

March 29, 1972

Honorable Henry Maier
Mayor of Milwaukee
U. S. Conference of Mayors
1612 K Street, NW
Washington, D. C.

Dear Henry:

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to reply specifically to your questions. They are poignant. They represent an immediate agenda for the cities. They might well be termed the ten commandments of minimal survival for our metropolitan areas.

The questions require both answers of substance and process. I would like to be more general about the process and then be specific about the substantive policy areas.

You are aware that I know how to get legislation passed. I know the Senate. I know the intricacies of the legislative process. I know how to get things done. And I have a record of achievement to prove it.

You asked a number of questions beginning with the phrase, "What will you do?" I want to outline to you a series of action steps as to how I, as a Senator and a Presidential candidate, can accomplish our joint goals. I pledge to:

-- Cast aside partisanship so that the politics of programs to aid the cities will not prevent the enactment of these programs. I will, however, continue to speak out on the issue differences between parties, but I will not let bitter partisanship blind me to badly needed programs. The needs of the cities ought not to be allowed to suffer and remain unmet simply because of senseless partisan bickering.

-- Begin immediately to talk personally with my colleagues in the Congress to point out the merits, the necessity, and the utter urgency of Congress' responding to urban programs in a positive manner.

-- Take to the Senate floor if necessary amendments and legislation that embody the programs listed in your questions. I will offer, if necessary, the required amendments to the appropriations bills and authorization legislation.

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-- Work for the inclusion of similar legislative goals and programs as a plank of the Democratic Party platforms.

-- Designate my staff aide for urban affairs to work with representatives of the cities on the legislation embodied in these questions.

-- Articulate in my campaign for the President the needs of urban and metropolitan areas, to make our citizens aware of the tough choices that have to be made, to come forth with programs that meet those needs, and I will make a personal commitment that in the new White House, the voice of the cities will be heard and respected.

Question 1. What will you do to make sure a general revenue sharing bill is enacted into law in this session of the Congress?

Our cities are caught in a paradox. They are at the same time both too big and too small. They are often too big to be responsive to the needs of their citizens; and, they are too small to marshal the economic resources and political structures to make better the lives of their people.

The results are predictable. Cities are in a financial squeeze as never before. Taxpayers are in a money bind as never before. And, resources within political subdivisions have simply reached their financial limits. That is why your first question is so important to the vitality of our cities.

I have been an ardent supporter of Revenue Sharing since Drs. Walter Heller and Joe Pechman first had the idea. It was a good idea then. It is an even better idea now.

As you know, the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives has spent the last few weeks in executive session on the Revenue Sharing bill. I presume that this bill will be reported and passed by the House shortly.

I have written Chairman Russell Long of the Senate Finance Committee asking that as the next order of business after Social Security and welfare reform, hearings on Revenue Sharing be quickly scheduled. I also expressed my hope that the Senate Finance Committee would expeditiously examine this legislation and report a bill as soon as possible.

I pledge now that in the event of any delay on the part of the Senate Committee, I will, after consultation with representatives with the mayors and other interest parties, offer Revenue Sharing as an amendment to other pending legislation on the floor of the Senate.

I feel strongly about this issue. The mayors want it. The people of our cities want it. It must be passed.

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downpayment by setting up a Home Owners Revolving Loan Fund for those who use conventional loans, and by placing ceilings on closing costs for insured home purchases.

The funding levels in the 1972 legislation are a reasonable start toward adequacy. They do not meet the needs. But as representatives of the cities have testified before the Senate, this money is important, and it is a sound beginning.

I will strongly urge my colleagues on the appropriations committees to fully fund this legislation.

In addition, I plan to reoffer my original legislation on the powers of a President to impound funds without consent of Congress. Last year the President impounded 12 billion dollars. This year, that amount is somewhere around 10 billion. Much of this money is badly needed by the cities. Funds such as water and sewage treatment assistance, model cities assistance, transit assistance -- all have been impounded at one time or the other. This is wrong. And as I have on the floor of the Senate, I intend to secure passage of my anti-impoundment legislation.

Question Four. What will you do to secure passage of legislation to provide adequate federal funds for purchase of mass transit systems and for operating subsidies in this session of the Congress?

There are two points in mass transit. The first involves the highway trust fund. The second concerns operating subsidies.

This March I introduced legislation that would open up the highway trust fund for mass transit facilities for maintenance of cities' streets, the preparation of locally approved comprehensive transportation plans, and for operating mass transit subsidies.

This legislation would provide an immediate infusion of nearly 1 billion dollars to our cities for use on their mass transit facilities. In addition, I strongly endorse, will support, am a cosponsor of, and will vote for legislation to provide operating subsidies for transit. I want to see this legislation passed in this session of Congress.

I believe it is critically necessary for the United States to correct the imbalances in our transit systems. We need more money in our urban areas for assistance in their transportation systems as that community determines necessary. This money must be returned by a set formula that allows

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cities to plan ahead, plan for budgets, for letting contracts, and securing building commitments for transportation programs.

I plan to work for this legislation. It embodies the recommendations as set forth in the League of Cities/Conference for Mayors recent publication in the Nation's Cities. It is important legislation, and I welcome your support.

Question Five. What will you do to bring about passage of meaningful and just welfare reform legislation in this session of the Congress that will shift more of the burden from state and local government to the federal government?

I believe that welfare reform is one of the most important measures the Congress will consider this year. There simply must be a complete change in public assistance -- the present system is not fair to either the recipient or the taxpayer. Welfare must be recognized as a national problem demanding national answers and national funding.

We can make a meaningful start this year.

I support the immediate federal assumption of all old age public assistance costs. I support phased in assumption of all AFDC costs. I am a cosponsor of amendments to the pending welfare bill that would begin a program to do just that, starting with a \$3,000 per year amount. In addition, I strongly support and will advocate on the floor of the Senate additional fiscal relief to the states and the local governments so that there will be an immediate limitation on the local funds used to pay welfare costs.

I do believe, however, that in our zeal to reform welfare that we make certain that no recipient receives less than he is now receiving. To this end, I would support federal assistance for any payment higher than \$2400 for a family of four and an expanded food stamp program. In short, I believe that both the states and localities and the recipients must be "held harmless" of any decreases in benefits or increases in costs.

I will fight for these measures on the floor of the Senate. And I will speak to them in my campaign for the Presidency.

Question Six. Do you support a universal health insurance program, and, if so, what will you do to bring about its passage in this session of the Congress?

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During my entire public life, I have had concern for the medical and health needs of our citizens. I was privileged to introduce the first Medicare bill back in 1949. I fought for that legislation time and time again. Today, we have Medicare. But we need more. That is why I am a cosponsor of a program of national health security for all of our citizens. We as a nation simply must begin to deal with the high cost of medical care and the specialized health needs of our population -- such as physical rehabilitation, mental retardation, and emotional problems.

National health insurance is but one measure. We must increase our supply of medical manpower, we must have a system of health care delivery that gets services to our people -- where they live in the neighborhoods, and we must re-orient our health thinking to preventive medical care.

As interim measures, I have sponsored legislation insuring that our elderly would not have to pay an increased amount for the health care. I favor eliminating the deductible payment, freezing co-payments for hospital costs, and eliminating the monthly insurance premiums. And I have sponsored legislation that would bring a comprehensive program of home health care so that the sick and disabled might have quality health care in their own homes without adding to the burden in our hospitals.

Question Seven. Do you support a permanent federally sponsored program to provide public service employment of at least one million jobs?

Not only do I support a program of one million jobs, but I have introduced legislation to back up that commitment. I simply do not agree with those who call public service jobs dead-end jobs. Public service employment can be employment of first opportunity. We can have the training programs that lead to permanent jobs. And at a time when unemployment is at record levels, we simply must have jobs now.

People want work. People want to build. People want to produce. And there are things to be done in this country. Our cities have unmet needs. The federal government just cannot sit idly by while there are hundreds of thousands of skilled highly qualified, intelligent workers who are jobless. The federal government is simply violating the 1946 Full Employment Act when it fails to act.

The legislation I have introduced also provides for 250,000 public service jobs, especially designated for youth.

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Teenage unemployment is the highest it has ever been. The national average is around 17 percent, but in certain areas of our country, youth unemployment often reaches between 40 and 50 percent. This is just intolerable.

Again, let me say that I do support the 1 million jobs proposal. I believe in it. And I intend to work to see that we have the jobs.

Question Eight. Will you support full funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in order to shift some of the cost of schools off the local property tax?

I support full funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. But I think we must do more. Our local taxpayers cannot continue to bear the complete burden of school financing. Property taxes are already too high.

I have advocated a program of educational financing that (1) would establish an educational trust fund to pay at least 1/3 of the cost of education; (2) would equalize spending among school districts (3) would begin programs for specialized educational problems such as mental retardation (4) continue local control of education (5) provide flexibility for local initiatives, and (6) a comprehensive full scale reform of the federal tax structure to close loopholes and return the money to relieve property taxes. The tax reform legislation I introduced with Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson would cut back property taxes used to support local government by about 50 percent and cut back property taxes used to support schools by at least 30 percent.

There is little question in my mind that the people of this nation are demanding tax fairness and tax justice. They are tired of seeing millionaires escape paying any taxes. They are tired of the big corporation and conglomerates not paying their fair share. They are tired of tax dodges and tax shelters that only the wealthy and super-rich can use to avoid paying taxes. They are tired of the special interest getting special lines and special deals from the tax system. They are saying loud and clear: close those loopholes, cut out the niche of special privilege, make the tax system fair, and cut the unburdenable property taxes.

I agree, and the education financing program I have outlined will do just that. I have taken the steps. I have fought for tax justice all my life. I continue that fight this year.

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Question Nine. Will you support the full authorized level of funding for law enforcement assistance programs in this session of the Congress?

I do support full funding for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. But I must say in all candor that I am not pleased by the method of distributing these funds by the federal agency nor by the results they have shown. The intent of Congress, in passing the 1968 act, has not been carried through. I believe that there has been lax federal administration, that not enough of the money gets to the law enforcement officer on the beat, and that little gets to the neighborhoods where it will do any good. In fact, of the 1971 appropriations for crime control, less than 5 percent of the funds actually filtered down to the local units. In short, I must demand that the federal government decrease the amount spent on bureaucracy and red tape and channel an increasing portion of these funds to high crime areas in our cities. I intend to press for a complete examination of the mismanagement, non-coordination, and misuse of federal funds under the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Question 10. Will you support full funding of the solid waste management and recycling program in this session of the Congress?

I support full funding for the solid waste management and recycling programs. I commend administration efforts to reduce spending for these functions.

I firmly believe that if we are ever going to solve some of the pressing environmental programs of the nation, then we have to look to management, to technological resource utilization, and adequate levels of financing to do so. I have also been in contact with firms in the private sector of our economy on this very question, and the result they have shown me as to what can be done with solid waste, the kinds of products producible with recycling, are encouraging and ought to be supported.

Finally, I hope that you will allow me a short digression. I have spent a majority of my time since returning to the Senate on questions of growth and development. I am convinced that this nation cannot continue on its present course of unplanned growth. We simply must have at the highest levels

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of government a commitment to define our objectives, our goals, our priorities, and then plan the best utilization of our resources to achieve the kind of growth that contributes, not detracts, from the quality of our lives.

The problems that face this country today, as pointed out by various presidential commissions and independent studies, is one of how we are going to live, what kind of financial resources we are going to live on, and what kind of life we will have in the future. We are making decisions today that will influence the kinds of problems and the kind of programs we will need for the tomorrows. This is our challenge, and the cities are part of it. How we as a nation tackle the problem of growth in our metropolitan areas, how we meet the immediate problems of cities, in relation to growth, the kind of financial resources we are willing to expend in our neighborhoods --this will be the final test of the measure of American Federalism.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Hubert H. Humphrey



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