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REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

STATE CONVENTION OF FLORIDA NURSING HOME ASSOCIATIONS

TAMPA, FLORIDA
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L AMERICA'S GREATEST RESOURCE IS NOT ITS WEALTH, ITS PROSPERITY
OR ITS POWER -- BUT ITS PEOPLE! WE MUST BUILD A SOCIETY WHICH
ENHANCES THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL.

L OUR SIGHTS MUST NOT ONLY BE ON THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY. WE
MUST ALSO BE CONCERNED WITH THE AMERICA OF TOMORROW -- THE
WORLD OF 1975, 1980 AND BEYOND.

L OUR NATION'S MOST NEGLECTED RESOURCE IS THE WISDOM AND
EXPERIENCE OF OUR SENIOR CITIZENS.

~~L OUR EMPHASIS IS ON YOUTH, NOT ON AGE. TOO MANY AMERICANS
ASSOCIATE AGE WITH ILLNESS.~~

L TOO MANY AMERICANS FEEL THE ELDERLY MUST BE SHUNTED ASIDE --
OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM OF LIFE.

I know
 L ~~AS LEADERS IN THE AGING FIELD~~ YOU ARE AWARE THAT:

-- THE 20 MILLION OLDER AMERICANS ARE NOT ~~BODY-FIXED~~ *all alike*

~~IN SPACE AND TIME~~ *rather are* -- BUT INDIVIDUALS WITH VARYING CHARACTERISTICS

AND NEEDS: ONLY ONE OUT OF 20 LIVE IN AN INSTITUTION; 7 OUT OF

10 LIVE IN FAMILIES; THERE ARE ALMOST FOUR TIMES AS MANY WIDOWS

AS WIDOWERS.

-- IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA, THERE WERE 650,000 MORE PERSONS
 OVER AGE 60 IN 1970 THAN IN 1960. THIS HAD CREATED NEW CHALLENGES

FOR NURSING HOME AND HEALTH-CARE LEADERS AND THIS TREND WILL

CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE.

-3-

-- OLDER MINORITY AMERICANS SUFFER MOST: PROPORTIONATELY
TWICE AS MANY WHITES AS BLACKS LIVE TO AGE 65; OLDER BLACK
AMERICANS GET FAR FEWER SERVICES; A BLACK ELDERLY PERSON HAS
ONLY ONE-THIRD THE CHANCE OF ENTERING A HOME FOR THE AGED OR A
NURSING HOME AS A WHITE ELDERLY PERSON.

-- MANY AGED BLACK MEN NEVER BENEFIT FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY
SYSTEM -- THEY DIE BEFORE BECOMING ELIGIBLE.

-- THREE QUARTERS OF HOUSING FOR AGED BLACKS IS DETERIORATED.

-- ONLY ABOUT ONE PERCENT OF FHA HOME MORTGAGES INCLUDE
PRINCIPAL MORTGAGERS WHO ARE 60 OR OLDER -- THE AGED ARE LEFT
BEHIND BY AMERICA'S HOUSING PROGRAMS. *Housing*

-- ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR PERSONS OVER 65 IS LIVING IN POVERTY.

Poverty

↳ NO NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR IN FLORIDA IS UNAWARE OF THE

Republican
~~NIXON~~ ADMINISTRATION'S NEGLECT OF YOUR SPECIFIC CONCERNS.

↳ EVEN AS HE PLEDGED TO CORRECT INEQUITIES IN YOUR FIELD, ~~the~~

Republican Administ
~~NIXON~~ CONTINUED TO SLASH FEDERAL AID TO NURSING HOMES.

↳ SINCE THE REPUBLICANS TOOK OFFICE, MEDICARE AID TO EXTENDED-

CARE FACILITIES DROPPED FROM \$340 MILLION IN 1968 TO \$180 MILLION
IN 1970 BY RETROACTIVE DENIAL OF PAYMENTS.

↳ NOWHERE IN AMERICA ARE WE DOING ENOUGH TO HELP THE AGED WITH

THEIR SOCIAL AND HEALTH PROBLEMS, THEIR FEELINGS OF ISOLATION
AND OF SELF-WORTH.

THAT'S WHY OLDER AMERICANS ARE UNITING TO HELP THEMSELVES --
THEY WANT TO BE A GENUINE PART OF AMERICAN LIFE. FOR AMERICA TO
PROGRESS WE NEED THEM AND THEIR WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE.

AS AN ORIGINAL SPONSOR OF MEDICARE IN 1949 -- WHICH WAS
NOT ENACTED UNTIL 1965 -- I AM AWARE OF THE SLOWNESS OF AMERICA'S
RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY.

WE MUST REVERSE THIS NEGLECT OF OLDER AMERICANS. BUT THIS
WILL REQUIRE A NATIONAL CHANGE OF MIND AND OF HEART. WE MUST ALSO:

-- IMPROVE THE INCOMES OF OLDER AMERICANS -- EVEN BY 1980
ONLY A THIRD OF THE AGED WILL HAVE ANY PRIVATE INCOME.

I HAVE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO BRING MINIMUM SOCIAL SECURITY
PAYMENTS UP TO A MORE REALISTIC LEVEL, INCREASE BENEFITS BY 10
PERCENT AND LIFT THE EARNED EXEMPTION CEILING TO \$3,000.

WE MUST ALSO APPLY FEDERAL GENERAL REVENUES TO THE COSTS --
AND GUARANTEE THAT ALL PERSONS OVER 65 ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SOCIAL
SECURITY BENEFITS -- IF NOT COVERED BY OTHER RETIREMENT SYSTEMS.

-- WE MUST MEET THE HOUSING CRISIS OF THE ELDERLY BY BUILDING
AT LEAST 125,000 UNITS PER YEAR FOR THEM.

-- WE MUST EXAMINE WAYS TO DESIGN BETTER FEDERAL ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS FOR LONG-TERM CARE AND TO IMPROVE OUTPATIENT CLINIC
SERVICES.

-- WE MUST RESPOND TO THE HIGH COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND
THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE NUTRITION THROUGH AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDICARE
PROGRAM.

-7-

-- WE MUST GUARANTEE THAT MINORITY OLDER AMERICANS RECEIVE THE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED.

TO GIVE THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF OLDER AMERICANS HIGH VISIBILITY AND TO COORDINATE ALL PROGRAMS FOR THE ELDERLY, WE MUST ESTABLISH A CABINET-LEVEL OFFICE OF THE AGING. THIS WILL GIVE OUR SENIOR CITIZENS A CHANCE TO MAKE THEIR VOICES FELT ON NATIONAL POLICY-MAKING.

CENTURIES AGO THE PSALMIST CRIED OUT: "CAST ME NOT OFF IN THE TIME OF OLD AGE; FORSAKE ME NOT WHEN MY STRENGTH FAILETH."

THE WELL-BEING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY WILL BE IN GREAT MEASURE ATTESTED AS WE FULFILL THIS PLEA. WE NEED A NATIONAL COALITION OF FORCES TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

I CALL UPON YOU TO JOIN WITH ME IN LEADING THE WAY.

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