is the core of our struggle with the totalitarian forces. The denial of human liberty, the betrayal of democratic ideals, is the sin and the crime of Communism and other totalitarian doctrines. This great nation of ours has poured out billions of dollars of the people's money in a struggle against the aggression of Communist ideology. We are sapping the economic strength of our economy to maintain a powerful military establishment because of the threat of Communist aggression. We live in a psychosis of fear because of the evil and ruthlessness of the totalitarian power.

How blind can we be? Are we incapable of seeing that neither Communism nor Fascism can be stopped by the mere demonstration of military power and financial resources? Our secret weapon in this great struggle is the fulfillment of the democratic ideal of human equality. This ideal is embodied in political form in the civil rights proposals which are now before the Congress of the United States.

The issue of civil rights penetrates our foreign policy and adulterates our domestic policy. It penetrates our foreign policy because by our failure to guarantee basic civil liberties to all peoples,

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regardless of race, color or creed, we are denying acceptance of the principles of human equality.

The underprivileged long-exploited peoples of Asia and Africa wish to be accepted as free and equal members of the human society. They will place their faith in the nation and the people who accept them and work with them as free and equal peoples. A foreign policy that does not include the issue of human dignity and human equality is one that is doomed to failure. As it has been stated again and again, the struggle we are now engaged in is one for men's minds. Respect, understanding and affection cannot be purchased by loans, gifts or grants. A unity of freedom-loving people cannot be molded by power and military might. The intangibles of human freedom, equality and individual dignity are the only real forces and weapons on the side of democratic faith.

The facts of international politics, the moral obligation of our own political faith, the economic and political needs of our times, call upon the Congress of the United States to fulfill the pledges on civil rights legislation which have been given to the people.

The issue of civil rights should be a non-partisan matter. The passage of civil rights legislation is a bi-partisan obligation.

Soon we shall come to grips with the issue of fair employment practices legislation. The FEPC bill listed on the Senate calendar as S. 1728 will be brought up for debate on the floor of the Senate within

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a matter of weeks. This bill has the support of the majority of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee. This bill represents a reasonable, moderate and constructive approach to a very serious problem. The principles of fair employment practices legislation are neither new nor untried. The President's Committee on FEPC during the war years has an enviable record of accomplishment. Already ten states have FEPC laws on their statute books. Many of the large cities have pioneered in this all-important field of legislation. Roughly speaking, about fifty million people, or more than a third of our country's population, is already covered by state or local FEPC laws.

The passage of FEPC and other civil rights legislation is jeopardized by the Wherry Resolution which was the product of last year's Republican-Dixiecrat coalition. I do not want to ~~underestimate~~ underestimate the difficulties which are placed in our path. However, I am convinced that belief in the Golden Rule can overcome a Senate rule. If we should fail, there is but one alternative -- an old, true, tried and tested alternative, namely, a free election. I am sure that every member of Congress can understand the meaning of this language. The time for political politeness is over. The clubby atmosphere of the Congress does not carry through to the country. It is not enough just to be a good fellow and to be liked by your colleagues. The American people did not send 531 members of the Congress of the United States to Washington in order to develop our social life. We are here for the

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purpose of developing, protecting and extending the democratic way of life. That way of life is being challenged by bigotry, hypocrisy, intolerance and discrimination right here in America. It will require much more courage to stand up against the anti-democratic forces within America than it does to vote the people's money to fight the Communist forces outside of America. The eyes of the people of the United States are focused on Washington. They say: "Whether you are Democrat or Republican is not the issue. By your deeds shall ye be known."

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PHILADELPHIA FELLOWSHIP COMMISSION, PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 1, 1950, 6:30 p.m.

Mr Shepherd - Mr Chairman

This is a significant and a symbolic year. Fourscore and seven years ago, on January first, 1863, a noble American and a beloved President issued for his day and for the pages of history a proclamation: "I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated states and parts of states are, and henceforth shall be, free." Fourscore and seven years ago, on November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln, standing bare-headed at Gettysburg, rededicated our nation "to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Lincoln reminded the Americans of his day that the struggle for freedom and equality is the responsibility of every generation. Today, the striving of the American people for a program of full civil rights is but a continuation of the growing movement and constant struggle for the realization of the human dream which received its political expression through the ideals of ~~the~~ American democracy.

*The Philad. Fellowship Commission
is moving forward in this
spirit. ~~His building understanding~~
~~and~~*

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The preservation of human rights is the paramount issue of our generation. Civil rights legislation in America must be enacted now: it is long overdue. Minorities still suffer the degradation of second-class citizenship. Minorities are still denied equality of opportunity all over America. Minorities are still denied the right to vote. Many Americans still suffer from fear and insecurity.

Then too, the denial of basic civil rights in America undermines our fundamental unity, retards the cultural and economic development of our nation's human and material resources, and seriously handicaps us in our foreign relations.

The extension and the guarantee of human rights and civil rights is the core of our struggle with the totalitarian forces.

~~Our nation has poured out billions of dollars in a struggle against the aggression of Communist ideology. We are sapping the vital strength of our economy to maintain a powerful military establishment because of the threat of Communist aggression. We live in a psychosis of fear because of the evil and ruthlessness of the totalitarian power.~~

~~How blind can we be? Are we incapable of seeing that neither~~
Communism ^{cannot} nor Fascism can be stopped by the mere demonstration of military power and financial resources? Our secret weapon in this great struggle is the fulfillment of the democratic ideal of human equality. This ideal is embodied in political form in the civil rights proposals which are now before the Congress of the United States. *and in the Elimination of intolerance, racial & religious, in every Community in the Nation.*

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Yes, The issue of civil rights penetrates our foreign policy and adulterates our domestic policy. By our failure to guarantee basic civil liberties to all peoples, regardless of race, color or creed, we are denying acceptance of the principles of human equality.

Our moral standing in the eyes of the world hinges on whether we pass civil rights legislation. The moral and political health of our own society depends on whether or not we adopt civil rights legislation. We can scarcely call ourselves a democratic nation if we fail to guarantee the right to vote and the right of personal security. We jeopardize our economic strength if we deny people an opportunity for employment because of color or creed.

The American people, ~~however~~, in their churches, in their trade unions, in their fraternal organizations, in the farm co-ops, through their municipal and state fair employment and anti-discrimination laws, appeal to the Congress of the United States. They appeal to the leaders of both political parties to rise above the temptations of immediate political advantage. This is no time for political polemics. This is rather the time for a call to reason and a plea for justice.

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Within the next few weeks the Senate of the United States will be faced with the issue of a fair employment practices bill. An attempt will be made by opponents of civil rights legislation to prevent a vote on this measure. They fear a vote because if the Senate is given an opportunity to express itself on this issue, an FEPC bill will overwhelmingly pass. They therefore will engage in filibuster, which is nothing more than an attempt to thwart the expressed will of the American people through their representatives.

The Congress of the United States has the responsibility of developing, protecting and extending the democratic way of life. That way of life is being challenged by bigotry, hypocrisy, intolerance and discrimination not only abroad, but right here in America. Now is the time to stand up against the anti-democratic forces within America, even if to do so may take more courage than to vote large expenditures ~~of money~~ to fight the anti-democratic forces outside America.

The eyes of the people of the world are focused on America. The eyes of the American people are focused on Washington. Ours is the responsibility to demonstrate that belief in the Golden Rule can overcome a Senate rule.



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