

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Rick

August 2, 1967

Dear Colleague:

We will release the attached statement to the Press on Thursday afternoon, August 3rd. We hope that you will join with us on the statement.

This statement represents an effort to put Republican Members of Congress on record favoring a program of immediate action by the Executive Branch to help relieve tension in America's cities during the remaining summer months. The program outlined is by no means a substitute for a long-range answer, but it may provide help in the weeks ahead in the form of preventive medicine.

If you wish to join on the statement, please call Ron Aaron in Congressman Taft's office at extension 3164 by 12:00 noon Thursday, August 3rd.

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John B. Anderson
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Brad Morse
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Robert Taft, Jr.
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FOR RELEASE
2:30 PM, THURSDAY
AUGUST 3, 1967

From the Offices of Congressmen:

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE IN THE CITIES

A nation torn by strife and violence cannot afford more bitterness, re-~~re~~rimination, retaliation or politics-as-usual.

America's response to rioting and disorder must, we believe, be both firm and affirmative, preventive and corrective.

Civil liberties depend upon the rule of law. When men take the law into their own hands the rule of law breaks down -- and civil rights and liberties become meaningless. Shooting, looting and violence cannot be tolerated. All responsible men know that stern measures must be taken to assure that law and order will prevail.

But we should not make the mistake of weakening or abandoning the Nation's commitment to equal opportunity and equal justice for all.

While we must find means of preventing and controlling the spread of violence in the country's urban areas, we must at the same time mobilize our efforts to deal with both the immediate and long-range social, economic and psychological factors which account for the unrest and grievance so easily exploited by extremists.

To halt or falter in our determination to do justice to our Negro fellow citizens would simply -- and tragically -- play into the hands of those who seek and thrive on unrest and violence. The extremist agitator preaches hate based on his assertion that white America will never yeild to Negro demands for justice. But he has not reached and must not reach the great body of Negro Americans who continue to look to the law and the national conscience for the redressing of grievance.

To respond to the riots either in terms of repression of the entire Negro community or reward for the relatively few who have resorted to violence will confirm

the agitator's charge and swell his ranks.

To redouble our efforts to do justice, to expand opportunity, to improve life in urban ghettos will expose the agitator's extremism and strengthen Negro America's hope and trust in the law and in orderly processes.

We welcome the President's appointment of an Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. We hope it will seek fundamental and long-range answers. It is necessary.

We welcome the proposal for a Joint Congressional Committee on Civil Disorders. It should seek fundamental and long-range answers. It is necessary.

But the crisis is not just long range. It is here and now, today. What can be done now to assure that the tragedies of Newark, Detroit and many other communities will not be repeated again and again this very summer?

There is an immediate need for a special White House Center whose fundamental job is to push energetically each and every federal agency to redirect programs and funds to meet immediate community needs. Its purpose would be to deal effectively with crisis conditions as and before they arise.

We need to build new bridges of understanding--but we need, too, to deal emphatically with trouble spots.

We need a "blue ribbon" commission to investigate, study and recommend long-range improvements--but we also need a "red button" crisis center in the White House to help get us through this summer.

We recommend, therefore, creation of a White House Center designed to force the national bureaucracy to use its existing authority to avoid the imminent development of civil disorder in the cities. With the enthusiastic backing, support and authority of the President, himself, the White House Center could mobilize the manifold Departments and Agencies of the federal government to use their existing authority to head off urban disasters.

For example:

1) The White House Center could insist that the Civil Rights Commission hold summer hearings now in the cities to hear and recommend action on the grievances of those urban Negroes who feel increasingly alienated from their society--partly because they believe no one is listening.

2) The White House Center could assure that the Community Relations Service would establish local offices in our troubled cities to maintain a constant dialogue between local public officials and the local Negro community--so that the level of Negro impatience is not a matter of speculation and the intention of city officials is not a matter of doubt.

3) The White House Center could assure maximum effort by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to convince local school officials of the need for the expanded use of school and recreation facilities in full-time summer programs--so that the energies of urban youth are engaged constructively and are not available to be tapped by the agitators of violence.

4) The White House Center could instruct the Department of Interior to utilize its authority under the Land and Water Conservation Act to increase swimming pool facilities in the tension-ridden urban areas--so that the heat of the summer is not allowed to contribute to the heat of racial tensions.

5) The White House Center could impress local officials and social work groups of the value of programs to encourage city families to use available public beaches and camping and recreation facilities in the area and assure that the prestige of the Transportation Department can be available to encourage local public and private transportation companies to support these programs--so that the urban poor can find new outlets for their energies and are not condemned day-in and day-out to the oppressive surroundings of core-city life.

6) The White House Center could encourage a broad effort in the private entertainment industry to coordinate the scheduling in urban centers of major sports events, jazz concerts, and outdoor movie showings during the long summer nights--so that the outbreak of violence is not the only distraction in the urban Negro's tedious and hot summer despair.

7) The White House Center could activate the President's Physical Fitness Program to create and schedule personal demonstrations by national sports figures, local contests for physical achievement, and a continuing calendar of core-city sporting events--so that a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm can help counteract the boredom of the summer months.

8) The White House Center could encourage the national television networks and local stations to provide for the programming of locally or nationally significant sporting events in those cities where violent disorder seems imminent--so that in times of trouble urban Americans have a reason to spend their idle hours at home and not in the streets.

9) The White House Center could assure that the Department of Justice, if necessary through funds appropriated under the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, encourage the creation in the heavily populated urban centers of auxiliary citizen police groups--so that when disorder comes, local law enforcement officials have an organized means of calling upon the responsible Negro Community to help maintain law

and order.

10) The White House Center could require the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Bureau of Public Roads, and other Federal departments and agencies, consistent with orderly planning, to encourage acceleration during the summer months of those local public and private projects whose ratio of labor intensity could provide summer jobs for unemployed Negro youth-- so that some efforts are made to minimize the legitimate Negro grievances in the field of job opportunity during the summer months when violence seems most likely.

We stress that these programs, individually and collectively, do not represent a long-range cure to the disease that afflicts America's cities. They are, instead, short-range measures of preventive medicine. Necessary as they are, they are not a substitute for a long-range answer.

Both the Congress and the Executive Branch have a pressing responsibility to seek and find long-range answers. In the short-run, in the days and weeks ahead, each of the Executive Departments and agencies of the United States government must find a way it can, through existing authority, contribute to the maintenance of law, order, and tranquility in our cities.

But governmental action can never replace or displace private initiative. Government can never solve the problems of urban unrest alone. The efforts, imagination, talent and resources of private business, private organizations of all kinds, and private individuals are essential. It will take the commitment of citizens in both the Negro and white communities of our cities to assure that reason, law and order will prevail. It is an obligation which all men share equally, for we are all inescapably involved.