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REMARKS BY

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CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES WORKSHOP

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IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
BLACK CAUCUS WORKSHOP ON "BLACK LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
FOR 1975," AND TO JOIN IN YOUR DISCUSSION OF FULL
EMPLOYMENT.

UNEMPLOYMENT, RUNNING AT "RECESSION" LEVELS
ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IS ALREADY AT "DEPRESSION" LEVELS
FOR MOST BLACK COMMUNITIES. IF YOU ARE BLACK, YOUR
CHANGES OF BEING JOBLESS ARE TWICE AS GREAT AS THEY
ARE IF YOU ARE WHITE (9.2% vs. 4.8%).

AND, IF YOU ARE A BLACK TEENAGER, CHANGES ARE
NEARLY THREE TIMES GREATER THAT YOU WON'T FIND WORK
IF YOU ARE BLACK (32% vs. 13%).

↳ In 1968, UNEMPLOYMENT WAS 3.6% AND WE WERE WORKING HARD TO GET IT DOWN MUCH LOWER. IN 1974, 5.4% UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN GREETED BY WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN AS "ENCOURAGING" AND A 6% RATE LATER THIS YEAR IS TALKED ABOUT WITH NO GREAT CONCERN. AND, OF COURSE, THESE FIGURES HIDE MILLIONS OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE WHO HAVE STOPPED LOOKING FOR JOBS OUT OF DESPAIR.

REPUBLICAN-POLICY-INDUCED UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE LAST SIX-YEARS HAS BEEN VERY DAMAGING TO THE OBJECTIVES OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND TO THE GOAL OF A MORE ^{in employment} ~~OF~~ EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THIS NATION'S WEALTH.

FROM 1947 THROUGH 1968, THE SHARE OF NATIONAL INCOME GOING TO THOSE FAMILIES IN THE LOWEST THREE-FIFTHS OF THE INCOME SCALE INCREASED, WHILE THE SHARE OF THOSE IN THE TOP ONE-FIFTH DECLINED.

BUT, SINCE 1969, THIS TWENTY YEAR TREND HAS BEEN REVERSED AT A LOSS OF NEARLY \$10 BILLION TO OUR LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES.

THIS SHOULD COME AS NO GREAT SURPRISE. TO QUOTE WILL ROGERS: "REPUBLICANS TAKE CARE OF BIG MONEY, AND BIG MONEY TAKES CARE OF REPUBLICANS." IF FURTHER PROOF WERE EVER NEEDED, JUST KEEP YOUR EYE ON BIG BUSINESS PROFITS. FOR STEEL, CHEMICALS, FUELS, MINING, AND THE BIG BANKS, 1974 HAS BEEN A BANNER YEAR.

AND BE CAREFUL OF THOSE WHO QUOTE OFFICIAL STATISTICS THAT PURPORT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT BLACK FAMILIES "NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD."

SURE, MEDIAN BLACK FAMILY INCOME NEARLY
DOUBLED IN THE LAST NINE YEARS, BUT COMPARED TO
MEDIAN WHITE FAMILY INCOME IT HAS GONE NOWHERE.

IN 1964 BLACK MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME WAS 54%
OF WHAT IT WAS FOR WHITES AND TODAY IT IS 57%.

IN OTHER WORDS, A DOUBLING OF THE DOLLAR
VALUE OF BLACK FAMILY INCOME OVER NINE YEARS HAS
RESULTED IN VIRTUALLY NO CHANGE IN THE REAL
DISTRIBUTION OF SHARES IN OUR ECONOMY.

INFLATION HAS BEEN PICTURED AS A THIEF IN
THE NIGHT STEALING EQUALLY FROM ALL AMERICANS.

IT IS THIS BASIC ASSUMPTION THAT MADE POSSIBLE THAT
INCREDIBLE STATEMENT, BY AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL
THAT WALL STREET BROKERS HAVE LOST THE MOST, AMONG
AMERICA'S INCOME GROUPS. WHAT A PITY!

INFLATION DISCRIMINATES AGAINST THE POOR,
THE OLD AND THE BLACK, AND GOD HELP THE PERSON WHO
FITS INTO ALL THREE OF THESE CATEGORIES. THE 12%
RATE OF INFLATION OF THE LAST YEAR IS MUCH HIGHER
FOR THOSE WHO SPEND MOST OF THEIR MONEY ON FOOD,
FUEL, HOUSING, AND MEDICAL COSTS. YOU DON'T NEED
AN ECONOMIST TO POINT OUT THAT THE REAL EXPLOSION
HAS BEEN IN THE PRICE OF THESE ESSENTIALS.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THINGS I BELIEVE WE
CAN AND MUST DO TO RESTORE JOBS TO OUR PEOPLE AND
REASONABLE PRICE STABILITY. NONE OF MY RECOMMENDATIONS
ARE MAGIC, ^{THEY} WON'T WORK OVERNIGHT. BUT, EVERY DAY WE
DELAY IN TAKING ACTION DELAYS THE RECOVERY DATE.

THEREFORE, WE MUST ACT NOW. *Here is what I think we need:*

FIRST, TAX RELIEF FOR LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME
PEOPLE COUPLED WITH LOOPHOLE CLOSING TAX REFORM,

SECOND, A MAJOR PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS PROGRAM,
BEGINNING IMMEDIATELY;

THIRD, ^ACREDIT ALLOCATION SYSTEM TO GET
CAPITAL INTO PRIORITY AREAS LIKE HOUSING AND MINORITY
BUSINESSS ENTERPRISES;

FOURTH, A MUCH MORE VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT OF
THE ANTI-TRUST LAWS; WE HAVE ALL HAD ENOUGH OF THE
CONSUMER RIP-OFF DIRECTED BY BIG BUSINESS,

FIFTH, A NEW FOOD POLICY AND ENERGY POLICY
MUST BE DEVELOPED; AND

SIXTH, A PERMANENT PRICE, PROFIT AND WAGE
MONITORING AGENCY, DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO CONGRESS,
AND WITH MORE POWER THEN THE CURRENT AGENCY IS
NEEDED.

BUT, FOR THE LONGER RUN, THERE ARE SOME MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM THAT ARE ESSENTIAL IF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE ARE TO BE MORE THAN CLICHÉS.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, "FULL EMPLOYMENT" MUST BECOME A FACT OF LIFE FOR EVERY AMERICAN. THE "RIGHT TO WORK" HAS YET TO BE RECOGNIZED IN OUR NATION AND MILLIONS OF OUR **PEOPLE** HAVE SUFFERED DEEPLY BECAUSE OF THIS FAILURE.

CONGRESSMAN HAWKINS AND I HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO PUSH FOR ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD TAKE THE "FULL EMPLOYMENT" PROMISE OF 1946 AND **MAKE** IT WORK IN 1976. I DON'T THINK I NEED TO GO OVER THE DETAILS; I AM SURE CONGRESSMAN HAWKINS HAS OR SOON WILL DO SO. BUT, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I AM FULLY COMMITTED TO THIS LEGISLATION.

IN A WORD, THIS LEGISLATION GUARANTEES
TO EVERY AMERICAN ABLE AND WILLING TO WORK A JOB
AND DECENT WAGES, AND ESTABLISHES THE FRAMEWORK TO
MAKE IT HAPPEN. THIS IS CRUCIAL LEGISLATION AND CAN
ONLY BE ENACTED WITH YOUR COMPLETE AND ACTIVE SUPPORT.



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