

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

CONGRESSIONAL BREAKFAST FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

January 15, 1975

Washington, D.C.

I am delighted that so many members of Congress are able to join us this morning. We are here for one reason - to demonstrate our concern over the economic crisis among Blacks in America and our determination to do something about it.

We have made progress in the last decade in our efforts to promote human rights and equal justice for all Americans. In fact, we can take pride in having "beaten the odds" and moved ahead as fast as we have.

But I reject the proposition that two centuries of racial injustice have somehow vanished from the land.

Let's not kid ourselves or permit anyone to deceive us. We have miles to go before we even approach our dreams.

America still has an unfinished agenda of human rights. And at the top of this agenda is the right to a meaningful life free from poverty and hunger.

We must shift the battlefield for equal opportunity in America from the courts to the marketplace. Economic justice must now be the major goal of a civil rights movement for the 1970's and beyond.

And this must be a civil rights movement for all Americans. Poverty knows no racial bounds. Whether white, black, brown or red, the children of urban slums and rural blight have a right to escape the poverty which every day, every week, every month and every passing year will deprive them of their basic civil rights: The right to develop to their full potential and the right to share in the abundance of America.

We now must identify the struggle for civil rights as an all-embracing struggle for the rights and privileges and duties of all Americans. We need allies and friends.

We must create a climate of shared interests between the needs, the hopes and the fears of the minorities, and the needs, the hopes and fears of the majority.

This is the challenge to every one of us who would claim a share in the leadership of our people.

Today we are entering a period of economic hardship which has not been equalled since the days of the soup kitchens and the boarded-up banks of the Great Depression.

Yes, my friends, despite statements to the contrary, we are entering a recession which will bring us too many tragic reminders of the 1930's. And let us remember that a recession for white America is depression for Black America.

Just look at the figures:

-- Unemployment for black adults now is nearly 13 per cent, compared to 7.1 per cent for whites.

-- In the last year unemployment among black men and women has increased by 50 per cent to reach a tragic total of 1.3 million people.

-- And joblessness among black teenagers has reached the socially disastrous rate of 38 per cent.

These are the so-called "official" figures. But they don't measure the true economic costs or the full human costs of this recession -- the broken homes, the lost educational opportunities, the hunger, the lost dreams, the pain of it all.

These official rates don't even count the millions of men and women who have, in frustration, given up looking for jobs, or those who have been forced to accept a part-time job because full-time work just wasn't available.

The struggle for economic justice always is tough, even when times are good. But when times are bad we must make special efforts.

The recession-creating policies of the Administrations since 1969 threaten all of the progress toward economic justice that we have made in two decades. I do not intend to stand idly by and watch the gains of the 60's go down the drain in the "Great Recession" of the 70's.

Unless we act soon, millions of poor blacks and poor whites will suffer even more poverty. These people will spend the rest of the decade trying to recover what they may lose in the coming months of recession.

I am not here to give you a dissertation on economics. But I want to tell you that the federal government can take action which will begin to turn the tide against recession in three important areas: taxes, the future of our cities, and, most importantly, jobs.

First, we must enact a program of tax relief which will put money in people's pockets so they can spend it and get the economy moving again.

I have proposed a \$21 billion tax cut aimed primarily at helping low and middle income families. They are the ones that really need help. This measure would reduce taxes by 61 per cent for those earning under \$5,000, by 32 per cent for those making \$5,000 to \$10,000, and 20 per cent for all those making \$10,000 to \$15,000.

There are many proposals for tax reductions being discussed these days. All of them are complex, and while prompt action is needed, wisdom demands very careful examination and deliberation.

An effective tax relief bill must meet three tests.

-- First, it must assure more equitable treatment of those in the lower and middle tax brackets.

-- Second, it should maintain the tax system's revenue-generating ability.

-- And third, it must be designed to be quickly implemented to provide the stimulus for economic growth.

The time has come for the government to recognize that its cities are becoming the shame of a great nation. Many are becoming empty shells where the poor live and the rich and middle class work and then leave. The vast treasure in American banks now flows to the suburbs, the speculative land developers, the multinational corporations and to finance the conglomerate mergers.

We need resources in our cities -- not to build skyscrapers, but to construct low cost housing. Not to build giant convention halls, but to improve our schools and hospitals. Not to build expressways, but to pave and clean our streets and provide efficient transportation systems.

If the private banks won't help our cities, then the Congress must establish a National Domestic Development Bank that will. Such a public bank would provide long-term, low-interest loans to stimulate economic development.

Third, and most important, we must launch a genuine full employment and equal opportunity program that will guarantee a job at decent wages to every American who is able and willing to work.

This is not a pipe dream. A nation which spends \$100 billion each year in its military budget can give every American a good job. The government must become the employer of last resort. Congressman Hawkins and I are introducing the Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Act, to wipe out unemployment in this nation and to make the vague ideal of the "right to a job" a reality in our people's lives.

We need to get America back to work.

Congressman Hawkins will explain exactly how our proposal would work. I urge all of you to give it your fullest possible support.

If we do not act to turn the economic tide, our nation and each of us must accept the consequences of its inaction.

We must accept the possibility of continued decay and despair in our cities.

And we also must accept the responsibility for having created a new generation of frustrated and angered Americans who never will believe that economic justice can be achieved in their country and in their lifetime.

With your commitment and leadership we can begin today a renewed march toward economic justice for all our citizens. We must again lock arms, in the spirit of that great American whose birthday we celebrate today and whose loss our nation mourns. We must quicken the pace in our march toward that "promised land" of opportunity and justice, and fulfill the dreams which Martin Luther King Jr. had for America.

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Dr King
Rev Jesse Jackson

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REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

CONGRESSIONAL BREAKFAST FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

JANUARY 15, 1975

WASHINGTON, D.C.

think a new -
think Big - dare to try
- new arithmetic
New Goals.
New Means

I AM DELIGHTED THAT SO MANY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ARE
ABLE TO JOIN US THIS MORNING. WE ARE HERE FOR ONE REASON -
TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN OVER THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AMONG
BLACKS IN AMERICA AND OUR DETERMINATION TO DO SOMETHING
ABOUT IT.

WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS IN THE LAST DECADE IN OUR EFFORTS
TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL AMERICANS.
IN FACT, WE CAN TAKE PRIDE IN HAVING "BEATEN THE ODDS" AND
MOVED AHEAD AS FAST AS WE HAVE.

↳ BUT I REJECT THE PROPOSITION THAT TWO CENTURIES OF
RACIAL INJUSTICE HAVE SOMEHOW VANISHED FROM THE LAND.

LET'S NOT KID OURSELVES OR PERMIT ANYONE TO DECEIVE US.

WE HAVE MILES TO GO BEFORE WE EVEN APPROACH OUR DREAMS.

AMERICA STILL HAS AN UNFINISHED AGENDA OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

AND AT THE TOP OF THIS AGENDA IS THE RIGHT TO A MEANINGFUL
LIFE FREE FROM POVERTY AND HUNGER.

WE MUST SHIFT THE BATTLEFIELD FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
IN AMERICA FROM THE COURTS TO THE MARKETPLACE. ECONOMIC

JUSTICE MUST NOW BE THE MAJOR GOAL OF A CIVIL RIGHTS
MOVEMENT FOR THE 1970'S AND BEYOND.

AND THIS MUST BE A CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ALL AMERICANS.

POVERTY KNOWS NO RACIAL BOUNDS. WHETHER WHITE, BLACK, BROWN

OR RED, THE CHILDREN OF URBAN SLUMS AND RURAL BLIGHT HAVE A

RIGHT TO ESCAPE THE POVERTY WHICH EVERY DAY, EVERY WEEK, EVERY

MONTH AND EVERY PASSING YEAR WILL DEPRIVE THEM OF THEIR

BASIC CIVIL RIGHTS; THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP TO THEIR FULL
POTENTIAL AND THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN THE ABUNDANCE OF AMERICA.

↳ WE NOW MUST IDENTIFY THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AS
AN ALL-EMBRACING STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES AND
DUTIES OF ALL AMERICANS. ↳ WE NEED ALLIES AND FRIENDS. !

↳ WE MUST CREATE A CLIMATE OF SHARED INTERESTS BETWEEN
THE NEEDS, THE HOPES AND THE FEARS OF THE MINORITIES AND
THE NEEDS, THE HOPES AND FEARS OF THE MAJORITY.

↳ THIS IS THE CHALLENGE TO EVERY ONE OF US WHO WOULD
CLAIM A SHARE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF OUR PEOPLE.

↳ TODAY WE ARE ENTERING A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP
WHICH HAS NOT BEEN EQUALLED SINCE THE DAYS OF THE SOUP
KITCHENS AND THE BOARDED-UP BANKS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

~~YES, MY FRIENDS~~ / DESPITE STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY,

WE ARE ENTERING A RECESSION WHICH WILL BRING US ~~SO~~ MANY

TRAGIC REMINDERS OF THE 1930's. } AND LET US REMEMBER THAT

A RECESSION FOR WHITE AMERICA IS DEPRESSION FOR BLACK AMERICA.

JUST LOOK AT THE FIGURES:

-- UNEMPLOYMENT FOR BLACK ADULTS NOW IS NEARLY 13 PER
CENT, COMPARED TO 7.1 PER CENT FOR WHITES.

↳ -- IN THE LAST YEAR UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG BLACK MEN AND
WOMEN HAS INCREASED BY 50 PER CENT TO REACH A TRAGIC TOTAL
OF 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE.

↳ -- AND JOBLESSNESS AMONG BLACK TEENAGERS HAS REACHED THE
SOCIAALLY DISASTROUS RATE OF 38 PER CENT.

↳ THESE ARE THE SO-CALLED "OFFICIAL" FIGURES! BUT THEY
DON'T MEASURE THE TRUE ECONOMIC COSTS OR THE FULL HUMAN COSTS
OF THIS RECESSION -- THE BROKEN HOMES, THE LOST EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES, THE HUNGER, THE LOST DREAMS, THE PAIN OF IT
ALL.

and -

↳ THESE "OFFICIAL" RATES DON'T EVEN COUNT THE MILLIONS
OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE, IN FRUSTRATION, GIVEN UP LOOKING
FOR JOBS, OR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ACCEPT A PART-TIME
JOB BECAUSE FULL-TIME WORK JUST WASN'T AVAILABLE.

↳ THE STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE ALWAYS IS TOUGH,
EVEN WHEN TIMES ARE GOOD! BUT WHEN TIMES ARE BAD WE MUST
MAKE SPECIAL EFFORTS.

↳ THE RECESSION-CREATING POLICIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIONS
SINCE 1969 THREATEN ALL OF THE PROGRESS TOWARD ECONOMIC

JUSTICE THAT WE HAVE MADE IN TWO DECADES / and we cannot
~~DO NOT INTEND~~

stand by
~~TO STAND BY~~ AND WATCH THE GAINS OF THE 60'S GO DOWN

THE DRAIN IN THE "GREAT RECESSION" OF THE 70'S.

↳ UNLESS WE ACT SOON, MILLIONS OF POOR BLACKS AND
POOR WHITES WILL SUFFER EVEN MORE POVERTY / THESE PEOPLE

WILL SPEND THE REST OF THE DECADE TRYING TO RECOVER WHAT

THEY MAY LOSE IN THE COMING MONTHS OF RECESSION.

↳ I AM NOT HERE TO GIVE YOU A DISSERTATION ON ECONOMICS.

BUT I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE

ACTION WHICH WILL BEGIN TO TURN THE TIDE AGAINST RECESSION

IN THREE IMPORTANT AREAS: TAXES, THE FUTURE OF OUR CITIES, AND,

MOST IMPORTANTLY, JOBS.

FIRST, WE MUST ENACT A PROGRAM OF TAX RELIEF WHICH WILL
PUT MONEY IN PEOPLE'S POCKETS SO THEY CAN SPEND IT AND GET
THE ECONOMY MOVING AGAIN.

I HAVE PROPOSED A \$21 BILLION TAX CUT AIMED PRIMARILY AT
HELPING LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES, ^{not 12 billion} THEY ARE THE ONES
THAT REALLY NEED HELP. THIS MEASURE WOULD REDUCE TAXES BY
61 PER CENT FOR THOSE EARNING UNDER \$5,000, BY 32 PER CENT
FOR THOSE MAKING \$5,000 TO \$10,000, AND 20 PER CENT FOR ALL
THOSE MAKING \$10,000 TO \$15,000.

THERE ARE MANY PROPOSALS FOR TAX REDUCTIONS BEING
DISCUSSED THESE DAYS. ALL OF THEM ARE COMPLEX, AND WHILE
PROMPT ACTION IS NEEDED, WISDOM DEMANDS VERY CAREFUL
EXAMINATION AND DELIBERATION.

AN EFFECTIVE TAX RELIEF BILL MUST MEET THREE TESTS.

-- FIRST, IT MUST ASSURE MORE EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF
THOSE IN THE LOWER AND MIDDLE TAX BRACKETS.

-- SECOND, IT SHOULD MAINTAIN ^{THE TAX} SYSTEM'S REVENUE-GENERATING
ABILITY.

-- AND THIRD, IT MUST BE DESIGNED TO BE QUICKLY IMPLEMENTED
TO PROVIDE ^{THE} STIMULUS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

↳ THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE THAT
ITS CITIES ARE BECOMING THE SHAME OF A GREAT NATION. ↳ MANY
ARE BECOMING EMPTY SHELLS WHERE THE POOR LIVE AND THE RICH
AND MIDDLE CLASS WORK AND THEN LEAVE. ↳ THE VAST TREASURE IN
AMERICAN BANKS NOW FLOWS TO THE SUBURBS, THE SPECULATIVE LAND
DEVELOPERS, THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND TO FINANCE
THE CONGLOMERATE MERGERS.

L WE NEED RESOURCES IN OUR CITIES -- NOT ^{only} TO BUILD SKYSCRAPERS,
BUT TO CONSTRUCT LOW COST HOUSING. ^{only} NOT TO BUILD GIANT

CONVENTION HALLS, BUT TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS,

L ^{only} NOT TO BUILD EXPRESSWAYS, BUT TO PAVE AND CLEAN OUR STREETS

AND PROVIDE EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.

L IF THE PRIVATE BANKS WON'T HELP OUR CITIES, THEN THE
CONGRESS MUST ESTABLISH A NATIONAL DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

THAT WILL L SUCH A PUBLIC BANK WOULD PROVIDE LONG-TERM,
LOW-INTEREST LOANS TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

#3 (THIRD), AND MOST IMPORTANT, WE MUST LAUNCH A GENUINE

FULL EMPLOYMENT AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM THAT WILL

GUARANTEE A JOB AT DECENT WAGES TO EVERY AMERICAN WHO IS

ABLE AND WILLING TO WORK.

THIS IS NOT A PIPE DREAM. A NATION WHICH SPENDS \$100 BILLION EACH YEAR IN ITS MILITARY BUDGET CAN GIVE EVERY AMERICAN A GOOD JOB. THE GOVERNMENT MUST BECOME THE EMPLOYER OF LAST RESORT. CONGRESSMAN HAWKINS AND I ~~HAVE~~ ^{ARE} INTRODUCING THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND FULL EMPLOYMENT ACT, TO WIPE OUT UNEMPLOYMENT IN THIS NATION AND TO MAKE THE VAGUE IDEAL OF THE "RIGHT TO A JOB" A REALITY IN OUR PEOPLE'S LIVES.

WE NEED TO GET AMERICA BACK TO WORK.

CONGRESSMAN HAWKINS WILL EXPLAIN EXACTLY HOW OUR PROPOSAL WOULD WORK. I URGE ALL OF YOU TO GIVE IT YOUR FULLEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT.

IF WE DO NOT ACT TO TURN THE ECONOMIC TIDE, OUR NATION AND EACH OF US MUST ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS INACTION.

WE MUST ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUED DECAY AND
DESPAIR IN OUR CITIES.

~~WE MUST ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUMMER OF VIOLENCE AND
UNREST.~~

AND WE ALSO MUST ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVING
CREATED A NEW GENERATION OF FRUSTRATED AND ANGERED AMERICANS
WHO NEVER WILL BELIEVE THAT ECONOMIC JUSTICE CAN BE ACHIEVED
IN THEIR COUNTRY AND IN THEIR LIFETIME.

WITH YOUR COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP WE CAN BEGIN TODAY
A RENEWED MARCH TOWARD ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS.

WE MUST AGAIN LOCK ARMS, IN THE SPIRIT OF THAT GREAT AMERICAN
WHOSE BIRTHDAY WE CELEBRATE TODAY AND WHOSE LOSS OUR NATION
MOURNS. WE MUST QUICKEN THE PACE IN OUR MARCH TOWARD THAT
"PROMISED LAND" OF OPPORTUNITY AND JUSTICE, AND FULFILL THE
DREAMS WHICH MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HAD FOR AMERICA.

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