

FOR RELEASE --

Feb. 29, 1972

ABC
plane
galleries
Elderly
Florida

HUMPHREY CALLS FOR 25 PER CENT INCREASE IN SOCIAL SECURITY
BENEFITS, MAJOR CHANGES IN OLD AGE ASSISTANCE AND MEDICARE

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 29--Senator Hubert H. Humphrey today proposed a 25 per cent increase in Social Security benefits and major changes in the Old Age ~~Assistance~~ Assistance and Medicare programs "to bring decency, dignity and hope to the lives of 20 million elderly Americans."

"The time has come to recognize that the needs of older Americans are not privileges to be bestowed by a generous society, but ~~human~~ basic ~~and~~ American rights," Humphrey told

"It is wrong that five million elderly Americans live in poverty. And I say we must change that shameful fact.

"It is wrong that millions of elderly Americans lack adequate transportation even for such ^basic needs as ~~xxx~~ visits to a physician.

"It ~~is~~ wrong that millions of elderly Americans, because they live on fixed incomes, are tragically unprotected against the ravages of rising ^{living} costs, ~~of living~~.

"It is wrong that millions of elderly Americans are priced out of the home buying market and ~~xxx~~ forced to live in sometimes crowded, shabby and unhealthy conditions.

"It is wrong that our society shamefully short-changes those who in their productive years have contributed so much to our society. And the time for change is now. I propose a new deal for the elderly citizens of our Nation."

Humphrey called for increases in the Old Age Assistance program to Federally-funded levels of \$165 a month for a single individual and \$215 for a couple, which he said would lift 5.4 million elderly and more than 1.5 million

Elderly Americans make up ten per cent of the Nation's population, he said, but they account for 25 per cent of the Nation's poor.

"The increases I propose will mean that no elderly American will be forced to live below the officially designated poverty line."

To protect the elderly against rising prices, Humphrey called for a 25 per cent increase in Social Security benefits, with a minimum \$100 a month provision, and a cost of living ~~escalator~~ ^{escalator} for permanent inflation protection.

In addition, he proposed these Social Security ~~for~~ reforms:

~~Introduce~~ --Introduction of one-third general treasury financing of ^{Social Security} ~~the~~ system, instead of the present 50 per cent contributions by employees and employers, which he said would cut the payroll tax workers now pay by two-thirds, ~~and~~ saving them an average of \$175 a year.

--Increasing from \$1,680 to \$3,000 the amount older Americans can earn before their benefits are reduced.

--~~Re~~ Equalizing benefits for both husbands and wives with the benefit level of single individuals ~~and~~ ^{need} so that couples ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~resort to divorce~~ ^{resort to divorce} to obtain higher benefits.

--Payment of 100 per cent ^{of a spouse's} benefits to widows and widowers, instead of the present 82 per cent.

To meet the health needs not only of the ~~old~~ elderly, but of all Americans, Humphrey called for enactment of a Comprehensive National Health Security Program.

But meanwhile, he said, "we must act to reform the Medicare system which ~~now~~ ~~says~~ to the elderly ~~we~~ we will recognize some of your needs, but not enough to ~~guarantee~~ ^{assure} you of good access to all your health needs."

"I have introduced legislation to include ^{the full cost of} ~~prescription~~ ^{prescription} drugs, one of the ~~highest~~ highest health care costs of the elderly, ~~which~~ under the Medicare program," he said.

"Why should Medicare pick up only part of the costs of staying healthy? And why should anyone be unable to afford the medicine a physician prescribes?"

Humphrey also called for:

--A comprehensive Home Health Care Program under Medicare. "There is no reason the elderly should be forced to go to a hospital and clinic for every illness. Care should be available where they ~~live~~ live," he said.

--Elimination of the requirement that the elderly pay the first \$50 for medical expenses under supplementary medical insurance.

--Elimination of the insurance ~~for payment~~ premium for doctors insurance.

--Freezing of the costs of the patient's share of hospital payments.

"Enough promises have been made to the elderly. The time has come for committed and compassionate leadership ^{*The time has come*} for action," Humphrey said.

"As Franklin Roosevelt once said: 'The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.'"

March 9, 1972

001342

MEMORANDUM

FOR: SENATOR

FROM: DAN

SUBJECT: SENIOR CITIZENS SPEECH

*not
used
as subbed*

Attached is a senior citizens speech for your appearance at Williams Park in St. Petersburg. It contains all of your major programs for seniors including the addition of the Humphrey Home Health Care Program for Elderly Americans which is the lead of the press release. Portions of this speech--or the whole thing--can be used at any senior citizen event in the next few days.

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

001343

WILLIAMS PARK SENIOR CITIZENS RALLY

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

MARCH 10, 1972

001344

IT'S HIGH TIME THAT JUSTICE BE DONE TO AMERICA'S
MOST NEGLECTED MINORITY.

IT'S HIGH TIME THAT JUSTICE BE DONE TO YOU AND
TO THE TWENTY MILLION OTHER SENIOR CITIZENS OF THE
UNITED STATES.

YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO AMERICA.

YOU MUST NOT -- YOU SHOULD NOT -- BE FORGOTTEN
IN YOUR RETIREMENT.

YOU HAVE BUILT THIS MAGNIFICENT AMERICA OF OURS --
ITS CITIES, ITS PUBLIC BUILDINGS, ITS HIGHWAYS, ITS
CULTURAL MONUMENTS.

YET TOO OFTEN YOU ARE TREATED AS STRANGERS IN

YOUR OWN COUNTRY.

OURS IS A YOUTH-ORIENTED NATION. I DO NOT COMPLAIN
OF THAT.

BUT THERE SHOULD BE -- THERE MUST BE -- RESPECT FOR
AGE AND EXPERIENCE AS WELL.

WHY ARE OLDER AMERICANS SO OFTEN FORGOTTEN?

WELL, THEY SAY IT'S THE SQUEAKING WHEEL THAT GETS
THE GREASE.

IT MAY BE THAT YOU ELDER AMERICANS HAVE JUST BEEN
TOO DECENT, TOO LONG-SUFFERING, TOO SOFT-SPOKEN FOR YOUR
OWN GOOD.

BUT WHEN IT COMES RIGHT DOWN TO IT, I WOULDN'T FOR THE
WORLD WANT YOU ANY OTHER WAY.

BUT PRECISELY BECAUSE YOU DO NOT RAISE YOUR VOICES,
THE REST OF US OWE IT TO YOU TO LISTEN MORE CAREFULLY TO
WHAT YOU SAY -- AND TO HEED IT.

THAT'S WHAT I HAVE TRIED TO DO, AS MAYOR, AS SENATOR,
AS VICE PRESIDENT, AND NOW AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE HIGHEST
OFFICE IN THE LAND.

YOU HAVE TOLD ME -- MANY OF YOU -- ABOUT YOUR
STRUGGLES IN MAKING ENDS MEET.

THE FIGURES TELL THE STORY. SOME 5.4 MILLION OLDER
AMERICANS LIVE IN POVERTY. MILLIONS MORE LIVE PRECARIOUSLY
JUST ABOVE IT.

DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS OF THIS NIXON ADMINISTRATION,
THE RANKS OF THE ELDERLY POOR HAVE SWELLED BY 100,000.

AND EVEN STATISTICS LIKE THESE DON'T REFLECT THE
REAL TRAGEDIES OF POVERTY -- ILL-HEALTH, MEAGER DIETS,
SHODDY APARTMENTS, THE FEAR OF BEING A CRIME VICTIM,
THE SHEER LONELINESS.

THERE'S NOTHING MYSTERIOUS ABOUT THE REMEDY FOR
POVERTY. IT'S MONEY -- CASH IN YOUR POCKETS.

FOR MOST OF AMERICA'S ^{ELDERLY} CITIZENS, THAT MEANS
MORE ADEQUATE SOCIAL SECURITY.

TOO MANY, AFTER A LIFETIME OF HARD WORK, ARE
SUBSISTING ON A MERE PITTANCE.

MOREOVER, EVEN THAT PITTANCE IS EATEN AWAY, MONTH
BY MONTH AND YEAR BY YEAR, BY THIS NIXON INFLATION.

I WANT TO REFORM AND LIBERALIZE OUR OBSOLESCE
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, I PROPOSE AN IMMEDIATE 25%
BOOST IN SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS -- WITH A \$100 MINIMUM.

THAT LOOKS LIKE SIMPLE JUSTICE TO ME, DOESN'T IT
TO YOU?

I PROPOSE A COST-OF-LIVING ESCALATOR TO KEEP BENEFITS
ABREAST WITH THE MARCH OF INFLATION.

THAT TOO LOOKS LIKE SIMPLE JUSTICE TO ME. DOESN'T
IT TO YOU TOO?

001349

THIRD, I PROPOSE THAT ONE-THIRD OF THE COST OF
SOCIAL SECURITY BE MET FROM THE FEDERAL TREASURY, NOT BY
THE REGRESSIVE PAYROLL TAX.

FOURTH, I PROPOSE RAISING FROM \$1680 TO \$8000 THE
AMOUNT A MAN OR WOMAN CAN EARN BEFORE BENEFITS ARE REDUCED.

FIFTH, I INSIST THAT BENEFITS MUST NOT BE REDUCED
WHEN TWO OLDER AMERICANS SHOOSSE TO GET MARRIED -- NOR
MUST A MARRIED COUPLE BE COMPELLED TO RESORT TO DIVORCE
TO KEEP FINANCIALLY ABOVE WATER.

FINALLY, I SEE NO REASON WHY A WIDOW OR WIDOWER
SHOULD RECEIVE ANYTHING LESS THAN 100% OF HIS OR HER
SPOUSE'S BENEFITS. TO PROVIDE ONLY 82 1/2%, AS AT

001350

PRESENT, SEEMS TO ME GROSSLY UNFAIR. DOESN'T IT TO YOU?

ALSO, I WILL SOON OFFER LEGISLATION TO INCREASE
MINIMUM OLD AGE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS TO LIFT 5.4 MILLION
ELDERLY AMERICANS OUT OF POVERTY.

ALL THIS AGAIN LOOKS TO ME LIKE SIMPLE JUSTICE TO A
MOST DESERVING GROUP OF AMERICANS.

DOESN'T IT TO YOU AS WELL?

WHY SHOULD THERE BE ANY OLDER AMERICANS IN THIS
AFFLUENT AMERICA OF OURS LIVING IN POVERTY -- ANY MORE
THAN CHILDREN SHOULD GO HUNGRY?

WE SHOULD MAKE IT A MATTER OF NATIONAL POLICY THAT
BOTH OUR YOUNGEST AND OUR OLDEST AMERICANS -- INDEED, ALL
AMERICANS -- LIVE DECENTLY.

001351

JUST AS OLDER AMERICANS SUFFER FAR MORE THAN THEIR
SHARE OF POVERTY, SO ALSO THEY SUFFER FAR MORE THAN
THEIR SHARE OF ILLNESS,

MEDICARE -- FOR WHICH I FOUGHT IN THE SENATE THROUGHOUT
MANY, MANY LONG YEARS -- HAS BEEN A GREAT BLESSING, BUT
EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT IT DOESN'T GO FAR ENOUGH,

HERE IS HOW I PROPOSE TO MAKE MEDICARE EVEN MORE
MEANINGFUL TO ALL OF YOU.

FIRST, I HAVE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO HAVE MEDICARE
PAY THE FULL COST OF YOUR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, YOUR EYEGLASSES
AND YOUR HEARING AIDS.

001352

I THINK MEDICARE SHOULD GO ALL THE WAY, NOT JUST PART
OF THE WAY, TO UNDERWRITE THE HEALTH COSTS OF THE ELDERLY.

AND WHY SHOULD ANY OF YOU SEE THE DOCTOR, THEN BE
UNABLE TO AFFORD THE MEDICINE HE PRESCRIBES?

I THINK THAT'S WRONG -- DEAD WRONG. DON'T YOU?

SECOND, I PROPOSE THE ELIMINATION OF THE \$50 DEDUCTIBLE
FOR SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL INSURANCE.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION ACTUALLY WANTS TO INCREASE
THIS CHARGE.

I SAY THAT'S GROSSLY UNFAIR. DON'T YOU?

THIRD, I WANT TO ELIMINATE THE PREMIUM YOU NOW HAVE
TO PAY FOR DOCTORS' INSURANCE.

001353

THESE ARE NEEDED REFORMS I HAVE DESCRIBED. BUT THEY
STILL LEAVE MEDICARE, IN MY OPINION, WITH A MAJOR SHORTCOMING.

UNDER MEDICARE, THERE IS TOO MUCH EMPHASIS UPON
HOSPITALIZATION.

UNDER MEDICARE, THERE IS EVERY INDUCEMENT TO GO TO
THE HOSPITAL -- EVEN THOUGH THE TREATMENT REQUIRED COULD
BETTER HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN HEALTH CENTERS OR AT HOME.

THEREFORE, I HAVE JUST INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO
ESTABLISH HOME HEALTH SERVICES FOR ELDERLY AMERICANS.

MY PROPOSED NEW PROGRAM DOES NOT FOCUS ON CRITICAL
AND ACUTE ILLNESSES, WHICH WOULD STILL REQUIRE HOSPITALIZATION.

IT FOCUSSES RATHER ON PREVENTIVE MEDICINE -- THE
SERVICES WHICH WILL FORESTALL ILLNESS AND KEEP PEOPLE IN
GOOD HEALTH IN THEIR HOMES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

ACCORDINGLY, MY HOME HEALTH CARE PROGRAM PROVIDES FOR:

- * THE FUNDING AND SETTING UP OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.
- * THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HOME HEALTH CARE SYSTEM --

BRINGING TO THE HOMES AND APARTMENTS OF ELDERLY AMERICANS
THE BEST IN MODERN MEDICAL SERVICES: PHYSICIANS, NURSES,
PHYSIOTHERAPISTS, AUDIOLOGISTS, SPEECH THERAPISTS, AND
NUTRITIONISTS.

THESE SERVICES WOULD BE FINANCED 90% BY THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT, 10% BY THE STATES.

IT MAY BE -- ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT OUR PRIME OBJECT --

THAT WE WOULD WIND UP ACTUALLY SAVING MONEY.

OVER TWO-THIRDS OF OUR PRESENT MEDICARE EXPENDITURES
GO FOR HOSPITALIZATION AND NURSING HOME CARE,

IT COULD BE THAT, IF WE HAVE THIS SYSTEM OF HOME
HEALTH CARE I'VE PROPOSED, MANY OF OUR ELDER AMERICANS
WHO NOW WIND UP IN HOSPITALS COULD HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY
TREATED BEFORE THEIR ILLNESSES BECAME CRITICAL.

YES, THE TIME HAS COME TO STOP PENALIZING OUR FELLOW-
AMERICANS WHEN THEY GROW OLD AND WHEN THEY GET SICK.

WE NEED ACTION NOW ON ALL THESE FRONTS: INCREASED
SOCIAL SECURITY, INCREASED OLD AGE ASSISTANCE, MORE

001356

ADEQUATE MEDICAL SERVICES,

BUT, TO SECURE ALL THESE THINGS, WE NEED A PRESIDENT

WHO WILL STAND UP AND SAY:

"I'M GOING TO SET ALL THESE THINGS TO RIGHTS. I'M
GOING TO ASK THE CONGRESS AND THE NATION TO JOIN WITH ME IN
DOING JUSTICE TO THE ELDERLY CITIZENS OF AMERICA."

THIS YEAR YOU CAN HELP ELECT THAT KIND OF PRESIDENT.

YOUR FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS -- AND IN YOUR VOTES.

INCIDENTALLY, HOW MANY OF YOU ARE GOING TO VOTE

TUESDAY --JUST RAISE YOUR HANDS!



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