

From the Office of  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
140 Senate Office Building  
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National 8-3120, Ext. 881

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Good government starts at the grass roots, and that's where political activity must start, Senator Humphrey said last night in an address before a Regional Conference of the National Students Association at St. John's College.

"You don't have to be concerned with national or international problems alone to exert a constructive influence in politics," he said. "The place to start is in your own city and your own state -- on local problems and local challenges.

"The great challenge today for better government means government at all levels, not just at the top. And it is experience gained in leadership toward solving local problems that is the best qualification for future leadership in a larger political realm".

As examples of "challenging problems" for local political concern, Senator Humphrey cited law enforcement, juvenile delinquency, better roads, and better schools.

"We must all be more concerned with good government on the local level, if we expect sound government on a national level," he said, calling attention to President Eisenhower's recent action in approving creation of a Commission on Intergovernmental Relations as a sound step in that direction. Senator Humphrey has introduced bills for such a commission in both the last Congress and in this Congress, aimed at strengthening local and state governments.

Speaking on "The Responsibility of College Students and Graduates in Politics and Government", Senator Humphrey urged Minnesota college students

to "apply their social and intellectual experience in college to political activity."

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"The worth and the vitality of American politics are on trial today, and those who are steeped in the true roots of democratic politics have a heavy responsibility to take up their part," he continued.

Politics in a democracy, said Humphrey, is basically good human relations, and are founded on social concern, self-respect, and respect for the opinions and contributions of others.

"There are some people in this world who do not think politics are important," Humphrey continued. "In the Communist world, politics are not important ...Marxism teaches that politics is mere trimming and superstructure, and that economic relationships are all that really matter. And so, power has been substituted for politics; craft, guile and force have been substituted for human relations."

Senator Humphrey pointed to Minnesota's political and social life as a real contribution to American democracy. "The most wonderful thing about the Minnesota experience," he said, "has been its diversity and variety. Minnesotans represent many occupations, many religious creeds, many origins across the sea; and Minnesota life has benefited by this, both economically and politically."

Encouraging students to take an active part in politics and government, Humphrey said that the great need of politics today is for men and women with the broad view "that sees further than the limits and desires of certain interest groups." He added that an important responsibility of liberal arts colleges today is to train that type of person.

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