

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Reagan, Ronald: 1980 Campaign Papers,
1965-1980

Series: XV: Speech Files (Robert Garrick and Bill Gavin)

Subseries: A: Bob Garrick File

Folder Title: [Draft – Together – A New Beginning]

Box: 436

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

Last Updated: 10/11/2023

DRAFT

TOGETHER -- A NEW BEGINNING

(Remarks of the Honorable Ronald Reagan
before the 70th Annual Conference,
National Urban League, New York Hilton,
New York City)

I am very pleased and honored to be with you to join in the National Urban League's 70th Anniversary Conference. To all of you and your 116 affiliates throughout the nation, Nancy and I say, "Happy Birthday" and continued success in your commendable efforts.

HISTORY

In reviewing the League's history, I was greatly impressed with the dedication and tireless efforts of your founders, leaders and membership from 1910 to 1980 and the impressive array of projects and activities geared toward bringing equality of access and opportunity to Black Americans of this nation.

The League was created in basements and kitchens right here in New York City out of the reform movement that swept the nation at the beginning of this century. Those were the dark years in Black America when Jim Crowism and rigid segregation was being entrenched in many parts of our nation -- when to be Black was to be a virtual peon in many rural areas, and when the migration of Blacks from the South to buy the promises of Northern cities began. When many of these migrants arrived in the north, they found not a promised land, but exclusion from jobs, housing and education and they were trapped by racism and poverty. Today, many of their descendants still face the same problems in our major urban areas.

It was out of this environment of despair, frustration, racism and poverty that the "Committee on Urban Condition Among Negroes" was formed here in New York, later to become the National Urban League, to serve the needs of the new Black migrant. Notwithstanding the deplorable activities of the Ku Klux Klan and other race hate groups to intimidate many of your affiliates in the 1950's, you never faltered. Today, the name "National Urban League" has become synonymous with the pursuit of excellence and the elimination of poverty and racism.

In an age when our historically Black colleges and universities, which produced many, if not most, of the nation's Black teachers, doctors, lawyers and other leaders, are fighting for survival, it was the Urban League whose efforts led to the first recruitment effort by a major corporation on a Black college campus. It is the Urban League, through its Black Executive Exchange Program, which forms creative partnerships between corporations and Black colleges in response to Black colleges' concern with regard to the preparation of students to become tomorrow's Black executives. This program gains increasing importance when we review the results of the Chicago Urban League's own study which showed that, of 13,000 managers in the Chicago area ranked as "department heads" or higher, only 117 were Black.

Yes, your past and your present is one of broadening economic opportunities, providing research and landmark studies on the Black condition, of breaking barriers to Black unemployment, expanding opportunities for the young and lobbying local, state and federal

government. Your leadership, particularly that of Whitney M. Young -- who led you during the turmoil and victories of the 1960's -- and Vernon Jordan -- your present leader who has moved you to new areas such as expansion of research and voter education efforts and increased emphasis on your Washington Bureau -- has been strong, determined and unyielding in its desire to achieve the League's objectives. Yes, the National Urban League has forged its own "New Beginning" for millions of Black Americans.

LET US WORK TOGETHER

It is with this history and commendable record in mind that I come here today to this great 70th Anniversary Conference to tell you and the nation -- loud and clear -- that I, as the Urban League, am committed to and am a believer in an open pluralistic society, free of barriers of race, sex and poverty. I pledge to you my commitment to make sure, as President of the United States, that Black citizens of this nation have the right to maintain their cultural and ethnic identity while at the same time enjoying equal access and opportunity to all aspects of the society. We all-- TOGETHER -- must reach across the barriers of race, social status, education, and economics to bring people together in a continual effort to make the promises of America a reality for Black Americans.

As we look at the legacy of success and achievement of the Urban League, it is in stark contrast to the legacy of failure and ineptness of Jimmy Carter and the Democratic controlled Congress whose disastrous economic policies have had a disproportionately

devastating impact on Black Americans of all income levels. Let's look at the record, based upon the Urban League's own statistics:

Black family median income which was 61% of White family median income in 1969, fell to 59% by the end of the decade;

The number of Black upper income families ~~actually~~ actually declined from 12% to 9% of all Black families during this period;

The average annual number of Blacks unemployed doubled from 750,000 in 1970 to over 1.4 million in 1978;

In 1969, only 38,000 or 5.6% of all Black women in the labor force heading families were unemployed, but by 1978, five times as many (195,000) Black women family heads were jobless, with their unemployment rate soaring to an alarming high of 15.4%;

Unemployment among Black men heading families doubled (from 84,000 to 148,000), raising their jobless rate from 2.9% to 5.2%; and,

In many central cities, Black teenage unemployment approached 50-65%.

These figures clearly show the President has given Black Americans a "bad check". While Jimmy Carter sings "We Shall Overcome", and says "I Love You All" to Black audiences, in many of our urban areas too many students are dropping out, too many teachers are just dropping in, and too many principals are just hanging on. While Jimmy Carter speaks the rhetoric of inflationary massive dead-end public job programs, the middle income Black bus-driver, teacher and professional is being devastated by double-digit inflation and high interest rates which serve to evade the economic gains that Blacks have made during the past decade.

Mr. Carter does not seem to know, as I do, that the Black worker who moonlights at a second job to earn money to send his or her child to college needs a tax credit for tuition expenses; Mr. Carter does not seem to know, as I do, that the Black family-business owner needs a revision in the estate tax laws to ease the tax burden on family-owned businesses. I know, as Mr. Carter and his economic policies do not realize, that the Black middle income person is the backbone and foundation of Black society and provides the role model for the inner city youth as a symbol of success. If the Black middle income teacher, construction worker, unskilled or skilled worker cannot make car and mortgage payments, or is laid off, then it is more difficult to convince his or her niece or nephew, or the potential inner city drop-out, that hardwork pays off.

Too many Black Americans have tied their hopes, dreams, and aspirations to the liberal rhetoric of the Democratic party which fails to realize that Black America is not a monolith of poor people, but is diverse economically and socially. I will not lump all Black people into one "catch all" phrase and slogan. I know that as of 1977, 91% of male-headed Black families and 68% of female-headed Black families relied on earning income.

Rather, I stand for unleashing the economic forces that will get needy Americans off the unemployment and welfare lines, halt runaway inflation and give Black families who have been on welfare the best chance to depend on themselves, and Black working families the best chance of helping to pay bills, and purchase homes. During six of my eight years as Governor, California's inflation

rate was lower than in the rest of the nation, while in six of the ^cproceeding eight years, it was higher than in the rest of the nation.

[Handwritten initials] My approach to solving unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, is to put strong emphasis on cooperation and efforts of partnership with the private sector as opposed to the Democratic/Carter view of relying on public jobs and public programs which can be cut off with a whim of public opinion. My philosophy is maintaining and establishing a set of youth programs which have stability and continuity, which emphasize long term, and not just summer jobs, and private sector employability. In short, we must have "earning with learning". I support, and will work for, public/private sector partnerships between our educational establishment and private employers to afford in school and out-of-school disadvantaged youth with opportunity to upgrade skills and move from completion to unsubsidized jobs.

URBAN REVITALIZATION

A few miles from this beautiful room, we find the despair and hopelessness of a South Bronx or a Harlem. Several 100 miles from this hotel, we find the despair and frustration of a Liberty City in Miami, and in nearly every major city of the nation there are mirror images of these communities which have been devastated by unemployment, crime, inferior educational opportunities and loss of hope. These areas stand as monuments to the failure of the Democratic Congress and Jimmy Carter. A key ingredient

of my campaign is concern for the family and the neighborhood. They are not mutually exclusive -- they are one. A family living in a neighborhood fraught with rampant crime, housing code violations, inadequate schools and police protection, poor public transportation and few jobs, can hardly devote sufficient time to family. Rather, that family, in many cases headed by a female who works, must be concerned with survival on a daily and even an hourly basis. A simple visit to the grocery store can be a risk to the elderly inner city resident who wants to cash her social security check. A simple parttime job for an inner city teenager can be dangerous in a neighborhood of high crime. And, opening a small business for a Black entrepreneur can be ultra hazardous unless there is bullet-proof glass surrounding the counter.

I believe we can and must revitalize our neighborhoods. I believe we can and must find a way to recycle and return some of the 130 billion dollar Black economy in the nation to benefit the people who live in the inner cities of the nation.

The concept of the Reagan administration will be "Neighborhood Revitalization through Economic Growth" with grass roots participation. As was recognized by Aristotle centuries ago, the immediate neighborhood should be and is the center and focus of human life in the city. You and I both know that the urban resident is fully aware that most, if not all, of the previous programs of Democratic social planners and academic designers were no more than "wonder drugs" which have had the effect of slowly

killing the patient.

Urban residents justifiably are wary of government programs which result in billions of dollars being spent to "save the neighborhood" which have only resulted in putting many of our older cities in deep economic and social trouble. The central cities are increasingly left with rising proportions of the poor with all of their social and economic problems ^{and} decreasing tax bases. Many federal programs have only made the problems and the situations worse. Urban renewal and its bulldozers, excessive licensing, property taxation, poor schools and rent controls have had a negative impact on our cities as places of opportunity, growth and enterprise.

Too many city halls and Washington bureaucrats ^{have} feared allowing any governmental powers to go to the people from whom they were taken. In many cases, they are more concerned with distributing economic and political rewards to a few, maintaining established bureaucracies, shifting the public and inner city resident's freedom of choice in favor of approved approaches, and on keeping "those people" under control.

I believe, as does the Urban League, that neighborhood and community residents can achieve success through creative self-help. I will work with you to create an "Urban Renaissance" in the 1980's. We will create an environment where community and local leadership can flourish at the grass roots level. We will create an environment where resources can be employed under the control of people who produce them and for their benefit.

The economic growth of our cities depends on their capacity to

to attract and hold wealth-producing industries offering income producing jobs to an educable work force. Between 1970 and 1974, selective migration into and out of the nation's cities led to a disastrous loss of some 30 billion dollars in urban income -- income that could have provided food, clothes, and shelter to millions of inner city residents free from the bondage of dependence on a self-effacing welfare system.

As President, I will vigorously support and seek enactment of programs such as Jack Kemp's "Urban Jobs and Enterprise Zone Act of 1980" which would restore economic growth in the inner cities through a restoration of economic incentives and private enterprise jobs. This legislation would reduce social security taxes by 50% for workers over 21 and by 90% for those younger, cut in half the capital gains tax on small business investment in poorer areas, and give a 15% reduction in tax rates for companies already in such areas. Additionally, it would accelerate depreciation allowances in each firm's first \$500,000 of capital investment. Such an effort would "greenline" the poorest areas to restore economic growth.

We must expand and assist opportunities for minority-owned small and medium sized businesses so that they can flourish and receive a greater portion of that 130 billion dollars. We must develop programs of economic revitalization that provides jobs in the inner cities, that support and aid minority-owned businesses in the inner cities, and which create a neighborhood where inner city dollars remain in or return to the inner city. To these goals and objectives I stand committed to work with you "TOGETHER" for "A New Beginning".

Greenlining

EDUCATION

As stated before, we cannot treat problems as isolated entities. While being concerned over lack of jobs for our youth, we must also make sure that our youths receive quality education so they have marketable and educational qualities in the basic areas of "reading, writing and arithmetic". Personnel offices of businesses, large and small, are finding that even when jobs are available, too many high school graduates can barely read, hardly write and have little, if any, work attitudes or employable skills. It is in the home and family where basic attitudes must be instilled and we cannot leave parenting to our teachers, our police or our community based organizations.

I am also concerned, that even when jobs are available, that the major source of Black college graduates -- our historically Black colleges and universities -- are being slowly strangled by the administration's policies on desegregation. It is unfair and inconsistent to tell a predominantly White college with a small enrollment of Black students and faculty that it is "intergrated", while telling a predominantly Black university with an even larger minority of White students and faculty, that it is a "vestige of segregation" and must merge with a larger White institution. As President, I will make sure that our historically Black colleges and universities have a voice in the highest levels of my administration.

In elementary and secondary education, we must not fail our children. We must not blame them for the failure of the

educational system to provide them with adequate preparation. If a child in the inner city or suburban America can memorize the lyrics to popular songs and football statistics, then that same child can learn the "ABC's". It is not that the child cannot be educated, it is the fact that, despite millions of dollars of assistance from the federal government, the system is not educating.

We must provide an atmosphere of moral leadership and commitment from the White House, an atmosphere and commitment which is absent under Jimmy Carter, that teachers must teach free of an atmosphere of fear; that parents must be parents and instill basic values of excellence, achievement and responsibility in their children; and community leaders must reinforce and support both teacher and parent for the well-being of both community and nation. We must all insist that teacher, parent, student, and community be made accountable for our children's education.

URBAN CRIME

Although we cannot ignore the evils of poverty, discrimination and unemployment on the attitude of our people, we must also make sure that people do not allow such frustration to be taken out on their neighbors in the form of crime.

The vast majority of the residents of our central cities are law abiding citizens who seek harmony at home and security and safety in the community. The time has come when all of us must tell the pimps, drug pushers, robbers, rapers, and murderers to leave

our neighborhoods or face the consequences.

As President, I will support efforts such as that of the predominantly Black National Bar Association to launch an all-out attack on crime in our communities especially in the inner cities, combined with our effort at economic revitalization to attack those problems which serve as the breeding ground for crime. I will not, nor will my U.S. attorneys, sit idly by while thugs and hoodlums terrorize you, your loved ones and your communities. The greatest beneficiary of an effective end to much of the deplorable and violent activity in American cities would be the men, women and children who live there and are the principal victims.

Although law enforcement is basically a local concern, there is no doubt that the President of the United States can and must set a clear tone of moral leadership that says lawlessness -- both street crime and white collar crime -- will not be tolerated against inner city residents and will be fought at every level. I will seek vigorous and speedy prosecutions by U.S. attorneys and firm sentencing by federal judges with equal justice and do regard to the due process rights of defendants. However, I will also be concerned about the rights of the victims of crime.

What good will it do to revitalize our inner cities and bring jobs to the residents if the workers fear walking from the job-site to the bus stop, subway or parking lot? I know and understand, and am sympathetic to the fact that lower, middle and upper income Black residents of urban America are concerned about

crime because they have been paying a disproportionate price for living in the central city. Based upon the statistics of the National Bar Association released last year --

Blacks are more likely than Whites to be victims of rapes, burglary, larceny or assault;

In 1977, more Blacks were fatal victims of crime than those who died in the total nine years of the Viet Nam War; and

Black males between the ages of 14 and 25 years are more likely to die the victims of homicide than from any other cause.

I pledge my best efforts to work with you to attack the problems of crime in America coupled with efforts to make certain that our criminal justice system responds with fairness, equality, and is truly blind to race, color, and economic status.

To conclude, I ask you to join with me in a "New Beginning" toward urban revitalization and economic growth, educational excellence, eradication of crime, improved health and housing accommodations at home and freedom around the world.

I only ask that you judge me on my record and my positions on the issues and that you analyze and question Jimmy Carter, his record, with the same toughness you apply to me. And, finally, that you make your choice on what you decide. I want your support; I need your help, and together: "LET'S MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN".

INSERT
NEW
BLACK VOTING
Soclin