

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

COALITION FOR THE EFFECTIVE RESETTLEMENT OF

INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 29, 1977

Stan Breen - Spec ASST to Gov Perpick

First, I want to pay special tribute to the Coalition for
Effective Resettlement of the Indo-Chinese Refugees for the
deep humanitarian concern you have demonstrated in assisting
in the assimilation of all Indo-Chinese refugees into our
society.

Since May of 1975, nearly 150,000 refugees from Indochina
have been resettled in the United States. This is the largest
and most rapid refugee resettlement in the history of our
country.

The private and voluntary organizations, religious groups
and state agencies who have been so deeply involved in the
resettlement efforts are to be commended for the job they
have done.

WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED
IN THE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REPRESENT THE
FINEST TRADITIONS OF OUR COUNTRY.

HOWEVER, WE DO HAVE PROBLEMS. WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF
TURNING OUR BACKS ON THESE REFUGEES AFTER ONLY TWO SHORT YEARS
OF FEDERAL HELP. THE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
IS SCHEDULED TO BE TERMINATED IN OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR. YET,
MANY REFUGEE FAMILIES STILL ARE IN NEED OF HELP.

THE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES HAVE ACHIEVED A REMARKABLE RECORD
OF ASSIMILATION INTO OUR SOCIETY. THE INDUSTRIOUSNESS AND SKILLS
THEY BRING TO THE UNITED STATES IS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT
LAST FALL 87 PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES IN THE LABOR FORCE WERE
EMPLOYED.

h BY LAST FALL, 41 PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES WERE RECEIVING A
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF MORE THAN \$9,500. THIS WAS ONLY
18 MONTHS AFTER THE REFUGEE PROGRAM WAS LAUNCHED IN THIS
COUNTRY--A MOST IMPRESSIVE RECORD BY ANY STANDARDS.

h MANY OTHER REFUGEES CAN MAKE THE SAME POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS
TO OUR SOCIETY ~~AND~~ IF THEY ARE PROVIDED WITH THE NECESSARY
TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE. THE 13 PERCENT UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURE AMONG
THE REFUGEES DOES NOT REFLECT THE MANY SINGLE PARENTS, UNSKILLED
VETERANS AND OLDER WORKERS WHO ARE NOT NOW IN THE LABOR FORCE
BECAUSE THEY ARE RECEIVING INTENSIVE LANGUAGE TRAINING AND/OR
VOCATIONAL TRAINING. THEY CAN, AND WILL, BECOME PRODUCTIVE
MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY IF GIVEN THE TIME TO ACQUIRE THE
LANGUAGE AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS WHICH WOULD ALLOW THEM TO DO SO.

IN ORDER TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS
AND AVOID LONG-TERM DEPENDENCY OF THESE REFUGEES ON PUBLIC
ASSISTANCE, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THESE SPECIAL FINANCIAL,
EDUCATIONAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES BE CONTINUED, ^{yet,} THOSE OF
YOU INVOLVED IN THE RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS, AND THE REFUGEES
THEMSELVES, RECOGNIZE THAT THESE EFFORTS SHOULD NOT CONTINUE
INDEFINITELY.

A PLANNED PHASE-OUT OF SPECIAL SERVICES IS NECESSARY
TO PREVENT EITHER AN UNWANTED INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF
SPECIALIZED SERVICES OR AN UNNECESSARY BURDEN OF UNEMPLOYMENT
AND WELFARE FALLING UPON THE STATES AND UPON THE REFUGEES
THEMSELVES.

↳ THEREFORE, THE PROPOSAL OFFERED BY THE COALITION IS
BOTH REASONABLE AND PRACTICAL. ↳ IT CALLS FOR THE CONTINUATION
OF EXISTING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CASH ASSISTANCE, MEDICAL
ASSISTANCE, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
PROGRAMS OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS. ↳ FUNDING FOR THESE SERVICES
WOULD BE PHASED OUT SO THAT, BY THE END OF THE THREE YEARS,
INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES ON THE
SAME BASIS AS OTHER U.S. RESIDENTS.

↳ I ALSO AM A CO-SPONSOR OF LEGISLATION WITH SENATOR EDWARD
KENNEDY WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE INDO-CHINESE TO ADJUST THEIR
STATUS FROM PAROLEE TO PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIEN WITHOUT
REFERENCE TO THE QUOTA LIMITATION.

THIS MEASURE WILL REMOVE A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO THE FULL
ASSIMILATION OF INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES IN OUR SOCIETY.

THE COALITION'S PROPOSAL, WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY THE INDO-
CHINESE REFUGEE COMMUNITY, IS NEEDED. SOME 16 YEARS AGO, THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE CUBAN REFUGEE PROGRAM. TODAY --
16 YEARS LATER -- WE STILL ARE PROVIDING DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
\$90 MILLION A YEAR IN SUCH ASSISTANCE. A THREE-YEAR PHASE-OUT
OF THE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM CERTAINLY IS A MOST REASONABLE
PROPOSAL AND WORTHY OF THE SUPPORT OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

I HAVE SPOKEN WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ABOUT THIS AND I FEEL
CONFIDENT HE SHARES MY CONCERN THAT THE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SHOULD BE CONTINUED IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE
FULL ASSIMILATION OF THESE INDUSTRIOUS PEOPLE INTO OUR SOCIETY.

I ALSO HAVE WRITTEN THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT
AND BUDGET TO EXPLAIN THE NEED FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM
OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, AS A FOLLOW-UP TO MY CONVERSATION
WITH THE PRESIDENT.

↳ YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT I PERSONALLY WILL SPONSOR THE
ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO CONTINUE THIS PROGRAM WHEN IT IS
READY FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION.

IN APPROACHING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND OFFICIALS IN THE
EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THE COALITION'S PROPOSALS,

↳ WOULD LET THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

↳ EIGHTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES ALREADY ARE EMPLOYED
IN THE LABOR FORCE.

↳ SOME 41 PERCENT OF THE INDO-CHINESE HOUSEHOLDS HAVE INCOMES OF \$9,500.

↳ THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AFTER 16 YEARS, IS STILL PROVIDING \$90 MILLION ANNUALLY FOR THE CUBAN REFUGEE PROGRAM. WHAT THE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES WANT, AND WHAT THE COALITION SUPPORTS, IS A THREE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THIS PROGRAM IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE ASSIMILATION OF THE LARGEST INFLUX OF REFUGEES AT ANY GIVEN TIME IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY.

I THINK THE MERITS OF THE CASE ARE STRONGLY ON YOUR SIDE AND I THINK MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WILL BE GENUINELY SYMPATHETIC TO YOUR CAUSE IF THE CASE IS OUTLINED IN THIS MANNER.

I CERTAINLY WILL DO ALL I CAN TO SEE THAT THE THREE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE PROGRAM IS ACHIEVED.

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