

10/23/72

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

Senator Walter F. Mondale (D. - Minn.) today called for early enactment of his Headstart, Child Development and Family Services legislation.

"The first five years of life can be the years of most exciting development," Mondale said, "but they can also be the years of most permanent damage. Over 3 million preschool children live in poverty, and there are fewer than 700,000 places in licensed day care centers available to serve the 5 million preschool children whose mothers are working. We know the damage that is done to young children who are malnourished or left alone to look after themselves all day while their parents work."

"We need to provide these families with a wide range of necessary health, education and quality day care services," the Minnesota Senator said, "in totally voluntary programs that are controlled by the parents."

The Mondale bill, which was passed by Congress in 1971, vetoed and repassed by a 73-12 vote in the Senate this year, would provide:

--Classes in child development for parents and prospective parents

--prenatal care and early health diagnosis and treatment.

--part day programs like Head Start and nursery school or tutors to work in the home.

--funds to upgrade existing inadequate day care centers or create new ones of the highest quality for children whose parents are working.

A program of this kind was the number one recommendation of the 1970 White House Conference on Children.

"We are paying an enormous price for not acting." Mondale said. "It is reflected in the rising costs of welfare, unemployment, institutionalization and crime."

BASIC CHILDREN'S SPEECH

Over sixty years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt
. . . calling the first White House Conference on Children
. . . spoke movingly about the plight of many of America's
children:

"Some," he said, "are orphans or half orphans. Some
are abandoned . . . some are victims of cruelty or neglect.
They are not delinquents. They are accused of no fault.
They are simply destitute or neglected."

That was 1910. In 1972, the picture is not so bleak.

--More children than ever before are receiving
needed medical care and nutritional assistance.

--Abusive child labor practices have been nearly
ended.

--Fewer children are living in poverty.

--More young Americans are attending and graduating
from school . . . and enrolling in college.

We have made progress. But over 60 years have elapsed since Roosevelt made that statement . . . and we have had 6 more White House Conferences on Children. Yet, tragically, millions of our children still do not share the fullness of American life. Today

--10 million children are still mired in poverty.

--21 out of every thousand infants die in childbirth, a record which is worse than that of 13 other nations.

--A million American children are born each year without adequate prenatal care, and 21 million children see a doctor less often than once a year.

--Over 8 million children arrive at school with no breakfast.

--At least 5 million children live in substandard housing.

It is not just the children of the poor who are the victims of our neglect:

--Of the 17 million school age children identified as "educationally disadvantaged" by HEW, less than a third came from poverty families.

--60% of our handicapped children don't receive the special educational services they need . . . and they come from all economic backgrounds.

The 1970 White House Conference on Children summarized it this way:

"Our children and our families are in deep trouble. A society that neglects its children and fears its youth cannot care about its future. Surely this is the way to National disaster."

There is much to be done. We need to improve our schools . . . our health care system . . . our services and institutions for the mentally and physically handicapped.

But the single most important objective must be the creation of a nationwide, comprehensive program of child development and preschool education.

We know how important the first five years of life are.

We know they can be the years of most exciting development . . . when children learn about themselves and their world . . . develop their feelings of confidence and self-worth . . . begin to accumulate the skills and the motivation that lead to success in school and life.

But we also know that these can be the years of permanent damage.

We know how malnutrition during the early years can cripple a child's intellect for life.

We know that leaving a young child alone all day . . . or leaving him in an overcrowded, make-shift day care center . . . can cause deep emotional and psychological problems that may never be unraveled.

And, above all, we know that these are not mere academic concepts.

The children vulnerable to the disasters of early childhood are all around us:

--There are over 3 million preschool children living in abject poverty.

--There are over five million preschool children whose mothers are working . . . and less than 700,000 places in licensed day care centers available to serve them.

--And a study several years ago showed that 8% of all children whose mothers are working -- including 18,000 preschoolers -- are left alone all day to take care of themselves.

I've seen these cheated children in migrant camps, Eskimo villages, ghettos, and pockets of rural poverty. They lead a kind of shadow life . . . void of the excitement, the curiosity and the hope that these years hold for other American children.

And I've been in some of these make-shift day care centers. They are cold and overcrowded . . . understaffed and uninspected . . . often filled with an eerie silence.

Listen to the way a Washington reporter described a center she visited in our nation's capitol:

"In one corner of the large, neat and very bare room 21 children, 3 to 6 years old, and two adults sit, watching "Captain Kangaroo" on a small-screen black-and-white television perched far above their heads on a room divider.

"About half the children seem attentive, a handful are squinting or glassy-eyed and five had their head down on the table either resting or sleeping.

"There is no talk, either during the commercials or after the program ends. The images flitting across the small screen are the only movements, their mechanically jolly banter the only sound."

According to the reporter, there are few books in the center, no educational toys, little if anything to stimulate creative play.

The children spend up to 11 hours in the sparsely equipped room with a schedule which includes an hour of

television . . . three hours of naptime . . . morning and afternoon devotions . . . an hour and fifteen minutes "getting ready to go home" . . . and an hour and a half for "going home". Only one hour is set aside for "class".

The frightening truth is that that center is far from the worst. The National Council of Jewish Women conducted a nationwide survey of day care facilities, and discovered some intolerable situations. One of the day care homes visited as part of the survey was licensed to care for six children . Instead, the visitor discovered, it contained 47 infants, toddlers and other preschoolers "cared for" by one untrained, unassisted woman.

I wish I could tell you that these are isolated examples . . . but I can't.

And I wish I could tell you that things are getting better . . . but they're not.

We're simply falling further behind in our efforts to meet the need for quality child care and preschool education.

For the first time in a decade, the number of children living in poverty did not decrease last year.

And the number of working mothers has been increasing dramatically. In 1948, for example, only one of every eight mothers with preschool children was working. Today that figure is one out of every three. And this trend is expected to continue through the 1970's.

That is why the 1970 White House Conference on Children concluded that our number one priority must be the creation of "comprehensive, family-oriented child development programs . . . including health services, day care and early childhood education."

And that is why I have spent the past four years fighting for enactment of child development legislation.

My bill is designed to provide these families with a wide range of necessary health, education and quality day care services . . . in totally voluntary programs that are controlled by the parents.

--For those parents or prospective parents who are unsure or unfamiliar with the responsibilities of parenthood, it offers classes in child development.

--For those who cannot afford it, it offers prenatal care and early health diagnosis and treatment for their children.

--For those who want help in providing educational opportunities for their preschool youngsters, it offers tutors to work with them and their children in the home . . . or part-day programs like Head Start or nursery school.

--And to the victims of inadequate child care, it offers help to upgrade existing day care homes and centers . . . as well as funds to create new ones of the highest quality.

This legislation was endorsed by the AFL-CIO, Common Cause, League of Women Voters, the National Education Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and a wide range of religious organizations.

We held extensive hearings . . . it had wide bipartisan support . . . and in 1971, it was adopted by the Congress.

Then, just before Christmas, it was vetoed . . . by the same President who . . . in 1969 . . . had declared a national commitment to the first five years of life . . . and whose own White House Conference on Children had made this initiative its top recommendation.

We passed the bill again this year in the Senate by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 73-12. But the House of Representatives did not act.

This legislation would cost \$2 billion over the next three years. Some people say this is too much . . . that we cannot afford it.

You often hear that when the issue is funding desperately needed human program.

As the cartoonist Herb Block, once said, some "can hear the distant drum more clearly than the cry of a hungry child."

The truth is that if we stopped pouring \$8 billion a year into the swamps and jungles of Indochina . . . we could easily afford to give all our children the chance for a decent life.

How can we defend commitments to spend over \$42 billion for a useless space shuttle . . . \$10 billion for an unneeded carrier task force . . . and hundreds of millions to bail out Lockheed and other bankrupt corporations . . . while the health and welfare of millions of American children hangs in the balance?

Those who oppose investments in our children ignore the enormous cost of not acting.

We all know what happens to cheated children. They often turn up in institutions for the retarded . . . in unemployment lines . . . and in prisons. And the American taxpayer picks up the tab in the increasing cost of welfare, unemployment compensation, crime and other programs that symbolize our failure.

We pay, for example, almost \$150,000 for every retarded child who is institutionalized . . . because once he is admitted he never gets out. Yet, an estimated 75% of mental retardation is related to poverty and childhood neglect . . . and some of it could be prevented if children were given a chance in the early years of life.

But the cost of our inaction cannot be measured in dollar terms alone. We pay for it in a more fundamental and disturbing way.

Erik Erikson once said:

"The most deadly of all possible sins is the mutilation of a child's spirit."

Yet, this sin is committed every day . . . all over America. And it demeans and embarrasses a nation which prides itself on caring deeply about its children.

I believe the American people will put an end to this injustice.

I believe we will fulfill our commitment to our children, and to ourselves.

For I believe that we recognize the sense of personal responsibility we all share . . . a responsibility that was described so well by the French philosopher, Albert Camus:

"Perhaps," Camus wrote, "we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children. And if you don't help us, who else in the world can help us do this."

PRESS RELEASE
VETERANS

Senator Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn) called upon Minnesotans to support a new program designed to bring counseling and guidance services to Minnesota veterans returning from Vietnam. The program, known as VETS -- Veterans Emergency Transition Service -- would operate in such critical areas as employment, education, drug rehabilitation and general counseling.

"When the Vietnam veteran returns home, he faces a difficult and lonely period of adjustment," said Mondale. "During this period, there is a kind of assistance that government simply cannot provide. Only one veteran can really help another.

"I believe VETS can be a model program for offering personal counseling on the many complex problems facing each veteran," Mondale continued. "VETS would operate through a statewide network of 40-50 counselors, all veterans of the Vietnam war.

Established by a Governor's proclamation on September 13, VETS is hampered by a serious shortage of funds. Mondale urged Minnesotans to support VETS with financial contributions, "so that we can make this program a reality."

Mondale also expressed support for a state constitutional amendment to permit a Vietnam veterans' bonus. The amendment will appear on the November 7th ballot. About 124,000 Minnesota veterans would be eligible to receive the bonus.

In supporting the bonus proposal, Mondale described state veterans' programs as a necessary supplement to existing federal programs.

At the same time, Mondale emphasized that Federal GI programs must be improved. Citing passage of legislation in the 92nd Congress to extend VA medical care benefits and increase educational allowances, Mondale said: "These important changes are the result of a broad and bipartisan consensus in the Congress."

Mondale pledged to "carry on the fight next year -- and as long as is necessary -- to see that the Federal government fulfills its obligations to the men who have served in their country's armed forces."

Umm. Collegiate Vets
10/28/72

The Vietnam war is unlike any war this country has ever fought.

It has been a war of brutal contrast -- and paradox.

And no paradox has been crueller than our eagerness to bring our soldiers home from Vietnam...and our failure to meet the needs of our returning veterans.

It wasn't this way after World War II. And Army psychiatrist has neatly summed up the difference:

"One advantage of the good old days of World War II was the troop ship that took three weeks to a month to come home. A man had more time to go through the transition of change, and he could have some of his fantasies about home knocked down by the other guys. And in the states he spent a few weeks in a processing center, which broke him gradually into civilization before he got home.

Now events move too rapidly. My God, the Marines even brought them home in jungle fatigues."

The quick transition creates problems. When he returns home, the Vietnam vet discovers that a job is hard to find. The unemployment rate among 20 to 24 year old Vietnam veterans is currently 12%.

The Vietnam vet returns to continue his education...or to begin the education he never had. He finds that his GI bill payments are grossly inadequate. And he finds that month after month...despite his urgent requests...the payments are slow in coming.

More than 300,000 veterans have returned wounded from Vietnam. Many of them need medical care or rehabilitation programs that aren't available at convenient VA hospitals -- or aren't available at all.

In short, technology has enabled us to bring men home quickly. But we have not been prepared to act quickly enough to meet the needs of our veterans once they return.

This shameful imbalance is changing. This past year, Congress took certain basic steps to recognize the special needs of Vietnam veterans -- and to respond to them.

--The Health Care Expansion Act of 1972 will mean more VA hospital beds. It will establish within three years a staff-to-patient ratio as good as our best community hospital facilities can offer. It will provide incentives to attract specialists to VA hospital facilities... and to train returning medical corpsmen as paramedical personnel.

--The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972 will provide major increases in payments under the GI bill. Increases will range from 25.7% for the single veteran, and a minimum of 27.3% for veterans with dependents...to 48% for on-the-job training.

For the first time, veterans will be able to expect their payments in advance. Beginning next August, there will be no more of the anxious and unfair ritual of waiting for the check to arrive in the mail.

This Act makes other vital improvements in the GI Education Act. Many of them will affect each of you here tonight. And it's a sad commentary on the way we handle veterans' affairs that many of you are already familiar with the provisions of the Act -- more familiar than the people who will be administering them.

These important changes in our veterans' medical care and education benefits are the achievement of a broad -- and bipartisan -- consensus in the Congress.

The Health Care Act passed by a vote of
The BI bill passed this year in the Senate by a vote of
Both Democrats and Republican spoke out in support of the
original Senate bill.

And this was not a triumph of election-year grandstanding.
It's the result of a fundamental...and deeply felt...commitment.
As one long time supporter of veterans' benefits said: "No
greater assistance can be given to enable the veteran to earn
a living under today's standards than a good education."

The author of ~~the~~ statement is Senator Strom Thurmond
of South Carolina...a Republican. We may agree on very few
other issues. But we share the same unshakeable conviction
that this country has an obligation to meet the needs of our
newest...and often forgotten...veterans.

It is this commitment -- widely shared in the Senate --
that enabled us to keep most of the vital provisions of
the final version of the Vietnam Readjustment Assistance Act.

But there were some points on which we lost out. At
the insistence of the Administration, the House deleted several
important features of the Act.

For example --

.We lost a loan program that would have enabled veterans...in cases of need...to borrow up to \$1,575 during the school year to supplement his direct GI bill payments. The Veterans Administration insisted that veterans already have enough loan programs available to them.

I have trouble following the logic of the VA argument.

As Senator Hartke pointed out: "It is difficult for the Senate Committee to reconcile the Veterans Administration position that the loan program was not needed...with their own estimates. These estimates -- supplied to the committee -- show that in the first year of the program 203,000 veterans would qualify for loans amounting to over \$200 million.

.We also lost a program that would have required an affirmative action plan...within every Federal department and agency...to establish preferential employment for Vietnam era and disabled vets.

House conferees took the Administration's position... and argued that we already have adequate programs for

hiring Vietnam and disabled veterans for Federal government jobs.

Here, too, I have trouble following the logic of the Administration argument. Figures supplied to the Senate indicate that the Administration has failed to meet even its own modest employment goals. The goal for the fiscal year 1972 was 75,000 veterans. In the first eight months of the 1972 fiscal year, the Federal Government hired only 32,000. Almost half of these men filled lower grade Post Office positions.

As Senator Hartke remarked: "It is hypocrisy of the highest order for the Federal government to encourage or require hiring of disabled and Vietnam era veterans by private industry and by State and local governments under the public employment...and not to make similar effort in its own hiring."

It's our responsibility to take the hypocrisy out of veterans' programs. We will carry on the fight next year... and as long as it's necessary...to see that the Federal government fulfills its obligations to the men who have served in their country's armed forces.

We must continue to overhaul...and improve...our vital education benefit programs.

Under legislation passed this year by the Congress, the basic GI bill payment will increase to \$220 a month, or \$1,980 a year.

This is better. But it's still not enough.

The Federal Office of Education estimates that the average cost of a single year in college ranges from \$2,700 in public institutions to \$4,600 in private institutions.

Furthermore, thousands of Vietnam veterans still do not take advantage of GI bill programs. Yet we know from past experience that increased GI participation inevitably results from increases in GI benefits.

The situation was very different...and much better... after World War II. At that time veterans returned to the most liberal education benefits this country has ever offered. These benefits went as high as \$1,175 -- a lot of money in 1946 -- and including a tuition payment of up to \$500 a year.

The rate of participation in education programs was much higher than it is today.

There's no reason why veterans today should not enjoy benefits comparable to what our last generations of war-time veterans enjoyed. It's a matter of simple equity -- and wise social policy.

We must offer generous financial assistance...to encourage the discouraged to go to schools...and to help veterans stay in school without assuming crushing burdens of moonlight jobs and heavy borrowing.

Federal programs...however much we improve them...are not likely to solve all our problems for us. We will need state government programs to supplement the benefits available for education.

Here in Minnesota we have an excellent opportunity to start such a program. On November 7, Minnesotans can vote to approve a state Constitutional amendment that will make possible a Vietnam veterans' bonus.

I strongly support ~~that~~ amendment. But I believe we can do more.

We can combine the bonus with a modest -- but significant -- state GI bill for our 124,000 Vietnam veterans in Minnesota. Such a program would give our veterans the parity with World War II veterans they clearly deserve.

And such a program would be money well spent.

It is the least we can do...in Washington and herein Minnesota...to ease the return of veterans from an unpopular war. The men who come back from Vietnam have the right to expect more of their countrymen than indifference or even hostility.

It is also a sound investment in our country's future. Franklin D. Roosevelt made this point during World War II, when he first argued for GI education benefit programs:

"The money invested in this training and schooling program will reap rich dividends in the higher productivity, more intelligent leadership and greater happiness of the American people."

Government programs can make education accessible to hundreds of thousands of veterans. They can offer incentives for going to school -- and staying there.

But there are certain programs which government cannot -- and should not -- undertake alone.

When he returns home, the Vietnam veteran faces a difficult and lonely period of adjustment. One veteran recently summed up the sense of confusion and alienation that he...and thousands like him...must face:

"Nowhere does the veteran see reflected his own view of himself: a person with special resources to offer, but also with special needs to be met. The society fixes him with a blind eye, and he retreats from that blank gaze, learning to say which is expected rather than what he really feels."

During this period of adjustment, there's a kind of assistance that government simply cannot provide. Only one veteran can really help another.

You know what I mean. You have been in Vietnam. You served together -- often over long periods of time. Now you find yourselves facing the same problems.

It may be enrollment procedures...or the maze of different VA programs and benefits..or lack of familiarity with employment procedures. It may be a critical failure of self-confidence or motivation that can affect a veteran returning to a world very different from the one he left.

That's why an out-reach counseling service is so important. You and the groups with whom you've worked -- other veterans' organizations, educators, businessmen and labor unions, civil rights and service groups -- have worked hard to make this service a reality.

And with the Veterans Emergency Transition Service (VETS) -- proclaimed last September 13th in an Executive Order issued by Governor Anderson -- you've made a sound beginning.

I know that Don Sullivan...and many other members of the Minnesota Collegiate Vets...have a great plans for VETS!

This is a program that seeks to do a unique job here in Minnesota. I believe VETS can be a model program for offering personal counseling that will help our veterans go back to school...find jobs...and get off and stay off drugs.

But I am also aware of the financial squeeze facing the VETS program.

When -- and if -- Federal Emergency Employment Act funds become available, they will provide an important source of financial support.

Even if these funds should become available, VETS will still need other, non-governmental support. Federal money simply will not be adequate to help staff the 40 to 50 positions VETS must have throughout the State.

I believe the VETS program is one that all Minnesotans can support.

Contributions from business and industry...labor unions... foundations...churches and synagogues...fraternal groups and lodges...can help the VETS program provide counseling and assistance to the tens of thousands of Minnesota veterans who need guidance.

Tonight I am calling on all Minnesotans to support VETS -- and make this program a reality.

I know the people of Minnesota. I believe they will respond.

because they recognize need where it truly exists. And I know that the people of Minnesota will respond in the spirit of humanity which has always distinguished our people.

We have a grave responsibility to our veterans. As Franklin Roosevelt told an earlier generation of Americans:

"We have taught our youth how to wage war. We must also teach them how to have useful and happy lives...in freedom...and justice...and decency."



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