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REMARKS BY SENATOR WALTER F. MONDALE
BEFORE THE AAA CONFERENCE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
MAY 28, 1968

From Slums to Suburbs: The Challenge for
Urban Transportation

Democracy is on trial in our urban areas today. What unemployed fathers, welfare mothers, and Poor People's Campaigners have told us can no longer be ignored. The domestic social crisis cries out for resolution. Democracy and decency require a massive commitment to ~~eliminating~~^{ending} the poverty and racism existing today.

Many have told the terrible litany of poverty -- inadequate education and housing; poor health services; physical and psychological deprivation. The Poor People's Campaign emphasizes perhaps the core problem: lack of jobs and income.

Many programs have been mounted in the past several years to help meet these problems: The War on Poverty, Model Cities and Rent Supplements, Manpower Training efforts, and others are a beginning.

But the riots of last summer, and the civil disturbances of this spring reinforce the conclusions so forcefully stated by the Riot Commission Report. We have only begun to redress the balance. Governmental efforts have scarcely dented the doomsday machine of poverty. Much more must be done.

You in this room today know much about the problems of which I speak. Mayors, civic leaders, police chiefs and others know the dimensions of the challenge before us, just as do Senators.

The very fact that you are here today shows you are concerned with the social issues that confront us. ^{These are} dilemmas that must engage not only the poor, but all of us, if ever they are to be resolved.

Good transportation means different things to different people:

- To Mayors and City Managers, it means a ^{lure for more} ~~city attractions~~ industries, and thus for more taxes;
~~to tax-paying industry~~
- To Police Chiefs, it means a city freer from ^{cars} ~~cars~~, and an easier place to enforce laws;
- To Public Works Officials, it means elimination of traffic snarls and other problems poor planning can bring;
- To Civic Leaders, it means a city lovely to live in, more pleasant to shop in, and more attractive to visit.

But to the poor, urban transit ^{is much} ~~is much~~ more, something related to the very quality of life itself. For to the working people of the slums, transit patterns in large measure determine the nature of the jobs they can get, and the kind of incomes they can receive. The bus, subway, or trains means a job to these people.

We all are aware of the employment problems in the ghettos today --

- More men and women unemployed in the ghetto than outside, sometimes two, three or four times more;
- Men and women relegated to low-skill, low-paying, dead-end jobs because of lack of the education and skills necessary to escape the trap of underemployment.

In the past, the directions for transit planning were relatively easy to follow. Industry and jobs were concentrated in the urban cores. The major task was to provide fast, cheap transportation from all parts of the city and metropolitan areas to the major industrial and commercial concentrations.

This was a challenge to be sure. Constructive interest in public transportation was not a certain thing. City Councils and constituents sometimes seemed more willing to complain than to commit funds for planning and action. And when spending came, the gadgets got the nod, while the ghettos were neglected. Monorails and mini-trains are glamorous after all. But mundane matters like better bus schedules for slum residents also are important.

Happily, the consensus is starting to shift in some cities. With grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Transportation Department, plans are being developed to deal with the gigantic complex of transit problems.

But before we become smug, let me quote a sage insight. Dr. Joseph Cooper of Howard University has observed that social problems are seldom solved. Rather, they are transformed. Dr. Cooper was speaking particularly of the shifting relationship between science and society, but I think the same principle also applies to the relationship between employment patterns and the transit system as well. For while we are planning for urban transit today, we are neglecting the related employment problem in the ghetto.

As many of you know, the job market is no longer centered in the city. Increasingly, it is shifting to the suburbs. This,

in turn, transforms the transit problem for the metropolitan area. No longer must we get people to the center alone, Also, we must get them to job sites scattered in the suburbs.

A recent article in the Monthly Labor Review documents the dimensions of the alteration.

--Industry, stores, offices, increasingly are building in the suburbs: In the period from 1960-1965 alone, 47% of all business building permits were for building outside the central city in twelve areas studied;

--Payroll employment is growing outside the central city: ^{There was} ~~an~~ ^{has been} a 30% increase in payroll employment in industries ~~1955-1965, 23% of payroll employment was outside the central~~ in the suburban ring between 1959 and 1965, while in ~~core in twelve major metropolitan areas studied, in 1965,~~ wholesale and retail trade, the percentage increase was ~~the proportion had risen to 47%,~~ 42%, and in services, finance, and real estate, 55%, in twelve areas studied.

--Clerical, sales, skilled, and semi-skilled industrial work, and service sector ^{jobs are becoming available} ~~employment~~ are growing outside the cities: ^{for example,} The Council of Economic Advisers reports that 975,000 jobs became available in the suburban rings of seven large metropolitan areas in the period from 1948-1962, ~~for example,~~

--And these are the jobs into which the poor could move:

Early in 1967, about 60% of those unemployed 15 weeks or more were last employed in such jobs.

The problem is to match poor people/ ^{living in old neighborhoods} ~~with these jobs located miles away. One of the major roadblocks is~~ with these jobs located miles away. ~~One of the major roadblocks is~~ transportation.

Ghetto residents are not going to be able to join the suburban migration in great numbers in the immediate future. I

fought hard for a fair housing bill, and I think that was important. But the fact is that sheer economics will continue to separate slum dwellers from suburban residents for many years to come. It's a vicious circle. To get the job, you have to be near the plant. Plants move away, but the people can't afford to be near them because they don't have the income to afford it. In 1964, the median income for all nonwhite households in the central cities of major metropolitan areas was \$3,656, about half that for white residents. Unfortunately, that kind of income won't cover the downpayment on a suburban home, no matter how many fair housing committees we sit on.

So the challenge remains to help the slum-dweller get to the suburbs, to a better job, and at a price he can afford.

The price often can't include a car. Most ghetto residents do not have cars, and so must rely on public transportation. In fourteen central cities recently studied, for example, fewer than half of the nonwhite families owned cars.

Unfortunately, today mass transit also is expensive. Data from the American Transit Association recently showed a range of fares on public transportation lines from central cities to suburban areas from thirty cents to sixty-five cents one way. Public transportation rates are rising sharply. In the last decade, public transportation fares have risen twice as fast as the cost of buying and operating an automobile. And the rate of increase is more than that for any other group of commodities or services in the Consumer Price Index, for areas studied.

And there is an additional problem: travel time. Even if the ghetto resident could afford the minimum of \$13.00 per month for transit costs, he might not be able to afford the travel time. Studies in Watts showed an average travel time of one hour and forty minutes from Watts to Douglas Aircraft, one of the largest suburban employers in the Los Angeles area. The Transit Association has found average travel times of an hour or more to be common. Circuitous routes, transfers, and scheduling also cause problems. Central city residents spend much more time in transit to the suburbs than do those coming the other direction.

Convenience and availability have a tremendous effect on public transportation use. And this, in turn, has extreme importance for the job market.

The problem of moving people from slums to suburbs is not new to many of you in this room. It certainly is known here in Minnesota.

An editorial in last July's Minneapolis Tribune reminded me of the dilemma we face right here in this area. The editorial explained that the Metropolitan Transit Commission had found public transportation excellent from Minneapolis and St Paul slum areas to downtown jobs. However, it also found it was inadequate for those wishing to travel from ghetto to suburban jobs, and jobs in core cities outside the central business district.

transit

The recent announcement of a HUD planning grant to the Metropolitan Transit Commission hopefully will assist Minneapolis-St. Paul in ^{*correcting*} ~~rectifying~~ this problem.

And I am sure many of you have taken similar first steps.

For with adequate planning, and appropriate action, the problem can be resolved.

A demonstration has already been completed in Watts.

A new bus system links Watts residents to jobs in outlying areas. A study in Long Island has been completed. And other studies have been inaugurated in Philadelphia, Washington, and elsewhere.

The amendments to the Urban Mass Transportation Act now being considered by the Congress would permit greater flexibility in developing and applying new concepts and systems. A change in working would make it possible for the federal government to give capital grant assistance to mass transportation services which serve specific portions of the public. ^{*This amendment*} ~~Thus it would be~~ ^{*make it*} possible to receive Federal assistance ^{*to*} ~~for~~ buying ~~a~~ special buses ^{*to which could*} transport ghetto residents to specific places of employment, ~~for~~ ^{*example.*}

Obviously, plans of many kinds will be needed before the problem is covered. New roads, new routes, new vehicles, new ^{*New Research*} financing, all may be required. (Certainly, the continuing commitment of concerned citizens like yourselves will be needed.) Do we need, for example, to provide free transportation to core residents?

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- Public officials and city planners must direct attention to the problem;
- City engineers and police officials must work together to resolve the technical issues;
- Civic leaders must join with ghetto residents to form a new coalition of concern, aimed at generating public support;
- Business leaders in suburban areas must be engaged to plan a cooperative effort to surmount scheduling and related problems, or provide free busses;
- And organizations like the AAA must also take initiative. Conferences like the one today probably will be needed to plan not only for the central city transit, but also for regional relationships between central cities and surrounding suburban areas.

In addition, the AAA might well take another look at its own membership. For with rising incomes, the proportion of car-ownership also rises. And with longer distances to travel, increasing numbers of ghetto residents may need the kind of assistance AAA membership can provide. The AAA might wish to study ways of involving the poor now, through reduced membership fees; and it might also see that pamphlets and other educational materials reach beyond the regular membership list to residents of the poorer sections of the city.

Charles M. Haar, Assistant Secretary for Metropolitan Development made an interesting point in an article last year called "Transportation and Economic Opportunity." Some transportation problems will be solved by planning for individual cases, he said. But some will take a much larger shift in our thinking. "Some

solutions," he said, "will require a change in our cost-benefit frame of reference so that transportation is regarded as a sub-element of the larger system of the development of human beings, with a payoff in enhanced productivity and social status as well as mobility."

In an important sense, transportation planning is social planning -- planning for the quantity and quality of people's lives.

Inequalities now exist in transportation planning that reflect the inequities of the society as a whole. Balance must be restored.

I am convinced that this democracy can win the trial of the cities. I am convinced we can resolve the urban crisis in housing, health, education, jobs, and transportation. And I am convinced that by concentrating not only on urban transit, but on metropolitan transportation; not only on travel within the cities, but from within the core to suburbs, we together can resolve the current dilemma.

Transportation has importance in creating opportunities for people of many kinds. ~~Assistant Secretary Haar uses a quotation I too would like to employ to reinforce my point. He~~ Justice Robert Jackson pointed out twenty-five years ago, "A Man's mere property status cannot be used to test, qualify, or limit his rights to travel freely."

Ghetto residents have a right to equality in transportation, just as they do to equal jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. Transportation can provide a new link for the poor -- a link through better jobs, and more adequate income, to that better life toward which all of us strive.

The ghetto issues us a challenge. And I know you will help us respond.

Speech file

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REMARKS OF SENATOR WALTER F. MONDALE
NAHRO Regional Convention
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Today America is on trial. Our nation, our democracy, our pattern of local government, our private enterprise system are on trial. The question which we must answer is whether the traditional American system can effectively deal with the urban crisis and the crisis of poverty and squalor.

If the answer is yes, we will have order and progress. If the answer is no, we will have chaos and disruption. You, as leaders in your communities and responsible for housing the poor and revitalizing your community are the key to deciding which answer we will obtain.

We know what this urban crisis is. Here in the richest nation in man's history, we have a subclass of poor people, many living in the slums of our cities. Our path to progress and a middle class society has by-passed these people.

We have been able to move to the tree-lined streets in the suburbs, send our children to good schools, and obtain satisfying, well paying jobs.

These fellow members of our society have been overlooked. They still live in rat-infested, decaying apartments, which were unfit for habitation 40 years ago. They still cannot find rewarding jobs which will pay enough to feed their children.

They still do not have the same opportunities we have, and they feel the government -- federal, state, and local -- is not concerned about them.

That is why there are thousands of poor people in Washington at this very moment. They are lobbying for a change of attitude on the part of government and society. They are pleading for responsiveness. They are telling us that this may be our last chance to respond, before the crisis engulfs us.

If not, we may face more violence and more disorder. Perhaps, we may face even a collapse of the American tradition of order, liberty, equality and progress.

This is the urban crisis. But it really is part of a nationwide phenomenon of poverty extending from the cities to Appalachia, from rural communities and farms to Indian reservations.

The recent report on Hunger dramatizes this. Shocking, severe malnutrition was found in every part of the country -- in metropolitan areas and on farms. This report indicates that too many Americans do not have the resources necessary to purchase the food needed for an adequate diet.

However, it is the cramped, confined quarters of the urban ghetto and slum where the problem is more acute and more apt to manifest itself in violence.

We have seen the results of the confinement for the past three summers and particularly in the past two months. We

have witnessed mobs, burning and looting our cities. We watched troops and armed vehicles move along our streets and convert our cities into armed camps. And, we stood by, helpless and powerless, as the death toll mounted and violence became the normal event of the day.

This is the urban crisis. This is the urban crisis with which we must deal.

The causes are many. Frustration. Alienation. Fear. Hopelessness. Suspicion. Emotions bottled up which create a powder keg ready to explode with the slightest spark of an incident.

The city, the institution which made America the greatest industrial power in the world, is now decaying. The city, which was the home of hope for so many, has become a place of despair and frustration. The city, the home of the great American dream is now a nightmare of confinement for too many of our fellow citizens.

The nation must deal with the city and transform it into the center of hope and progress for the future. Sixty years ago the city was the gateway to a higher standard of living for the European immigrant. Today it must become the same gateway for our own "immigrants."

This is not an easy task; it cannot be done by government alone. But with the total commitment of the public and private sector, our cities can again become habitable.

First, we must establish an environment which is sympathetic to the plight of the existing people in the core city. We must recognize that each of our cities has at least one ghetto or slum and that this festering neighborhood is the source of much of the trouble. This ghetto breeds the frustration and despair which is translated into violence with the slightest provocation.

The ghetto and the slum is many things to its inhabitants.

First, it is a condition - a frame of mind - from which there seems to be little hope of escape.

Second, it is a neighborhood characterized by poor housing, litter, garbage on the streets, no playgrounds, poor schools.

Third, it is a place to be exploited by the credit merchant, and pawnbroker, a place where food, housing and the necessities and pleasures of life cost more than in any other part of the city.

Fourth, it is a place which the government seems to ignore. It is where the newest or poorest teachers are sent. It is a place where the oldest public service equipment is used and it is the last place in which street and sewer repairs are made.

In short, it is a living hell. It is an environment where children lose their potential as human beings; a place where they grow and develop not into men, but into hustlers, pushers, number writers, and derelicts.

We must convince the ghetto dweller that we are committed to the elimination of this ghetto and all associated with it. This has to be done, in two stages.

First, in the short run, the ghetto must be transformed into a healthy, safe neighborhood in which people can live, work, and relax.

Second, and most important, however, is the long-run elimination of the ghetto.

We have made progress on the second point this year. For the first time in our history -- 103 years after the Civil War -- have a national fair housing law, giving a person the right to choose where he wishes to live. I am proud to say that I sponsored the bill and fought for it.

This is the type of psychological action necessary to give the residents of the ghetto the hope that something better lies in the future.

We have also made some progress, though limited, in improving the conditions in the ghetto. However, there has been a great tendency, as you all know, to destroy rather than

improve the ghetto and rehouse these people in a new ghetto. Highways, highrise office buildings, upper income apartments, heliports and other buildings aimed for the use of the middle class have been erected in the rubble of the old ghetto.

The former resident is forced to find new quarters, but his options are few: - A waiting list for public housing; a waiting list for rent supplements, or a different slum. Too often our urban renewal efforts, both nationally and at the local level, have been directed to satisfying the downtown merchants, the middle class commuter or the industrial corporation. These forces have loomed more important than the poor people and the neighborhood residents.

This must be stopped. I am all for beautiful cities, civic centers and impressive skylines. However, a city must be for its people and if we sacrifice the people and their well being to achieve beauty, there is something wrong with our priorities.

I am happy to say that this is changing, there is recognition that mistakes were made in the past. Minneapolis is developing one of the best code enforcement programs in the nation; St. Paul is concentrating on the rehabilitation of housing in a huge 100-acre piece of land. Other cities such as Cleveland, Chicago and Gary are turning their urban renewal and model city programs in the right direction.

However, that oft quoted goal of "a safe and decent home and suitable living environment for every American family", first articulated 19 years ago, is still just rhetoric. It must become reality.

But this is a job no single group can do. It is an effort for which we need social workers, housing officials, businessmen, educators, lawyers, physicians, religious leaders, and all members of the community.

Only through this cooperative effort will constructive, permanent results emerge. Some of the reaction to the unrest in the cities has been positive. The creation of the Urban Coalition; the offers and action from businesses; the understanding of the mass media have established a platform from which we must build.

You as the housing and urban renewal officials in your communities must be part of this positive response. Urban coalitions are meaningless if the city will not build housing for the poor people. Social service committees are ineffective unless the city is interested in rehabilitating its decayed neighborhoods.

It is your responsibility. It is a challenge to you to fulfill the goal of a safe and suitable home for all Americans. If you are dedicated to racial and social justice, and can convince the community of this dedication, you will succeed.

The nation will have met the urban crisis head-on, and solved the problems.

We can sit in Washington and pass one bill after another, aimed at providing better housing and revitalizing communities. But we do not implement the programs. You do. We do not select the neighborhoods; we do not decide on re-use; we do not establish priorities for action. This is rightly your responsibility.

The Federal government can offer the tools, modify the programs, and provide money. But the locality must choose among programs, and interpret guidelines to meet the local situations.

The local community must develop a total, coordinated attack on the ghetto. It involves many things:

- Better education -- to compensate for the lack of opportunity in the past.
- Better health facilities -- to bridge the mortality gap which exists between middle income America and the rest of the nation.
- Better jobs, promotions, and training for jobs -- to increase income in the neighborhood.
- Better transportation facilities -- to move the core city resident to the suburbs where the new jobs are located.
- Better housing -- to replace areas of dilapidated and deteriorating homes and apartments.

This is an effort which will require coordination of activities at the Federal and local level. I hope that the model city program which emphasizes coordination of social and physical planning will serve as an example of how more can be done.

The key to this attack is the improvement of physical surroundings -- the visible reminder to people that they live in a ghetto.

This is the area where your specific contribution is vital. It is up to you to lead your community in organizing a comprehensive program for this improvement.

Right now there are adequate Federal programs for which you can apply. Hopefully, with the passage of this year's Housing and Urban Development Act, to which I devoted many hours, there will be new opportunities for you. But let me run through some of our programs and ask you to ask yourself what your community has done to take advantage of them.

1. Have you built a sufficient number of family public housing units in the past five years to meet the increase of poor people in your city?
2. Have you increased the stock of subsidized housing by leasing units? Have you encouraged some of the ghetto residents to move away from the ghetto by the use of scattered site housing?
3. Have you devoted enough of your efforts to renewing the declining neighborhood? If you have used rehabilitation, was it to bring middle class people back in the city or to provide decent housing for the poor?

4. Is your required program of relocation activities a dynamic method to find good housing for those whose homes are uninhabitable, or is it a sham necessary to meet a Federal requirement?
5. Is your citizen participation effort really geared to arrive at joint decisions with those in the neighborhood to be affected by your programs or is it to ratify decisions made in your office?

These are hard questions to answer. If you think your answers are not the right ones, then I ask you to use your influence to correct the situation in your city, and move the programs toward the people.

Right now, the Senate has before it one of the most comprehensive housing bills in the history of urban development legislation. It is the first segment of a program which will provide 6 million units for low and moderate families over a 10-year period. It expands all of our previous efforts and establishes new tools and techniques to assist you in urban improvement. Basically the bill:

- Provides a new program of home ownership for lower income families. They would pay 20% of their income toward the monthly mortgage payment with the Federal government subsidizing the remainder through payments to the private financial institution which held the mortgage.
- Establishes a similar rental program with a sliding scale subsidy so that most families would pay 25% of their income toward family housing.
- Mandates the FHA to insure "acceptable risk" mortgages located in the older, declining areas of a city.

- Creates a special risk insurance fund, where the above categories of mortgages will be placed. This is a recognition that there may be heavier losses in these programs and appropriate money to cover these losses.
- Creates a program of technical and financial assistance to prospective nonprofit sponsors of lower income housing. Non-interest bearing loans, covering up to 80% of the pre-packaging costs to these developers would be available.
- Establishes a new interim assistance program to provide 2/3 grants for a community to undertake immediate, short-term projects in a neighborhood scheduled for clearance, rehabilitation, or code enforcement but not yet eligible for regular Federal assistance.

I will not take time here for the technical details of this bill. I have, however, a summary of the bill which I issued when it was approved by the Committee. These are here and available to any of you who have not seen the bill or the report.

The point to be made, however, is that this massive bill will succeed only if you are willing to take these tools and develop dynamic local initiative to provide the better housing which we so desperately need in this country.

Again, it is up to you. The President, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Congress can only do so much. You are the ones, given the limits of your local ~~situation~~ situation, who must make these programs work and make them vehicles for the poor to find safe and decent living quarters.

Thus, I conclude by reminding you of your responsibilities:

1. Administer the programs you have in a way to insure the maximum amount of assistance to those residents in need of better housing.
2. Take advantage of all the Federal programs available to achieve the goal of the improvement of neighborhoods and the elimination of the ghetto.
3. Mobilize others in the community behind your efforts. To build housing you need the cooperation of developers and financial institutions; to obtain successful programs the community as a whole must be committed to them.
4. Communicate suggestions to your legislators. Tell us what additional legislation or amendments are necessary to give you more flexibility in achieving your purposes.

This is a difficult job. It cannot be done tomorrow. It will take years. I know that men of your ability are capable of doing it and I promise any cooperation necessary.

Our nation must eliminate the present scene of disorder and destruction. You are in the vanguard of those who can do it. The challenge for the future of America and for the future of the city as an institution is in your hands. With your dedication and effort we can meet that challenge.



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