

[Transcript]

A D D R E S S

By

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, Vice-President,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

OREGON FEDERATION OF POSTAL CLERKS
Sheraton Motor Inn
Portland, Ore.
June 11, 1965.

Well, that's about as nice an introduction as I have had in many a month, particularly when he gave me a commercial. I gather that book is on sale in Portland. When I received the invitation to come to your meeting, I decided that since I am no longer a member of the United States Senate, and that I won't be able to do as much for you as I would like to do on that legislative front, that I could at least come by and tell you, "Thank you for the many good things that you have not only performed for your Country and for the Postal Service, but for the many good things that you have done for others in public life, and I know that my friend the Senior Senator of this State, Senator Wayne Morse, and your Junior Senator, Maurine Neuberger would never forgive me if I didn't bring each and every one of you their warmest greetings and their good wishes and their thanks for your kindness and your helpfulness throughout the years.

So, when you write to Wayne, you be sure to tell him that his friend Humphrey was out here and said, "hello", because if you don't, he won't take care of my cows that I have out at his farm.

You know, that some years ago Wayne sold me--well, Senator McCarthy, my colleague and myself-- we bought eight Angus. We had another partner, Oscar Chapman (former Secretary of the Interior). Well, then Oscar Chapman decided that he really wasn't a farmer, and he just left those two sidewalk farmers from Minneapolis and St. Paul in charge of those cattle; and he gave his share of the cattle to Wayne. So, Senator McCarthy and myself still had--how do you divide eight cattle by three--it's rather

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Difficult. Anyway, we had our share. And I used to accuse my friend, Senator Morse, of having a member of his family being a veterinarian, because every time I'd see him he'd say, "Oh, Hubert, I have bad news for you today." And I'd say, "What's that?" and he'd say, "Your cow just ran into a barbed wire fence." And I'd say, "How much was that?" And he'd say, "That was about twenty dollars." I must confess though, that I could find no evidence to support my charge that a member of his family was a veterinarian.

But I do want you to know that you have no better friend in the Congress of the United States than these two senators of yours and your Congressman and Congresswoman, Edith Green, and the others from around this State. I can't go down each one of them, but I bring you their warmest greetings.

Now, I have a very good friend that has a very important position in the Postal Clerks and that's Pat Nilan. I'm sure you know Pat, and he'd be a little bit angry with me if I didn't mention his name around here too. Don Dunne and I have been sitting here "commisserating" and I want you to remember me to Pat when you are in communication.

I want to talk to you very briefly today. I have a big day ahead of me and tonight I have the Governors of the Western States Conference. I'll just take a few moments to discuss with you what we are trying to do in this government of yours. I fully appreciate the limitations under which you operate and the prohibitions of law, namely the Hatch Act. I would in no way try to prejudice your position by being particularly partisan in anything I have to say. I do want you to know, though, that we're very proud in the government of the United States, of the quality of service--the high standards of personal conduct and performance of the personnel of our Post Office Department, and that is particularly true of those who do the job of managing the post offices, the postal clerks, and, of course, the others

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that carry on the activities, such as the letter carriers and others that we have. You have had a friendly government and friendly Congress, and your legislation when it comes before the Congress, receives as friendly and competent attention as any legislative program before the Congress. Oh, I might say, you're pretty good at lobbying, too, once in a while. I used to get those letters when I was in the Senate and it would be some nice wife of a postal clerk, writing in to say, "Dear Senator, do you realize what's happening to us?" And they'd have the budget, the number of children, the monthly payment on the house, and on the car, and the doctor's bills, etc., and when they added it up then it would seem like the salary was less than the expenses. And they'd say, "We would surely appreciate that 10% increase that you said you were going to vote for." But I have a feeling that you're going to receive very friendly consideration from Congress this year and while I'm not in a position to know how much it's going to be--I will tell you this--that as you know, the purpose of this administration is to make your income, and your wage and salary structure comparable to that of private industry. That's its purpose. I also want you to know, so that there may be no doubt about it, that your organization, your union is a vital part of your protection, in terms of living standards and wage standards and working conditions. The government of the United States recognizes the right of collective bargaining--encourages you to join and affiliate with responsible union organization. And may I say that when I was a Senator, I was the sponsor for this legislation and made it possible for, and not only made it possible but directed the government of the United States to work with, and bargain with, and consult with the responsible established union organizations of public employees.

Now you're not just members of the United Federation of Postal Clerks in a particular local, you are also citizens of this great Country. I just left a group of men in this community that represent what you could call industry or men managing financial institutions in many of your large corporate enterprises, and I had a message for them as I have for you. This great

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country of ours, now more than ever needs an upgrading of its entire performance of its people. We have tremendous burdens to bear in the future. We are a leader in the world and leadership as the leaders of your local here and of your State Federation can tell you, leadership is not a privilege--leadership is a responsibility and it can be a burden and it rests heavily sometimes upon those who are called upon to lead. And your great America today has the burden of leadership. I know many of us get a little weary of it, as citizens or in public life. Sometimes we say like that song, "Stop the World and I Want to Get Off", but about the only way you can get off from this world right now is to join those astronauts. I don't know whether or not we have enough space capsules for all of you, so most of you will have to stay right here and see what you can do to make this a better world here. Somebody said, not long ago, that any country that hopes to put a man on the Moon ought to be able to put Man on his feet on earth.

So what are we trying to do now in this program of our government? Government cannot do all of the things for you that you would like to have done, and it wouldn't be good for us if Government could or did do all of the things that some people say it ought to. We are a very self-reliant people, and we want to maintain that spirit. Government however is a part of our life, and it has very important functions to perform. And when I speak of Government, I don't just speak of Federal Government-- I mean Federal, State and Local, and it does little good to try to pit one against another. Some people have made a whole political life out of trying to fan the flames of animosity and enmity between the Federal Government and the State Government. That's the whole program-- a program I call a "stick-up"--you fight! No constructive program does condemn the Federal Government, praise the State Government, or condemn the State Government and praise the Federal Government. I really don't think that makes very much sense. The government that affects your life starts right at your own town, and it goes right up the line from your home town, to you State, and up to the Nation Capital, and even up to the United Nations.

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where decisions are made. So our path, it seems to me, is try to get these units of government working together for the people, to better the people, to improve our cities, to improve our farms, to improve our highways, to beautify our Country, to educate our people, to bring their health protection--and that's what we are trying to do.

The President of the United States is a man who seeks to bring people closer together--not further apart, and this administration--the Johnson-Humphrey Administration is dedicated to the proposition of attempting to unite the American people around common objectives, social good and progress and we think we are beginning to make some progress in that. There is closer cooperation today between capital and labor than anytime in our history. I read the papers yesterday and it shows where a good example is the steel industry. The leaders of industry and the union are figuring out how they can have a totally strike free industry; how they can settle disputes amicably--and by the way, I think it takes a lesson to all of these organizations, some of our government organizations, government unions--you in employing groups with the government; you have learned to better yourself; better your working conditions; improve your standard of living, not by brute force but by power of persuasion; by effective political action and social action. So we are seeking to bind up the wounds of the Nation. You haven't heard your President or your Vice-President come on out here and make derogatory comments about different segments of our society. You don't prove yourself a friend of labor by saying that every business man is an ex-lawyer, and you don't prove yourself a friend of business by calling labor unions--labor bosses and labor crooks. That's the talk for people who have little or no responsibility or sense of responsibility. We have people that violate rules of conduct in public and private life, but in the main--today, in the main, the labor movement in America works for the common good--not just for the good of its membership, and in the main, the American business communities work for the common good--not just its own individual problems. We have those, yes, that indulge in some excesses, but there are few, and I don't think America should be interpreted by the excesses of a little minority. I think it ought to be understood by the performance of

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the vast majority.

Well, you know we're doing some things. It's quite a fascinating world we live in, isn't it? You know, Wednesday morning, I picked up the telephone in my office and I called--made a long distance call--decided I wanted to talk to that fellow that's been walking around in outer space (wasn't that something) so I called the USS 1 - that aircraft carrier, and I talked to Major McDivitt, and I talked to Major White; I happened to be Chairman of the Space Corp.--one of my duties under law, and I expressed to them your congratulations, just as the President had done a day earlier. I told them how proud we were of them and how they had honored us and how they had brought great honor to the entire Nation, and how much it meant to us, not only because of their perpetual competence, their expertness, but how much it meant to us because of their demeanor; the way they acted; their personal conduct. Wasn't it marvelous! Here they were up there going 17,500 miles or more per hour in outer space, 125 miles up from the earth and they were joking. And here was this fellow, Major White going out of that capsule, walking around out there--free movement in space and Major McDivitt says, "Quit fogging up the windshield!" Ah, let me tell you, a Major that still has that kind of humor is one that is strong and healthy physically and emotionally and spiritually. I think the American people felt a whole lot better because, not only because of what was done (which was miraculous) but the manner in which it was done--the faith and the confidence, the optimism, the exuberance--and then when it was all done you know what happened--they had a little visit with their wives, and one of these sweet ladies said to one of the Majors, "Now you behave!" Now how in the dickens can a fellow misbehave in outer space?

And then you will recall one of them said, "Now you get back in that capsule," and that was Pat White, and I'm here to testify that the reason he went back in wasn't because of Chris Craft down in Houston, but because of Pat, "Now this

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is enough of this monkey business, now behave!" Now this is thoroughly humorous and as thoroughly an American experience as anyone could ever have, and look what it's done for us throughout the world. Prague _____ (?), even the newspaper in Havana congratulates us. This is effective foreign policy; this is the image of America, the image of confidence, the image of ability, the image of excellence, and above all the image of good manners, good humor, good human relations. Now one of these days, some of the folks in this audience will have their sons or daughters in this same axis. It won't be long before this that we witnessed recently will be quite common. As a matter of fact we have literally hundreds of space satellites in orbit right now. It is almost unbelievable. Do you realize that those men that were in that space capsule were actually safer than Christopher Columbus was when he made that journey just three hundred years or so ago, no, about five hundred years ago? Actually there was more protection, more safe guards--oh, we can see the wonderful changes that are taking place in our lifetime, and as I say it won't be so long before this will be quite commonplace. But we can't all be in space capsules and we have to figure out what we're going to do on earth and that's what I want to tell you about, so what are we going to do?

Well, we're trying to improve our future. Just a few simple things. We've learned right now, without a question of a doubt that Americans have to be better educated. Oh, we're pretty well educated, but being pretty well is not good enough. Those astronauts, when they're up there, if they say everything is okey, that means there is trouble. If they say it's A okey, go, go, that means it's all right--they're doing fine. We have to be just a little better than just getting by. Most everything in America is pretty good, but not good enough, in our educational structure, and for some it has not been good at all. This is what we mean when we say we have to find people; sometimes they say they're culturally deprived, really they're people that have been just left behind; they're in the back waters, rather than in the main street of American life. Now those people that I'm speaking of aren't bad people; it may be not all their fault; I don't know why this all happened.

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Some people say, "Well, it was technology." Some people say, "It was automation." Sometimes an industry changes and leaves a whole community without an industrial base. There are a lot of reasons things happen and you can spend all of your life figuring out whose fault it was, but I'd rather figure out how we can do something about it.

At the time of the greatest wealth in our history, at the time of our greatest prosperity, this Country still has a conscience. This America that has more wealth than ever before any other nation has ever known has said publicly and privately and by public policy that there are people here that have never had a break. There are some that got left behind and we're not going to let that happen. We're going to help them. We're going to help them help themselves. We're not just going to write out a check and say, "Here, go have it, go spend it." That would be no help that way. It would be like taking an aspirin tablet when you have a basic organic disease with a terrible pain that lingers on. You get a little temporary relief, but it doesn't cure. So we're engaged now in massive programs of education, manpower training, the war on poverty, project head start so that little kids, little ones between five years of age and when they start school they'll be able to stay in step. We have thousands of youngsters in this Country that speak a foreign language, Spanish speaking children right here on the West Coast, thousands of them, and yet they go to a school in Grade 1, where there's only English and if they don't have some head start to learn a little bit of a language before they go to school, they never catch up and they become frustrated, stay hopelessly behind and they drop out, and they're in trouble--many of them--not all, but many. So we're going to do something about it! We now know that we can do something about poverty. There was a time maybe when you couldn't have done much. You didn't have tools or skills, but we now have them. You know it's one thing to fail to do something because you can't do anything and don't know how to do anything about it, but it is unforgiveable to fail to do something if you can do something about it, and we can do something. For example: The Governor of South Carolina told me not long ago

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that they took 7,500 (?) ^{HARD}heart core unemployed. Now, ^{HARD}heart core unemployed is a man that has been unemployed for three years or more, and has had no work. He's been on relief; he's spent all the unemployment compensation, used all of his benefits, all of his union benefits (if he had any) and he's just getting food ^{PACKAGES} and relief from the County, and that isn't much of an existence and it surely doesn't do much to inspire a wife, or a good wife. They took 7,500 of them and they put them into manpower and development courses, and it cost them a lot of money, but after that six months of training, ninety days after they had finished their training, 5,000 of them had jobs--good jobs earning a weekly paycheck and a monthly income. You can do something! They have now become taxpay^Fors, instead of tax users; they have become producers instead of just consumers with no income.

The Mayor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania--I was there a month ago tonight, Mayor Joseph Farr (?) told me that 2,000 ^{HARD}heart core unemployed that had been unemployed four years or more--they put them in training schools, literacy schools, vocational education and thirty days afterwards--thirty days after they'd finished their courses, 75% of them had jobs. Now they had been taking care of their families on relief for three to four years. This is what I mean by upgrading. Helping people to help themselves with personal unemployment is not just a loss of income. It's what happens to the individual. The loss of faith in himself, the disillusionment, not even wanted, no place for him to go, nothing for him and this can destroy him, just like a sickness can take your life as it can take your spirit, so this government of yours today is engaged in a massive program of the conservation and development of human resources and I want you to know that I read every once in a while where someone will say, "Well, I wonder what happened to the liberal spirit in government?" Well, that is it. The liberal spirit in government is when you start to organize the societies so that you help those who need help, when you extend a hand of cooperation and compassion and assistance to those persons that need help to help themselves--that's what it's all about.

The first Bill that I ever introduced in Congress, sixteen years ago March, this

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year was a Bill for putting under Social Security benefits, hospitalization and nursing care for persons 65 years of age or over. I put that Bill in the Senate every year from March, 1949 up until ~~the~~ left the United States Senate. In 1956 I went to Senator Clinton Anderson of New Mexico. He was on the Finance Committee. I sat along side of him and by the way, in the next chair was Senator Wayne Morse, and I said, "Clint, why don't you take this Bill--you're on the Committee. You're a ranking member of the Committee and I have learned enough about the Senate to learn that the best way to get something done is to have a man on the Committee take a Bill with his name on it and fight for it in that Committee. Let me be your co-sponsor. Senator Morse is another co-sponsor. You go ahead and see what we can do about this." Now it is known as the King - Anderson (?) Bill. Who cares by what title, or whose name is on it.

The fact of the matter is that before this Congress completes its work, every person in America eligible for Social Security benefits, age 65 or over will have a comprehensive program of hospital care, nursing home care, free out-patient care and if you're willing to make the contribution of \$3.00 a month yourself you can get doctor and surgical and blood care, prepaid--prepaid insurance for the days you need it.

Well, we're trying to do something else. Most of you live in cities, don't you? How many people here live in cities? Let's just see your hands. Most of you live in cities--it's quite obvious. Well, 80% of the American people by 1970 or 1975 are going to live in cities. By the year 2000, 90% will be in the cities, but what kind of cities are we going to have? Are you going to have your children brought up to live on asphalt and concrete, and smog, polluted air, polluted water, impoverished conditions, or are we going to let man be like he's supposed to be--live with nature in a sense. You know I really believe people were intended to see the trees and the grass and touch the ground. In Greek Mythology, we speak of that

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god that gave you strength when you touched the ground. Well, man when he touches the earth gains some strength. We're going to have to rebuild many of our cities. You have a big urban renewal program going right here in Portland. This is only the beginning. If we can find a way to transport a man from Cape Kennedy, Florida to the Moon, we ought to be able to get him in from home to the factory. And if we'll put one tenth as much attention to problems of transportation of the man on this earth, so that he doesn't have to spend a good share of his life battling traffic congestion to get to his place of work, or his home--if we'll spend one tenth the amount of money and time on that as we do on space, there'd be a lot more space for us to live in here and we'd live a little longer.

So we're just beginning to do these things. There's a whole new effort ahead of us--a whole new period, and Gee Whiz! if somebody asked me what would be the one wish I'd like to have most, more than any other, "I'd like to be about twenty years of age," because what's going to happen in these next few years is really going to be incredible. Yes, just amazing! I met a dear lady last night that was 94. She claimed she was a great grandmother of a young lady in San Francisco that had just graduated from high school and I sat and talked with this bright, wonderful, beloved woman 94 years old and she remembered the phonograph--the first phonograph, she remembers the first radio and the first automobile and the first telephones that were used and she said, "Isn't it wonderful? What they're doing now. Oh, I just wish I had a few more years, because look what they're going to do!" That's what's going to be the world of tomorrow. Look what they're going to do. That's why I go around to these college campuses talking to young people, to give them the feeling that these aren't difficult days. Oh, they've always been difficult, I mean you know. I go 'round telling my boys and my daughter how Daddy used to work during the depression, and I think they figure that I'm just indulging in fiction. That's an entirely different world for them. They have no under-

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standing of it, and you're just wasting your time talking about it and it's better off that they read about it, and they'll come closer to the meaning of it if they read what somebody else said about it. But I'll tell you one thing. They know what kind of an age they're living in now and when you hear these bright young people talk, they always talk a different language. They're talking about a new mathematics, and I wasn't very good in the old mathematics. They're talking about computers; they're talking about space; they're talking about every conceivable thing--well, that we ever dared to even think about.

We have to see to it that this Country offers the bright young minds that are theirs this great human potential to grow because the great wealth of this Nation is in its people; the real strength of the Country is in its people and the real power of this Country is in that brain power, and while you had a sizeable number of the top 10% of the high school graduates of this Country--the top ten that don't go on to college, that means that you're suffering from the heat, you're taking a licking and a tragic waste. It's like having a hole in the bottom of the Fort Knox _____(?) Sometimes, some people think there is one there anyway. We can't afford that and so they're going to have a higher education program. We're going to have this elementary education program; we're going to have the program of the job corp; the neighborhood youth corp. I've seen these young people in these camps and now I'm going to conclude on this note. I read two newspaper articles on the airplane coming up here from two different newspapers in San Francisco. One newspaper made it appear that that job corp they had down there was just causing nothing but trouble, and I thought it was doing quite well and when I read that story I said, "Oh my goodness, isn't that too bad", and then I read the other comments about the same camp, same town, same place and they thought everything was just coming fine. You can just about find what you want to, you know.

I want to tell you that you go home and if you are just determined to have a

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fight with your wife, you can get one. I might add if she's determined to have one with you, you can get one too. But if you're equally determined that it's going to be a half way decent relationship, you'll most likely maintain that too.

Now this job corp program, and youth corp, neighborhood youth corp, this is like the peace corp we will ask the nobility to give up one year of their lives to help the underprivileged, to work in the hospital, in a child care center, in a mental institution and there are thousands of young people doing this. The First Aid has 3,000 volunteering--3,000 highly educated, highly motivated young people volunteered to work for nothing one year. That's not bad and we have over 100,000 volunteers right now. 250,000 volunteers for the job corp. What kind of boys are these? They're not forced into this and these are the 15 year olds and the 17 year olds and they come from homes and areas frequently where there's been trouble, and where they haven't had a break; where they couldn't get a job; where Dad didn't have enough money or where the family was broken or where there was some trouble. These young men are signing up-- a quarter of a million of them are already signed up--that was a month ago, I'm sure there must be over 300,000--just boys and 100,000 or more young girls. And what are they planning to do--are they getting paid for it? No, they're getting \$50 a month. You're not going to have too big a ball on that, you know. And most of it is being held back and they'll get it as a severance pay when they go home, but there is food and clothing and education and recreation and their teeth fixed. Do you know what we find on these job forecasts? We find over two-thirds of the youngsters that come into these job camps have never been to a dentist. We find a large percentage of them have never been to a doctor--never had a physical examination, and you ought to hear what the counselors tell you. Many of these boys 16, 17 and 18 break down and cry because nobody cares. Many answers are the same when they are asked these questions: Why did you come? Why did you join? They say because "It was my last chance."

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Now I am going to tell this audience that these programs will do good in this Country, and they'll cost you a lot less than leaving them undone. It will cost you approximately in one of these camps, about \$2,800 to \$3,000 to keep a boy there, and it will cost you \$3,500 if he goes to jail. It will cost you \$1,800 a year if he's a school drop-out, and if he's on relief it'll cost you \$2,500. For \$2,800 or \$3,000 a year you can get this boy a chance for gainful employment, education, health, clothing, recreation, special social relationships, and we're going to do it, and you know what's going to happen? There's going to be somebody snooping around just to see which one got out of line. I can just see it, because the good news won't be that there were 10,000 of these saved. The headlines will be "a knifing" or a "serious act that took place on our social act", "a sex case" "out of 10,000 there are 50 that go south". It would have been five times that many that went sour if they hadn't gone to camp. If I seem to be a little bit disturbed by it, let me tell you why, because I read even as I came to this meeting the news will be that some boy got out of line. Well let me tell you something, your boys may get out of line even if they're home. I told a group the other night I was sure they never had any trouble with their children telephoning, but what we are seeking therefore to do, in summary is to find ways and means to get more of our fellows as active participants in this great spirit of democracy, to get more of our people as active producers and doers, to get more of our people into the joy of living that we're going to be able to do. You just have the faith that we're going to be able to do it, and I'll tell you something, this will do us more good abroad than anything that we can do even to creating a fantastic new weapon system. The example of good human relations, the example of brotherhood, the example of human progress, the example that we eliminate from our thinking and our actions, bigotry, discrimination and prejudice. These examples will do you more good than figuring out a hundred negatron(?) bombs. We have some very powerful forces working for us, moral initiative, precepts and examples. Remember 2/3 of the world is covered. Remember that you are a member of the society that could have had 50% of all the produced wealth in the world -- Americans. You get 50% of everything that

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is produced in the world. Is it any wonder that the rest of the world gets a little doubtful about us, and angry and that there's riots and disorders, and is it any wonder that people expect us to carry more than what we think is our fair share of the burden because we have more than our fair share of the good, therefore when we improve our relationships at home; when we show for example that a young man or a young girl that didn't have a chance can get one; that didn't have an education, can have one; when we show that we are properly unaware of color, in other words that we judge people with peace as God's people created in the image of the Maker; when we start to judge people as people and quit talking about them as some color line or something else; when we do that we're going to be really the word's beater, and that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to get ourselves geared up not only economically and industrially, but politicly, socially, morally, spiritually, so that we can meet and meet kindly and not with domination.

Well, it was sure nice to be with you. Thank you very much.



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