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G.R. Civitan Club - Thurs. Oct, 22, 1970.

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A SPEECH BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETAIL DRUGGISTS
AT ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY
10:30 a.m., MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1970

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

As retail druggists you are engaged in the most popular business in America.

Corner drugstores are being operated--literally, on street corners--by increasing numbers of self-appointed merchandisers in illicit and dangerous drugs.

Neither is the social problem of drug abuse limited to the illegal street corner merchandiser and his customers. It also extends to the medicine cabinet in the home.

This is the Age of Affluence and the Age of Anxiety. And so drug abuse is no longer restricted to any one part of our population. It is found at all social, economic and age levels.

Today it is all too easy for anyone of any age who does not like the way he lives to try a drug in search of euphoria or oblivion.

The drug dilemma facing this country has become a national concern. As the general alarm over drug abuse has increased, so has the illicit use of drugs. This trend must be reversed.

The Administration is making strenuous efforts to limit the supply of drugs of abuse--especially the narcotics. But because of the enormity of the task, we will have to learn to use additional means to control the use of narcotics and other dangerous drugs.

We have already seen that threats and the imposition of severe punishment through criminal sanctions have not been an effective deterrent to drug abuse.

The point is that as knowledge of the effects of these drugs becomes more precise the rules by which their use is proscribed must also be decided precisely.

This is the thrust of new legislation passed by both Houses of the Congress and now awaiting final shaping.

The Congress has enacted new legislation
~~New legislation has been formulated~~ which I think will finally enable us to deal effectively with the menace of drug abuse.

Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970
~~This omnibus drug control bill recently passed by the House~~ is one of the *accomplishments* *9/1st* ~~major actions of this session~~ of the Congress. It is designed to crack down--intelligently--on narcotics traffic and use.

(more)



new law
The ~~bill~~ is a key part of the Administration's efforts to combat the growing spread of organized and street crime. It authorizes \$403 million over three years for programs ranging from research to law enforcement. It gives the Justice Department broad powers to deal with organized peddlers of narcotics while seeking to prevent one-time offenders from being branded as felons.

The bill recognizes that a major method of cracking down on drug abuse is to strike at the illegal traffic in narcotics.

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While the penalty for possession of narcotics for one's own personal use has been reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor, the penalties for distribution of narcotics have been toughened. Penalties for first offense conviction on narcotics peddling have been increased to five years in prison or a \$15,000 fine or both. For distribution for profit to a person under 18 years of age, the penalty will be 10 years or a \$15,000 fine or both for the first offense. The bill also provides extra-long sentences for peddlers involved in a so-called narcotics ring.

new narcotics law attacks drug abuse
The ~~drug abuse control bill now near final enactment attacks this social and health problem~~ in a number of ways.

It is designed to make it difficult to obtain drugs subject to abuse; to deter individuals who exploit the weaknesses of others for personal profit through the illicit sale of drugs, and to punish those who engage in this traffic; to provide means of deterring individuals from engaging in the abuse of drugs; to rehabilitate those who have fallen into this trap; and to educate those who might otherwise be tempted to abuse drugs.

The bill provides increased authority for the Attorney General to control the manufacture and distribution of drugs subject to abuse.

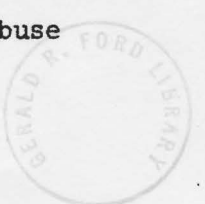
The bill provides that all persons engaged in the distribution of drugs, from the manufacturer down to the final dispenser, shall be registered. The registration requirements for manufacturers and wholesale distributors are of such a nature that in substance the bill gives licensing authority to the Attorney General.

Retail druggists, physicians, and researchers are required to be registered. Registration of these persons by the Attorney General is as a matter of right where the registrant is engaged in activities authorized or permitted under State law.

All persons in the distribution chain are required to keep records subject to inspection.

The bill also permits the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs to identify and characterize for regulatory purposes substances having a potential for abuse

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and to develop adequate screening capabilities to assure that these drugs are drugs that should be identified at an early stage before control.

~~This leaves to the National Institute of Mental Health the basic research into narcotics and dangerous drugs, which is its proper function.~~

The criminal penalties in the bill are much more flexible than the present penalty structure and allows judges discretion in sentencing offenders.

The Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 ^{answers} ~~is easily~~ ~~one of the most important bills passed by the House this year.~~

~~The Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee struggled with it for months, pondering the broad philosophical differences involved in deciding on an approach to the drug problem.~~

~~There was~~ a pressing need to overhaul existing drug laws.

In past years, hard drugs like heroin and cocaine were controlled from a tax standpoint and enforcement lay in the Treasury Department. Marihuana appeared on the scene, and although it was quite a different substance it was pushed in with the other substances then being controlled. This accounts for the sentencing structure in marihuana cases up to this point.

When a pattern of abuse began to develop in the use of pep pills and tranquilizers, it was natural that legislation to curb them would come from the Commerce Committee as an amendment to the food and drug law.

At that time LSD was no great problem but hallucinogenic drugs were recognized as a possible source of trouble and so they were included in H.R. 2.

An entirely independent penalty structure was provided, aimed at what seemed like a separate and distinct problem.

Having two approaches to drug abuse enforcement did not make sense. The drug culture which emerged in America certainly did not differentiate. Consequently LSD, marihuana and hard drugs like heroin got all mixed in together.

Sorting out the offenders in the same group for purposes of prosecution and sentencing pointed up the need for a comprehensive approach.

^{new law}
The ~~bill~~ not only goes thoroughly into the subject of enforcement but also sets forth an accelerated program for rehabilitation.

Rescuing potential drug abusers and short-stopping drug abuse are actually more important in the long run than trying to salvage those whose lives drug addiction has already wrecked.

Many programs today, both in and out of government, are focusing upon the drug problem.

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Taking these into consideration, the ~~House bill~~ ^{new narcotics law} exerts even greater efforts in the direction of rehabilitation. It amends the program which creates community mental health centers to make them available to drug dependent patients. In addition, extra funds and extra authority are included to put special facilities into places where the drug problem hits the hardest.

In the ultimate, the success of the war on drugs will depend on the extent and quality of the education effort engaged in by Government and private organizations combined.

~~Let me tell you a little bit about the education section of the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act.~~

~~The new law~~
It authorizes grants and contracts by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, first, for the collection, preparation and dissemination of educational materials on drug use and abuse; and, second, for the development and evaluation of programs of drug abuse education directed at the general public, school-age children, and special high-risk groups.

In addition to these responsibilities, the HEW Secretary will train persons to organize and participate in programs of public drug abuse education; coordinate Federal efforts in drug abuse education; and provide technical assistance to the States and local communities regarding drug abuse education programs.

~~This~~ This is the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, a most significant piece of legislation. It brings together the various laws affecting drugs, codifies and consolidates them. It makes enforcement more uniform and the handling of offenders more flexible and therefore more effective.

~~Some say enforcement has been weakened. Others say just the opposite.~~

The thrust behind the changes is to permit more discretion in the handling of first offenders while bearing down hard upon the pusher and the peddler. ~~Let me point out that most law enforcement people believe the harsh mandatory sentences in the existing narcotics law have been a hindrance rather than an aid to enforcement.~~

~~All of the penalties are doubled for second offenses.~~

~~I do not think the \$403 million authorized for the three-year program encompassed by the bill is too much. Drug abuse is already costing us far more in actual dollars than the amount provided in the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970.~~

~~There is no price which can be set upon the misery which comes to families~~

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~~and to individuals caught up in this horrible net of drug addiction and its inevitable consequences.~~

~~But a price can be set upon the enormous increases in organized crime and street crime tied in with the sharp rise in drug addiction in the United States-- and it far exceeds the cost of drug abuse control. It is generally recognized that drug abuse is the primary cause of the tremendous increase in street crime in the last decade.~~

No piece of legislation can guarantee to lick the drug problem in this country. That is a job which calls for every kind of recruit. Every echelon of government, every public and private organization must commit its resources and energy to the task. If that happens, I think we can meet the challenge.

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