

SPEECH BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
to the
MINNESOTA WELFARE CONFERENCE
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"WELFARE AND LIBERALISM - FAITH FOR THE FUTURE"

65th
I am very happy to have this opportunity to address you at this
the 65th annual meeting of the Minnesota Welfare Conference. I feel in par-
ticular a close kinship to all of you who are performing such a great service
in the field of social welfare. I say this because in my work as a legislator
I deal on a day-to-day basis with the welfare needs of the people and with
consideration and development of programs which you as professional welfare
workers handle and direct in actual operation.

I speak to you this evening in my role as a legislator. Such a
role is both a great honor and a great responsibility, just as is your
work in social welfare. Our goals are the same, ~~to~~ namely to seek a better
tomorrow where the dignity of the individual will be respected and ^{where} the oppor-
tunity ~~at hand~~ ^{will be present} for all of us in a free society to develop and put to full use
our potential capabilities.

Rabbi Roskus

✓ Social Workers
County Commissioners

Is this a utopian concept? Is it idealistic, impractical and unrealistic? Some would say it is. But I believe that the great progress that has been made in this world has been made by men who dared to dream of a better tomorrow; of men who had faith in the basic goodness of mankind; of men who believed that we could build a society in which human beings could realize their great potential as free men with free wills. I subscribe to this dream, if that is what you call it. I have faith in the future and I firmly believe that we have but scratched the surface in our efforts to build a better tomorrow.

I speak to you as a legislator who has faith in the liberal philosophy. As the title of my talk suggests, this is what I wish to discuss with you. For I feel that the philosophy of modern social welfare is the same philosophy as that on which I base my actions as a liberal in the halls of Congress.

My political philosophy is based upon that of Thomas Jefferson who set down his creed in the Declaration of Independence with these words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they

are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men. . . ."

Today most of us take these words for granted. But we forget that this idea as set down by Jefferson less than two hundred years ago was an entirely new concept of the role of government. Their meaning must not be lost.

Service - Liberty

Thomas Jefferson was saying that it is the function of government to serve the needs of man and to help him realize his aims. Government is a servant of man. When the government renders service to men it is not a hand-out or benevolence, it is only rendering to man what he is in the first place entitled to.

*Constitution = Provide for the Common Defense
Promote the General Welfare*

It is well to remember that in the beginning public welfare measures were adopted as an exercise of the police power for the purpose of preserving order and maintaining the peace rather than to benefit the group affected by the welfare measures themselves. This was the thinking behind the Elizabethan

Police Power

poor laws, for example, which had as their purpose protecting the system of personal property from disruption at the hands of the hungry beggars.

In our country in the early days this same approach to welfare measures was used. Mental hospitals, ~~for example~~, were built not for the benefit of the mentally ill, but as a sort of prison for the protection of the rest of society. ^{little} ~~No~~ thought was given to the mentally ill themselves or to ~~treating them~~ ^{ing} to restore their health. And as you well know, this concept of mental hospitals is still, unfortunately to some degree, with us.

In the same manner, institutions were set up for physically and mentally retarded children, not to help these children to ^a happier life, but rather to hide them from the eyes of a society which did not like to be reminded that such afflictions existed.

Our "reform" schools were built and staffed not to help youngsters to become useful members of society, but rather as a form of punishment and for the protection of society.

Now there is obviously a need for the Government to use its police

power to prohibit and ^{confine} ~~hold down~~ harmful activities. But the police power is

^{seldom} ~~not~~ a creative force and for that reason it is not an effective instrument for promotion of social welfare.

You as workers in the social welfare ^{field} ~~vineyard~~, ~~as to speak~~, are only too familiar with ^{the necessity} ~~this concept~~ of social welfare as a positive rather than a negative force.

^{Recently}
~~In preparing my address for this evening~~ I ran across an excellent book entitled "The Right To Life" by Arthur Delafield Smith, which was published in 1955. Mr. Smith spells out what he calls the "professional idea" of social welfare and I would like to quote him:

The professional idea is positive. It involves the proposal to 'ride along with,' or 'run with,' the individual in the knowledge that he possesses at base a vital force which, freed as far as possible from whatever blocks or distorts its functioning, is by its very nature or definition a constructive agent. The professional idea proposes to strengthen the capacities of the will of the individual to realize his best goals. It proposes to implement and make constructive use of parental aspirations. It

proposes to enable individuals to purchase shelter that meets basic standards of health and decency. It proposes to enable mothers to keep their children when lack of money would cause their abandonment. It proposes, for example, to eliminate the economic motif from state laws that waste the skills of professionally trained personnel by employing them to decide which state has the primary monetary obligation for an abandoned child. It proposes to provide trained guardians and to see that adoptions are motivated by a concern for the child. It proposes to maintain health in preference to curing illness. In rehabilitation, it proposes to build upon whatever capacity and compensating strengths it finds within the individual himself. It proposes to assure the individual of his ability to make higher ground.

↳ Here is the positive approach to the solution of human problems.

↳ It is an approach with which I agree as a political liberal. This approach is gradually changing our concept of the role of government.

We are beginning to understand what Thomas Jefferson was talking about in the 18th century. We are beginning to look upon government not as a ^{Police officer} ~~big brother~~ who is holding a club over our head bearing the label "Authority",

but rather as an instrument rendering professional service to the people.

This is the concept of government which I hold and which I am sure that you in social welfare hold. I look not upon government as a harsh

cold-blooded authority telling us we can't do this and we can't do that,

but rather as a servant of the people rendering to us those services to

which we are entitled as human beings.

Constructive force

It is this political philosophy which was behind so much of the social legislation passed in the past 25 years. I am thinking, for example,

of the Social Security Act which was in a certain sense a ^{re-}volutionary piece of legislation. For in setting up insurance programs for retired workers,

survivors and the unemployed, this Act was saying in effect that people in our society are entitled as a matter of right under the law to ^{earned} compensation;

this is not charity, it is not benevolence, it is their right as citizens.

Here was a new concept: The Government being used not to give hand-outs, but rather making payments to certain citizens as a matter of ~~absolute~~ right regardless of race, creed, color, occupation or economic status.

I am thinking also of the grants by the Federal government to the states under the Social Security Act for ^{the aged,} the blind, dependent children, crippled children, and for maternal and child welfare.

And there is the Wagner Act which for the first time protected men and women in their efforts to organize into unions for the purpose of bettering their working conditions and gaining a sense of security.

There is the work of our Public Health Service which embodies the National Institutes of Health which have done so much to not only cure disease but also to prevent it.

Our government programs for slum clearance and urban renewal are another example of this positive approach to social welfare.

There are many other examples of ^{welfare-oriented} legislative programs, ~~which have~~ been adopted along this line, but I shall not list them all tonight. What is important to remember is that these are examples of what the Government can accomplish not as a police power, not as an authority attempting to harass its citizens, but rather as an instrument charged with the responsibility

*Promote the
General Welfare*

of rendering services to citizens as a legal obligation.

We hear some people argue that all this is socialism. I recall a few years ago when the ~~House of Representatives~~ ^{Congress} was debating the public housing bill. A very conservative Representative from the State of Michigan got up and denounced the bill as socialistic and therefore he was opposed to it. At that point a wonderful old gentleman from Chicago, Congressman Barratt O'Hara rose and said, "But does not the gentleman from Michigan remember the socialized housing which we had when we were young men? In those days we called it the poor house."

~~At~~ ^this little story illustrates, I think, a very important difference between the political conservative and the political liberal. It is a difference of approach. To the conservative, socialism is perfectly all right if it is in the form of the county poor house. For this, after all, is an exercise of the police power of the State designed to maintain some type of order in the community. But such poor houses did not have as their primary purpose to benefit the people forced to go there.

Housing programs for low-income families and for our elder citizens, on the other hand, are based on the concept of making the lives of the people who will occupy such housing better and happier.

Those who espouse the "poor house mentality" have a fear of the future. They fear that they will lose what they already have. But the political liberal and the social welfare worker have faith in the future. They believe that there will be a better tomorrow, *if we work + plan first* and that we can create a society where mankind will be free to dream and where ~~his~~ dreams may come true.

This is my creed and I think it is the creed of you here tonight who are dedicating your lives to welfare work.

(MORE)

I did not come here tonight to deliver a political address. But I would like to take a few minutes to speak to you not as a partisan politician but as an American citizen, as a man with a wife and children, who is vitally concerned about efforts now underway to cut back and to dismantle welfare measures placed on the statute books in the past 25 years.

↳ This is a topic which concerns all citizens, but in particular it concerns you men and women here this evening who are devoting your lives to the field of social welfare. And I say in all sincerity and without wishing to appear as an alarmist, that the welfare programs of the Federal Government are in trouble.

↳ In January of this year the President presented to the Congress his annual budget message. This message is very important as it reveals the Administration's spending proposals for the year ahead. There was a great deal of concern expressed by many of the more conservative papers over the fact that Government expenditures are to be higher in the coming fiscal year.

But all too little publicity and attention was given to the fact that the President actually proposed that appropriations for the coming fiscal year be cut back from those of the current fiscal year 1958. The important set of figures to examine are the appropriations figures for these show how much the Federal agencies are authorized to spend in the coming year.

And these figures show that the President is recommending cuts in appropriations of almost \$2 billion from what he had requested for this year. And it is in the area of civil benefits where the most drastic slashes are made. Such cuts amount to \$4.4 billion.

In a few moments I shall ^{mention} ~~analyze in detail~~ some of the welfare programs the President wants to cut. ~~But~~ ^B Before I do, I would like to call your attention to two comments made on the President's recommended cut backs in social welfare programs; comments by highly respected sources. The noted columnist, Walter Lippmann, had this to say about the President's budget message:

What the President has proposed is a narrow concentration on specialized strategic weapons accompanied by a contraction in almost every other field of national activity. The program says, in effect, that if only we can catch up with the Russians in missiles, all will be well, and we can retreat almost everywhere else along the line. . . .

How the program was put together becomes clearer as we see it as a whole. The sputnik has been treated as a challenge to our missile program which has to be met. The new money for missiles and the like has been covered by the President's accepting, as he never has before, the views of those in his inner councils who want to cut back and, in principle, would like to dismantle, the welfare measures which have come down from the New Deal.

No doubt there is room for cutting back on some of the subsidies and grants-in-aid. But the basic conception of the program is, considering the time we live in, a curious one -- that this nation, challenged as never before in its history, is to reduce and contract its national responsibility for the internal development and welfare of the Nation.

And the highly respected Washington Post said this about the budget

cutbacks:

What is fundamentally missing from the 1959 budget is a recognition that this country cannot operate in these times 'on the cheap.' The share of the national product that is devoted to defense and to mutual security and to basic domestic services adequate for stable times is not enough for a time of extraordinary change and growth. It is time to face up to the need for a sizable increase in the Federal budget, and to stop pretending that the country either can or wishes to ignore whatever adjustments or sacrifices this may entail.

What Walter Lippmann and the Washington Post say is certainly true.

The President's budget reflects backwardness, timidity, and a basic lack of faith in the American economy. It is based on the mistaken notion that this country cannot afford both defense and provisions for the general welfare.

It reflects the Administration's acceptance of the philosophy that the Federal Government is doing too much in the field of general welfare. It is a budget with a bookkeeper's mentality indicating greater concern over a balanced budget than concern for the basic needs of the American people.

I would remind you that we had balanced budgets during the Great Depression. It must have been a source of great comfort to the millions of

unemployed, the dispossessed, the bankrupt farmers, and hungry families to know that the budget was balanced!

Not only does the President recommend hefty cuts in welfare programs, but he makes it quite clear that it is his intention to reduce the role of the Federal Government in welfare programs. I quote the President in his budget message:

Continuing work by the Joint Federal-State Action Committee, as well as thorough-going reappraisals by Federal agencies on their own initiative, should lead to further recommendations for reducing grant-in-aid programs in future years, with the States assuming more of the responsibility for their activities and themselves collecting more tax revenues to finance them.

The President seems completely unaware of the fact that these Federal welfare programs which he would turn over to the States came into existence in the first place because many problems are nationwide in scope and can be treated only nationally; because higher minimum educational, health, and welfare standards for all Americans involve the well-being of the entire nation; because many states and localities do not have the financial resources to provide

these minimum standards; and because only the Federal Government is sufficiently powerful to insure an adequate and just tax contribution from those best able to make such contribution.

I want to take a few minutes to point out some of the more glaring cuts in the welfare programs which the ^{BUDGET} President recommends. I think it is important that people in the social welfare field be informed on these facts which unfortunately have not ^{received} ~~gotten~~ the attention they deserve.

The President begins his budget message this year by stating that it reflects "concern for human well-being," but 22 pages later we discover that this "concern" is shown by recommended appropriation cuts of \$4.4 billion -- from \$20.4 billion for the current year to \$16 billion for 1959.

In contrast to the ambiguous language of most of the budget message, the President is quite explicit when it comes to civil benefits:

Under present conditions, I am not recommending enactment at this time of certain legislation now pending in Congress for new programs which I have previously advocated. . . . I am also deferring proposals for some other grant programs and for certain new public-works projects.

I am also making recommendations to reduce some programs, to curtail expansion in others, and to transfer greater responsibility from the Federal Government to State and local governments or to private individuals or enterprises. All of these recommendations, in addition to being required by sound public policy, will help to hold expenditures in future years to prudent levels.

Before discussing the President's plans to dismantle domestic programs permit me to cite various authorization slashes called for by the President.

In his budget message the President states:

"The national needs require the development through a strong general educational system of a vast number of aptitudes and skills."

He then proceeds to recommend cuts in educational programs totaling \$278 million -- a 40-percent slash from last year's budget requests. En-

tirely omitted is last year's recommendation for a federally aided school construction program. And funds for schools in federally impacted areas are cut by \$38

million although the President tells us "the Federal Government has a responsibility for aiding school districts when it creates serious financial problems for them."

In the field of public health the President calls for cuts of \$50 million. Hardest hit is the hospital construction program under the Hill-Burton Act which the President wants slashed by \$46 million -- a cut of 38 percent -- "in view of the progress already made toward community hospital requirements for general beds." The President ignores completely the report of the Public Health Service made July 1, 1957, that there exists a shortage of close to 900,000 hospital beds. Even the National Institutes of Health which has done so much to fight disease is cut back by \$9 million.

In the category of commerce and housing the President calls for \$730 million less than last year -- a cut of 26 percent.

The President refers to "the rapid growth of our population and its increasing concentration in urban and suburban areas" and then proceeds to request \$48 million less than last year for urban renewal -- a decrease of 20 percent.

The President speaks of "the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family," and then proposes cuts in housing amounting to \$507 million -- a slash of 54 percent.

Concerning area redevelopment which is of growing importance in view of the recession, the President states: "I repeat my recommendation of last year for the prompt enactment of appropriate authority under which communities with basic problems of persistent unemployment can be assisted in their solution." But when we look in the fine print for his authorization requests to carry out such programs we find not 1 penny as compared to last year's request for \$52 million. The President asks for a redevelopment program and at the same time says "don't give me any money, though, to carry it out."

The drastic cutbacks in appropriation requests for domestic programs which I have outlined are, however, but one-half of this story. Even more important are the President's proposals to dismantle many New Deal and Fair Deal programs.

The Chamber of Commerce predicted such a course of action last October, even before the Soviet satellites, when it stated:

An historic shift in the Eisenhower administration policy may become apparent in the next few months. If carried out successfully,

it would change the course of recent Federal-State-local relationships involving billions of dollars in tax money. It could lead to abandonment of a number of proposed programs that have previously been warmly embraced by the Administration.

~~and~~ The Chamber's predictions have proved accurate. As a starter this year the President recommends that Federal grants to the States for vocational aid and the construction of waste treatment facilities be terminated and that these programs be transferred to the States.

L The President further proposes that Federal grants be gradually reduced for hospital construction, public assistance, school construction in federally impacted areas and natural disaster relief.

In recommending Federal reductions in public assistance the President stated that "the States should have greater responsibility. . . . for modernizing the formulas for public assistance with a view to gradually reducing Federal participation in its financing."

By cutting back on Federal participation in public assistance programs, ~~it would mean~~ ^{we would insure} that the very States and the people needing assistance the most would suffer the most.

It is paradoxical that the Administration should come forward now and urge cuts in welfare programs at the very time the nation is in the grip of a serious recession. I do not have to remind any of you here this evening that in a period of business distress and heavy unemployment the welfare needs of the community become more acute.

And let no one fool themselves into thinking that the situation is not serious. This is no mild readjustment. It is a full-blown recession. It is already the longest business decline we have experienced since the disastrous depression. ^{of the 1930s} Unemployment is at a 16 year high and still climbing. Business failures this past month were the highest for any February since 1933. Industrial production has dropped 12 percent since the beginning of last year. Personal income is declining. Profits are off. Investment in

plants and equipment this year is estimated to run a full \$5 billion less than in 1957. Automobile production is off 35 percent from last year. Steel production is running at little more than half of capacity. Freight car loadings are ~~20~~ percent below a year ago.

And in a recession, such as this, with unemployment mounting the first to suffer are those in the lower economic brackets. With little if any savings to fall back on, the low-income families which can find no work face an immediate problem. Many, thank goodness, have some income to keep them going in the form of unemployment insurance payments. But many workers are not covered and in many States the duration and size of benefits is far too low. Tens of thousands of workers have already exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.

h And these people come to you and to the organizations which you represent. They need assistance and they need it immediately. In New York City, for example, it is reported that relief rolls are up 200 percent over last year. And I know that the effects of rising unemployment are being felt here at home too.

You in your work know it from first hand knowledge.

And so I find it distressing to see the Administration urging that the Federal Government whittle away at welfare programs in a time of such great need. It is my view point that the welfare programs of the Federal Government are far from adequate and even if we were experiencing prosperity and full employment such programs should be ~~expanded~~^{improved}. But to propose cut backs when we have mounting unemployment and declining business activity is to me frankly preposterous.

In a Senate speech early this month, I set out a series of proposals for action on the Federal level to halt this recession and to get us back on the road to recovery. Several of my suggestions were in the field of social welfare. I believe my proposals are in order regardless of the economic climate of the country, but they are especially vital in a time of economic decline such as we are now witnessing. Permit me to briefly outline my suggestions as I set them forth in the Senate this month:

① Federal - State - Local Cooperation
✓ Tax cuts - Increase in Dependents Allowance - at least 1 yr
✓ Public works - ✓ Schools, Hospitals, sewage
disposal plants, Hi-way
Agriculture ✓ conservation, reforestation
Parks - Housing

Unemployment Compens

1. Unemployment compensation benefit payments should be promptly

increased both in amount and in duration of payments. Such benefits are today sorely inadequate. Federal standards are needed to bring unemployment insurance payments up to a decent level. The way to do it is to pass the bill recently introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman McCarthy of St. Paul, and sponsored by Senator Kennedy and myself in the Senate.

Soc Sec

2. Social security payments to our retired citizens need to be increased in view of the sharp rise in recent years in the cost-of-living.

Bills are now pending in the Senate which would increase social security benefits from 10 to 25%. I think these measures are urgent.

Housing

3. In the vital field of housing, we are not even keeping pace with the growth of our population. We need a housing program to provide decent homes for all Americans. — This is the accepted goal - Act of 1949

For millions of citizens who still live in slums and for whom decent private housing is not available at a price they can afford, we need an expanded public housing and urban renewal program. Our country is the richest in the world's history. It is a national disgrace that any citizen should be inadequately housed.

With our rapidly increasing number of elder citizens, we must provide a housing program designed for their special needs.

middle income + private housing financing

Educ - Emergency Action ~~do~~

Scholarships
Teacher Aid - Loans

4. Education demands top priority, and in view of the shortage of classrooms we need a federally-aided school construction program. We also need federal assistance for the construction of additional laboratory and other facilities for our crowded colleges and universities.

@ Work Study Program NY &

Health Medicine

5. In the field of health and medicine, the needs are growing.

Hospital construction under the Hill-Burton Act should be stepped up to meet the shortage of hospital beds for both physical and mental illness.

There is a need for more community health clinics, and I have introduced legislation to encourage their construction ^{utilizing} ~~by means of~~ Federal financial assistance. repayable loans - on REA principle

The wonderful work that the National Institutes of Health have been doing cannot be put into words. No one can estimate the lives that have been saved or the number of people today with healthy bodies and minds due to the research of this great Government organization. It is unthinkable that the budget of the NIH should be slashed. Its work in the fields of cancer, heart disease, mental illness, and so many other vital areas which we know

NIH

so little about should be given top priority. The only limit on such expenditures should be what the Institutes ^{realistically} need to do the best possible job.

6. Hospital and medical care for our older citizens is unquestion-

ably an urgent matter. ^{shortly} Very ~~soon~~ I shall introduce in the Senate a bill

which will guarantee minimum hospitalization and nursing home services

for our older citizens. The most expeditious way to provide this service,

it seems to me, is to dovetail it with our old age and survivors benefits

under the social security program.

7. We desperately need more grants and scholarships and post

graduate education in the field of public health. I have pending in this

Congress a proposed emergency public health training act, a bill

authorizing a 5-year program of direct grants to the Public Health

Service to all accredited schools of public health on the basis of

their enrollment up to a total not exceeding \$1 million for each of the

next five fiscal years. Unless this or a similar measure is passed,

*Hosp & Medical
Care*

Public Health

in keeping with their professional status and contribution to the welfare of
the society.

Overseas Teach Assist - Food
welfare Medicine

In conclusion, may I reiterate my theme that the fields of social
welfare and politics are not independent of one another. Welfare workers and
politicians need to know each other better. Too many people in the political
field know all too little about social welfare. And I feel that too few in
the welfare field take the interest they should in politics.

If I may make one suggestion to you tonight it is this. Take an
active interest in your Government on the local, state and Federal level.
Know what is going on and make your views known to your officials as to the
needs in the field of social welfare. If possible, join and take an active
role in the political party of your choice, be it the Democratic Party or the
Republican Party. And give backing and support to candidates and public
officials who are concerned with the welfare of the people.

I might say that sometimes those of us in public life who are working
for the promotion of social welfare measures feel a little lonesome. We need
your support and your backing. There is no scarcity of spokesmen for special

interest groups besieging us to do this and to do that, but there are all too few spokesmen concerned with the commonweal.

May I thank you for this opportunity to address you this evening.

It is a real privilege. And as a citizen and fellow Minnesotan may I commend you for the fine work you are doing to make our country an even better place in which to live.

JJF/ed
March 20, 1958

I am especially pleased ~~to see~~ tonight to address this fine ^{conference} ~~group~~
group on a subject ^{which} ~~that~~ is personally, as well as politcally, of great
importance to me. I say especially pleased because unfortunately
welfare is a field of legislation which in the panic to to expedite
U.S. missiles and rockets gets pushed to one side. While I realize
of course the grave issues that Russian scientific achievement present,
I do not feel that social advancement should be neglected to fight
Eastern propganda. Futhermore, on the international scene America
will have lost its position of prestige if we are not able to have
both scientific achievements and programs for human betterment.



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