

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

UNITED STATES INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

Washington, D.C.

June 4, 1975

I am delighted to be with you today to participate in your first Annual Political Action Seminar. It is a particular pleasure to speak to this country's Independent Telephone Company representatives whose record of service to the American people, and especially to those who live in the rural parts of our country, has been an admirable achievement.

At a time when we are facing the most severe recession since the Depression, I was pleased to note the other day that large independent telephone companies are reporting revenue gains.

I also was encouraged by Hugh Wilbourn's comments on the association's projections which indicated that, although there was a slight dip in the growth rate in the first half, that he expects to see revenue growth rebounding in the second half of this year.

The independent telephone companies have made a major contribution in opening up the communications system in the rural areas of this country. In addition to introducing the first dial telephone, today independent telephone companies serve more than 50 percent of the geographic service area in this country.

Since the purpose of this seminar is Political Action, I would like to focus my comments this afternoon on three major areas.

First, I would like to discuss some of the issues which are confronting our people in the rural areas of this country.

Second, we should consider recent political occurrences which have tested the very foundation of this democracy.

And then we will talk about the kinds of reforms which are needed to improve our democratic processes.

Today we are suffering a period of economic hardship, more serious than anything our nation has been through since the Great Depression.

In the first quarter of 1975, the real value of the Gross National Product declined by 10 percent.

During the last 12 months, the number of people "officially" unemployed has nearly doubled, rising from 4.5 million last April to 8.2 million for April of this year. In the rural non-farm areas of this country, the unemployment rate is 9.8 percent, well over the 8.9 percent national average, and equal to the unemployment rate we are finding in our central cities.

At the same time, Americans have seen their purchasing power of their take-home pay fall all the way back to its 1964 level.

We have to act now to reverse this tide against recession, and to assure a strong economic recovery in the months ahead.

I would like to outline just a few of the steps that I believe the federal government can and must take to begin to turn the tide.

The first is that the President of the United States has got to stop vetoing vitally needed public service jobs programs.

I was profoundly concerned when President Ford recently vetoed the Emergency Employment Appropriations Act.

This bill included funds for 310,000 urgently needed public service jobs, as well as a \$456 million appropriation for the Summer Youth Jobs Program -- which works out to 840,000 9-week job opportunities for your young people.

This action by the President is completely inconsistent with what we all know is in the best interest of this nation. It is obvious that the Administration still regards inflation as America's priority issue, to the extent that it is failing to deal firmly with the most serious problem -- an economy that is crippled by a major recession.

Unemployment is the real issue today, and it is urgent that federal policies concentrate on expanding America's financial resources and on creating jobs that are critically needed.

The Congress must override this Presidential veto.

How much more expensive is it for our nation to have 10 to 12 million of its people jobless, on welfare, food stamps, and our plants idle, than to provide federal assistance now to get this economy moving again?

The only way you reverse recessionary trends is by pumping money into the economy, and by putting people back to work. And someone had better get this message to the White House, or we will be in even greater economic trouble than we are in today.

I am impressed that the U.S. Independent Telephone Association is initiating this kind of Political Action Workshop. I think more of this kind of seminar in practical politics is needed. I would hope that upon your return home, the tools which you gained from this experience will be shared with others in order that we may educate our citizenry on how to get things done in Washington, D.C.

I notice from your schedule that you will be visiting Capitol Hill later this afternoon.

As you visit the Capitol, don't be overwhelmed by the marble halls or the vast rotundas. Although these buildings are beautiful and impressive, remember that your government is composed of human beings, men and women like yourselves who are trying to represent you and all of their constituents the best they know how.

For those of us who have been involved in politics for some time, we occasionally must be reminded of a statement by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. "The future lies with those wise political leaders who realize that the great public is interested more in government than in politics."

Our recent experience would support that point, that the American people are not interested in political shenanigans, but are more interested in good government.

We have witnessed over two years of the most turbulent, trying times in the history of our nation.

The President and Vice President of the United States resigned in a cloud of scandal and corruption; the integrity of our constitutional system has been threatened, the system by which we elect public officials has been maligned. Our great public institutions have been shaken to their very foundation. In short, our Constitution has met its greatest test since the Civil War.

But our government is still standing. Our commitment to the purposes and ideals of the Constitution has been greatly strengthened. We have proven that we are, indeed, a government of laws and not of men. And our political and election systems are undergoing extensive reforms -- proving that ours is a living, vibrant, constantly improving democracy.

Some of you might like me to tell you that as a result of recent reforms, our Democratic form of government is perfect. Well, I am here to tell you that it isn't perfect. And do you want to know why? Because it's run by 215 million people, none of whom is perfect. That's right. Representative democracy is not -- it cannot be -- perfect. And I, for one, don't think that it has to be perfect to be successful.

John Buchan said when reflecting on democracy:

"The essential thing as distinguished from this or that democratic government -- was primarily an attitude of mind, a spiritual testament, and not an economic structure or a political machine. The testament involved certain basic beliefs -- that the personality was sacrosanct, which was the meaning of liberty; that policy should be settled by free discussion; that normally a minority should be ready to yield to a majority, which in turn should respect a minority's sacred things."

This democracy is still committed to those individual freedoms and liberties; to open and free discussion, and to the principle of majority rule. However, I firmly believe that this system works best when it is under a certain amount of stress -- conflict -- tension. The thing that has made this country great is the diversity of views and the controversy which has created sufficient tension within the system to create change.

My challenge to you today is to learn how to put a little tension into the system.

Edmund Burke once said, "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together."

As you visit with various members of Congress about your individual concerns, I would encourage you to talk to my colleagues about what kinds of proposals they are supporting, to reform the Congress in order to make it a more responsive and effective legislative body.

Significant progress was made this year with the introduction of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act. We have also seen dramatic reforms in the House this year. And the Senate has lowered the barrier of the filibuster, in order to move ahead on the vital agenda that is before it. However, much remains to be done.

In February, I introduced the Modern Congress Act of 1975, which is a bill to strengthen the role of Congress as a coequal branch of government.

This bill would require a status report from the Congress on Congressional initiatives, priorities matters to be acted upon by the Congress, and finally a State of the Congress message.

It would establish a 24 member federal-state legislative council to be made up of state and Congressional representatives, to interact and exchange information. This bill would also provide for the opening up of Congressional committee meetings.

Another area which has long been in need of reform, and which has direct impact on this group, is the operation of our various federal regulatory commissions. Originally, these commissions and agencies were intended to be "arms of the Congress" which Congress defined as independent agencies with quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial functions. The commissions were intended to be independent of the Executive, to be free from executive control and to act in a manner protecting the public interest.

In my judgment, there have been two serious perversions of the original Congressional concept. First, I am concerned that the executive branch has captured control over some of these agencies. And second, the commissions themselves appear too often to have become captives of the special interest they are supposed to regulate, placing the wishes of the special interest first and those of the consumer last.

I urge you to take up the challenge of helping us reform our institutions of government to make them more responsive to the needs of our people. Take what you have learned during this seminar and share it with others. Become involved in your local community activities and in political affairs. You can and you must contribute to this democracy through putting constructive tension into the system.

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Joe Ford

Bob Dole

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

UNITED STATES INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 4, 1975

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR
FIRST ANNUAL POLITICAL ACTION SEMINAR. IT IS A PARTICULAR
PLEASURE TO SPEAK TO THIS COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE
COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES WHOSE RECORD OF SERVICE TO THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE, AND ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE RURAL PARTS OF
OUR COUNTRY, HAS BEEN AN ADMIRABLE ACHIEVEMENT.

AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE FACING THE MOST SEVERE RECESSION
SINCE THE DEPRESSION, I WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THE OTHER DAY
THAT LARGE INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE COMPANIES ARE REPORTING
REVENUE GAINS.

I ALSO WAS ENCOURAGED BY HUGH WILBOURN'S COMMENTS ON THE
ASSOCIATION'S PROJECTIONS WHICH INDICATED THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE
WAS A SLIGHT DIP IN THE GROWTH RATE IN THE FIRST HALF, THAT
HE EXPECTS TO SEE REVENUE GROWTH REBOUNDED
OF THIS YEAR.

THE INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE COMPANIES HAVE MADE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION IN OPENING UP THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THIS COUNTRY. L IN ADDITION TO INTRODUCING THE FIRST DIAL TELEPHONE, TODAY INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE COMPANIES SERVE MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA IN THIS COUNTRY.

L SINCE THE PURPOSE OF THIS SEMINAR IS POLITICAL ACTION, I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS MY COMMENTS THIS AFTERNOON ON THREE MAJOR AREAS.

① L FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE ISSUES WHICH ARE CONFRONTING OUR PEOPLE IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THIS COUNTRY.

② L SECOND, WE SHOULD CONSIDER RECENT POLITICAL OCCURENCES WHICH HAVE TESTED THE VERY FOUNDATION OF THIS DEMOCRACY.

AND THEN WE WILL TALK ABOUT THE KINDS OF REFORMS WHICH ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES,

↳ TODAY WE ARE SUFFERING A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP, MORE SERIOUS THAN ANYTHING OUR NATION HAS BEEN THROUGH SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

↳ IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1975, THE REAL VALUE OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT DECLINED BY ^{over} 10 PERCENT.

↳ DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE "OFFICIALLY" UNEMPLOYED HAS NEARLY DOUBLED, RISING FROM 4.5 MILLION LAST APRIL TO 8.2 MILLION FOR APRIL OF THIS YEAR. ↳ IN THE RURAL NON-FARM AREAS OF THIS COUNTRY, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS 9.8 PERCENT, WELL OVER THE 8.9 PERCENT NATIONAL AVERAGE, AND EQUAL TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WE ARE FINDING IN OUR CENTRAL CITIES.

↳ AT THE SAME TIME, AMERICANS HAVE SEEN THEIR PURCHASING
POWER OF THEIR TAKE-HOME PAY FALL ALL THE WAY BACK TO ITS 1964
LEVEL.

↳ WE HAVE TO ACT NOW TO REVERSE THIS TIDE AGAINST RECESSION,
AND TO ASSURE A STRONG ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

↳ I WOULD LIKE TO OUTLINE JUST A FEW OF THE STEPS THAT I
BELIEVE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN AND MUST TAKE TO BEGIN TO
TURN THE TIDE.

↳ THE FIRST IS THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS
GOT TO STOP VETOING VITALLY NEEDED PUBLIC SERVICE *work + jobs* ~~JOBS PROGRAMS.~~

↳ I WAS PROFOUNDLY CONCERNED WHEN PRESIDENT FORD RECENTLY
VETOED THE EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT.

THIS BILL INCLUDED FUNDS FOR 310,000 URGENTLY NEEDED PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS, AS WELL AS A \$456 MILLION APPROPRIATION FOR THE SUMMER YOUTH JOBS PROGRAM -- WHICH WORKS OUT TO 840,000 9-WEEK JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

↳ THIS ACTION BY THE PRESIDENT IS COMPLETELY INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE ALL KNOW IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THIS NATION.

↳ IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION STILL REGARDS INFLATION AS AMERICA'S PRIORITY ISSUE ^{and} TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS FAILING TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM -- AN ECONOMY THAT IS CRIPPLED BY A MAJOR RECESSION.

↳ UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE REAL ISSUE TODAY, AND IT IS URGENT THAT FEDERAL POLICIES CONCENTRATE ON EXPANDING AMERICA'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ON CREATING JOBS THAT ARE CRITICALLY NEEDED.

↳ THE CONGRESS MUST OVERRIDE THIS PRESIDENTIAL VETO.

↳ HOW MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE IS IT FOR OUR NATION TO HAVE 10 TO

12 MILLION OF ITS PEOPLE JOBLESS, ON WELFARE, FOOD STAMPS, AND

OUR PLANTS IDLE, THAN TO PROVIDE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE NOW TO GET

THIS ECONOMY MOVING AGAIN?

↳ THE ONLY WAY YOU REVERSE RECESSIONARY TRENDS IS BY PUMPING

MONEY INTO THE ECONOMY, AND BY PUTTING PEOPLE BACK TO WORK,

(Seminar)

↳ AND SOMEONE HAD BETTER GET THIS MESSAGE TO THE WHITE HOUSE, OR

WE WILL BE IN EVEN GREATER ECONOMIC TROUBLE THAN WE ARE IN TODAY.

↳ I AM IMPRESSED THAT THE U.S. INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

IS INITIATING THIS KIND OF POLITICAL ACTION WORKSHOP I THINK

MORE OF THIS KIND OF SEMINAR IN PRACTICAL POLITICS IS NEEDED.

I WOULD HOPE THAT UPON YOUR RETURN HOME, THE TOOLS WHICH YOU GAINED FROM THIS EXPERIENCE WILL BE SHARED WITH OTHERS IN ORDER THAT WE MAY EDUCATE OUR CITIZENRY ON HOW TO GET THINGS DONE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

∟ I NOTICE FROM YOUR SCHEDULE THAT YOU WILL BE VISITING CAPITOL HILL LATER THIS AFTERNOON.

∟ AS YOU VISIT THE CAPITOL, DON'T BE OVERWHELMED BY THE MARBLE HALLS OR THE VAST ROTUNDAS; ALTHOUGH THESE BUILDINGS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND IMPRESSIVE, REMEMBER THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT IS COMPOSED OF HUMAN BEINGS, MEN AND WOMEN LIKE YOURSELVES WHO ARE TRYING TO REPRESENT YOU AND ALL OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS THE BEST THEY KNOW HOW.

FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN POLITICS FOR
SOME TIME, WE OCCASIONALLY MUST BE REMINDED OF A STATEMENT BY
FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT. "THE FUTURE LIES WITH THOSE WISE
POLITICAL LEADERS WHO REALIZE THAT THE GREAT PUBLIC IS INTERESTED
MORE IN GOVERNMENT THAN IN POLITICS."

OUR RECENT EXPERIENCE WOULD SUPPORT THAT POINT, THAT THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN POLITICAL SHENANIGANS, BUT
ARE MORE INTERESTED IN GOOD GOVERNMENT.

WE HAVE WITNESSED OVER TWO YEARS OF THE MOST TURBULENT,
TRYING TIMES IN THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION.

THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

RESIGNED IN A CLOUD OF SCANDAL AND CORRUPTION; THE INTEGRITY
OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN THREATENED, THE SYSTEM
BY WHICH WE ELECT PUBLIC OFFICIALS HAS BEEN MALIGNED, OUR GREAT
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN SHAKEN TO THEIR VERY FOUNDATION.

IN SHORT, OUR CONSTITUTION HAS MET ITS GREATEST TEST SINCE THE
CIVIL WAR.

↳ BUT OUR GOVERNMENT IS STILL STANDING. OUR COMMITMENT
TO THE PURPOSES AND IDEALS OF THE CONSTITUTION HAS BEEN GREATLY
STRENGTHENED. WE HAVE PROVEN THAT WE ARE, INDEED, A GOVERNMENT
OF LAWS AND NOT OF MEN. AND OUR POLITICAL AND ELECTION SYSTEMS
ARE UNDERGOING EXTENSIVE REFORMS -- PROVING THAT OURS IS A
LIVING, VIBRANT, CONSTANTLY IMPROVING DEMOCRACY.

L SOME OF YOU MIGHT LIKE ME TO TELL YOU THAT AS A RESULT OF RECENT REFORMS, OUR DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT IS PERFECT. WELL, I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THAT IT ISN'T PERFECT. AND DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY? BECAUSE IT'S RUN BY 215 MILLION PEOPLE, NONE OF WHOM IS PERFECT. THAT'S RIGHT, REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IS NOT -- IT CANNOT BE -- PERFECT. AND I, FOR ONE, DON'T THINK THAT IT HAS TO BE PERFECT TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

Churchill
Democ

JOHN BUCHAN SAID WHEN REFLECTING ON DEMOCRACY:

"THE ESSENTIAL THING AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THIS OR THAT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT -- WAS PRIMARILY AN ATTITUDE OF MIND, A SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT, AND NOT AN ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OR A POLITICAL MACHINE. THE TESTAMENT INVOLVED CERTAIN BASIC BELIEFS -- THAT THE PERSONALITY WAS SACROSANCT, WHICH WAS THE MEANING OF LIBERTY; THAT POLICY SHOULD BE SETTLED BY FREE DISCUSSION; THAT NORMALLY A MINORITY SHOULD BE READY TO YIELD TO A MAJORITY, WHICH IN TURN SHOULD RESPECT A MINORITY'S SACRED THINGS."

L THIS DEMOCRACY IS STILL COMMITTED TO THOSE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS
AND LIBERTIES; TO OPEN AND FREE DISCUSSION, AND TO THE PRINCIPLE
OF MAJORITY RULE. HOWEVER, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THIS SYSTEM
WORKS BEST WHEN IT IS UNDER A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF STRESS -

CONFLICT -- TENSION. THE THING THAT HAS MADE THIS COUNTRY GREAT
IS THE DIVERSITY OF VIEWS AND THE CONTROVERSY WHICH HAS CREATED
SUFFICIENT TENSION WITHIN THE SYSTEM TO CREATE CHANGE.

L MY CHALLENGE TO YOU TODAY IS TO LEARN HOW TO PUT A LITTLE
TENSION INTO THE SYSTEM.

L EDMUND BURKE ONCE SAID, "MAGNANIMITY IN POLITICS IS NOT
SELDOM THE TRUEST WISDOM; AND A GREAT EMPIRE AND LITTLE MINDS
GO ILL TOGETHER."

AS YOU VISIT WITH VARIOUS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ABOUT YOUR
INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS, I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TALK TO MY
COLLEAGUES ABOUT WHAT KINDS OF PROPOSALS THEY ARE SUPPORTING, TO
REFORM THE CONGRESS IN ORDER TO MAKE IT A MORE RESPONSIVE AND
EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE BODY. SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WAS MADE THIS YEAR
WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET AND IMPOUNDMENT
CONTROL ACT. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN DRAMATIC REFORMS IN THE HOUSE
THIS YEAR. AND THE SENATE HAS LOWERED THE BARRIER OF THE FILIBUSTER,
IN ORDER TO MOVE AHEAD ON THE VITAL AGENDA THAT IS BEFORE IT.
HOWEVER, MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE.

IN FEBRUARY, I INTRODUCED THE MODERN CONGRESS ACT OF 1975,
WHICH IS A BILL TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF CONGRESS AS A COEQUAL
BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT.

THIS BILL WOULD REQUIRE A STATUS REPORT FROM THE CONGRESS
ON CONGRESSIONAL INITIATIVES, PRIORITIES, MATTERS TO BE
ACTED UPON BY THE CONGRESS, AND FINALLY A STATE OF THE
CONGRESS MESSAGE.

IT WOULD ESTABLISH A 24 MEMBER FEDERAL-STATE LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL TO BE MADE UP OF STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES,
TO INTERACT AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION. THIS BILL WOULD ALSO
PROVIDE FOR THE OPENING UP OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

ANOTHER AREA WHICH HAS LONG BEEN IN NEED OF REFORM,
AND WHICH HAS DIRECT IMPACT ON THIS GROUP, IS THE OPERATION OF
OUR VARIOUS FEDERAL REGULATORY COMMISSIONS, ORIGINALLY,
THESE COMMISSIONS AND AGENCIES WERE INTENDED TO BE "ARMS
OF THE CONGRESS" WHICH CONGRESS DEFINED AS INDEPENDENT
AGENCIES WITH QUASI-LEGISLATIVE AND QUASI-JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS.
THE COMMISSIONS WERE INTENDED TO BE INDEPENDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE,
TO BE FREE FROM EXECUTIVE CONTROL AND TO ACT IN A MANNER
PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

IN MY JUDGMENT, THERE HAVE BEEN TWO SERIOUS PERVERSIONS
OF THE ORIGINAL CONGRESSIONAL CONCEPT. FIRST, I AM CONCERNED
THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAS CAPTURED CONTROL OVER SOME OF
THESE AGENCIES.

AND SECOND, THE COMMISSIONS THEMSELVES APPEAR

TOO OFTEN TO HAVE BECOME CAPTIVES OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST THEY

ARE SUPPOSED TO REGULATE, PLACING THE WISHES OF THE SPECIAL

INTEREST FIRST AND THOSE OF THE CONSUMER LAST.

I URGE YOU TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE OF HELPING US REFORM

OUR INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THEM MORE RESPONSIVE

TO THE NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE. TAKE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED DURING

THIS SEMINAR AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. BECOME INVOLVED IN YOUR

LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS. YOU CAN

AND YOU MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THIS DEMOCRACY THROUGH PUTTING

CONSTRUCTIVE TENSION INTO THE SYSTEM.

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