

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

WOMEN IN COMMUNITY SERVICE
TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Washington, D.C.

May 5, 1975

It is a distinct pleasure to be with you today to add my voice to yours in celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of your participation in the Job Corps.

What wonderful memories we have -- how elated we were to see the enactment of the vital Economic Opportunity Act. It represented the height of our efforts to establish as the law of the land a policy mandating that poverty be eradicated in America.

You deserve to take pride in your vital role in the success of this program, which has had a total enrollment over the years of nearly half a million young men and women who otherwise faced the unending cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment -- or scattered, unsatisfying, unproductive odd jobs.

Your efforts to provide special assistance to the young women enrolled in Job Corps have enhanced the effectiveness of the program immeasurably. Without your careful and compassionate follow-up work, aiding enrollees to reenter society as employable, self-fulfilled young women, much of the time, money and effort could have gone for nothing.

But you and thousands of others like you have put your commitment to work to guarantee that Job Corps training, guidance and education provided a basis for a life of truly productive and meaningful employment and involvement in the community.

Over the 10 years of your involvement, over 20,000 volunteers have served with Job Corps. This is an enormous reserve of skill, and compassion, and dedication. And you should be proud.

But you know -- and I know -- that you cannot rest. Job Corps needs your support more than ever -- not only by your continued participation -- but by your efforts to make the Administration and the Congress understand the imperative of keeping alive this program which has proved so successful.

In these days of budget-cutting and talk of federal government belt-tightening, many of the programs we fought so long and hard to create are in danger of getting the axe because some bureaucrat down in the OMB doesn't think its cost-benefit rate is high enough.

Now, I'm all for cutting back on waste and duplication. There may be some federal programs whose spending levels could and should be reduced. But Job Corps is not one of them.

In hard, economic terms, Job Corps has been tremendously successful. And you -- and I -- will not sit still and watch it fall victim to misguided, mislabeled fiscal restraint.

You are deeply aware of the massive toll that unemployment, or unfulfilling employment, takes on Americans who have been trapped in the cycle of poverty. Daily, you see the frustrations which come with inadequate employment. The tears of desperation when a young mother or father is unable -- no matter how hard they try -- to provide enough food for their family -- lunch money for the kids in school. There is no health insurance -- no decent health care. There is no time for cultural activity; no hope of becoming a productive, happy member of the community, because the community is a club for insiders, and poor men and women are on the outside.

Unemployment means more than a loss of income. It means that society says, in effect: "We don't want you. We don't need you. There is no place for you."

The Job Corps has changed this sad story for thousands of young Americans:

-- Young people who have learned that there is a place for them in our society

-- Young people who have been taught that they do indeed have a role to play in building a greater America

-- Young people who can now say, "Respect me -- I have skill; I have an education; I respect myself."

While you are in Washington, you have the perfect opportunity to make known your determination to keep alive this program -- now authorized under Title IV of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. I hope you will make a point to see your Representatives and Senators. Tell them the Job Corps is a success. Emphasize that it has the capability of meeting one of our greatest needs -- training men and women to become productive again. This is the strongest argument for some of those who believe that any money spent for anti-poverty programs is fiscally irresponsible. Tell them that Job Corps is an excellent investment.

Make your voices heard. The challenge falls to you and to me. We must bring home the message that government can be a positive force in the lives of people. We must say, again and again, that government working in concert with its citizens can improve the lives of people. Government can be a partner in building a just society where each person has the freedom to develop his or her abilities to the fullest.

So make your case, and make it strong. Our cause is just. It is responsible. It is good government.

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MAY 5, 1975

IT IS A DISTINCT PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS IN CELEBRATION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE JOB CORPS.

WHAT WONDERFUL MEMORIES WE HAVE -- HOW ELATED WE WERE TO SEE THE ENACTMENT OF THE VITAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT.

IT REPRESENTED THE HEIGHT OF OUR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AS THE LAW OF THE LAND A POLICY MANDATING THAT POVERTY BE ERADICATED IN AMERICA.

YOU DESERVE TO TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR VITAL ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THIS PROGRAM, WHICH HAS HAD A TOTAL ENROLLMENT OVER THE YEARS OF NEARLY HALF A MILLION YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO OTHERWISE FACED THE UNENDING CYCLE OF POVERTY, ILLITERACY, AND UNEMPLOYMENT -- OR SCATTERED, UNSATISFYING, UNPRODUCTIVE ODD JOBS.

YOUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE YOUNG WOMEN ENROLLED IN JOB CORPS HAVE ENHANCED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM IMMEASURABLY. WITHOUT YOUR CAREFUL AND COMPASSIONATE FOLLOW-UP WORK, AIDING ENROLLEES TO REENTER SOCIETY AS EMPLOYABLE, SELF-FULFILLED YOUNG WOMEN, MUCH OF THE TIME, MONEY AND EFFORT COULD HAVE GONE FOR NOTHING.

BUT YOU AND THOUSANDS OF OTHERS LIKE YOU HAVE PUT YOUR COMMITMENT TO WORK TO GUARANTEE THAT JOB CORPS TRAINING, GUIDANCE AND EDUCATION PROVIDED A BASIS FOR A LIFE OF TRULY PRODUCTIVE AND MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY.

OVER THE 10 YEARS OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT, OVER 20,000
VOLUNTEERS HAVE SERVED WITH JOB CORPS. THIS IS AN ENORMOUS
RESERVE OF SKILL, AND COMPASSION, AND DEDICATION. AND YOU
SHOULD BE PROUD,

BUT YOU KNOW -- AND I KNOW -- THAT YOU CANNOT REST,
JOB CORPS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT MORE THAN EVER -- NOT ONLY
BY YOUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION -- BUT BY YOUR EFFORTS TO
MAKE THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS UNDERSTAND THE
IMPERATIVE OF KEEPING ALIVE THIS PROGRAM WHICH HAS PROVED
SO SUCCESSFUL.

IN THESE DAYS OF BUDGET-CUTTING AND TALK OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BELT-TIGHTENING, MANY OF THE PROGRAMS WE FOUGHT SO LONG AND HARD TO CREATE ARE IN DANGER OF GETTING THE AXE BECAUSE SOME BUREAUCRAT DOWN IN THE OMB DOESN'T THINK ITS COST-BENEFIT RATE IS HIGH ENOUGH.

NOW, I'M ALL FOR CUTTING BACK ON WASTE AND DUPLICATION. THERE MAY BE SOME FEDERAL PROGRAMS WHOSE SPENDING LEVELS COULD AND SHOULD BE REDUCED, BUT JOB CORPS IS NOT ONE OF THEM,

IN HARD, ECONOMIC TERMS, JOB CORPS HAS BEEN TREMENDOUSLY SUCCESSFUL. AND YOU -- AND I -- WILL NOT SIT STILL AND WATCH IT FALL VICTIM TO MISGUIDED, MISLABELED FISCAL RESTRAINT.

YOU ARE DEEPLY AWARE OF THE MASSIVE TOLL THAT UNEMPLOYMENT, OR UNFULFILLING EMPLOYMENT, TAKES ON AMERICANS WHO HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN THE CYCLE OF POVERTY. DAILY, YOU SEE THE FRUSTRATIONS WHICH COME WITH INADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT.

THE TEARS OF DESPERATION WHEN A YOUNG MOTHER OR FATHER IS UNABLE -- NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY TRY -- TO PROVIDE ENOUGH FOOD FOR THEIR FAMILY -- LUNCH MONEY FOR THE KIDS IN SCHOOL.

THERE IS NO HEALTH INSURANCE -- NO DECENT HEALTH CARE. THERE IS NO TIME FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITY; NO HOPE OF BECOMING A PRODUCTIVE, HAPPY MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY, BECAUSE THE COMMUNITY IS A CLUB FOR INSIDERS, AND POOR MEN AND WOMEN ARE ON THE OUTSIDE.

UNEMPLOYMENT MEANS MORE THAN A LOSS OF INCOME, IT MEANS THAT SOCIETY SAYS, IN EFFECT: "WE DON'T WANT YOU. WE DON'T NEED YOU. THERE IS NO PLACE FOR YOU."

THE JOB CORPS HAS CHANGED THIS SAD STORY FOR THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS:

-- YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEARNED THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR THEM IN OUR SOCIETY;

-- YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THAT THEY DO INDEED HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN BUILDING A GREATER AMERICA;

-- YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CAN NOW SAY, "RESPECT ME -- I HAVE SKILL; I HAVE AN EDUCATION; I RESPECT MYSELF."

WHILE YOU ARE IN WASHINGTON, YOU HAVE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE KNOWN YOUR DETERMINATION TO KEEP ALIVE THIS PROGRAM -- NOW AUTHORIZED UNDER TITLE IV OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACT. I HOPE YOU WILL MAKE A POINT TO SEE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS.

TELL THEM THE JOB CORPS IS A SUCCESS. EMPHASIZE THAT IT HAS THE CAPABILITY OF MEETING ONE OF OUR GREATEST NEEDS -- TRAINING MEN AND WOMEN TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE AGAIN. THIS IS THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT FOR SOME OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT ANY MONEY SPENT FOR ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS IS FISCALLY IRRESPONSIBLE. TELL THEM THAT JOB CORPS IS AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT.

MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD. THE CHALLENGE FALLS TO YOU AND TO ME. WE MUST BRING HOME THE MESSAGE THAT GOVERNMENT CAN BE A POSITIVE FORCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE. WE MUST SAY, AGAIN AND AGAIN, THAT GOVERNMENT WORKING IN CONCERT WITH ITS CITIZENS CAN IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE. GOVERNMENT CAN BE A PARTNER IN BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY WHERE EACH PERSON HAS THE FREEDOM TO DEVELOP HIS OR HER ABILITIES TO THE FULLEST.

SO MAKE YOUR CASE, AND MAKE IT STRONG. OUR CAUSE IS JUST. IT IS RESPONSIBLE. IT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT.

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