

The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “14th Annual Fund-Raising Banquet, True Light Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, MI, October 23, 1970” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 7:30 P.M. FRIDAY--
October 23, 1970

From the Office of Rep. Gerald R. Ford

The American people are committed to racial equality and blacks in America are making substantial progress, Rep. Gerald R. Ford declared tonight.

Ford cited evidence of progress by blacks in a speech at the 14th annual fund-raising dinner of the True Light Baptist Church.

Ford said gains in real income, education and standard of living have been proportionately greater for blacks than for whites in recent years, that the proportion of blacks earning middle incomes has more than doubled since 1950, and that the proportion of black students in American colleges has increased more than 50 per cent in the last two decades.

Pointing to black progress under the Nixon Administration, Ford listed black appointments within the Administration, inauguration of the Philadelphia Plan of minority group hiring, proposed changes in welfare and manpower training, the Nixon proposal for health insurance for poor families, efforts at school desegregation, and support for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Ford said President Nixon has named 64 per cent more non-whites to top executive positions than the previous Administration. He also noted that although Federal employment has been declining, the number of minority group members in Federal jobs rose by about 4,600 from November 1967 to November 1969.

On the subject of school desegregation, Ford declared: "This has been a very significant year. The volume of school desegregation this year has been greater than for any other year since the Supreme Court ordered the end of dual school systems in 1954."

Ford reported that 336 school districts were desegregated in 14 states this year, as compared with only 55 during the previous school year. He added that in 1967 not quite 14 per cent of the black students in those states attended majority white schools but that this year the estimate is 33 to 40 per cent.

Turning to black progress on the local scene, Ford cited Federal grants of \$638,430 for the Sheldon Complex, \$640,781 for the West Side Complex, \$2,384,000 for the Model Cities program, and \$72,893 for anti-poverty program planning and youth development in low-income neighborhoods.

Ford said the Federal anti-poverty grants, school aid allocations, public housing and parkland grants to Kent County for 1968 through 1970--grants which in large measure benefited black citizens of Grand Rapids--add up to more than \$12 million.

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7:30 p.m. OCT. 23, 1970

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Read

I am taking my theme this evening from the name of your church, The True Light.

This very event, this fund-raising dinner, is a demonstration of the true light. It is an outpouring of the love of people for God and the love of people for each other. This, indeed, is the light that illuminates the world.

We have the true light in America in great abundance if we but look for it.

We have the true light in Grand Rapids in great quantity if we but open our eyes to it.

Tonight I would like to help open the eyes of all our citizens to the true light ~~that is shining~~ in America and in Grand Rapids.

It is a light that stands in sharp contrast with the ~~darkness~~ darkness spread by those who preach the ~~doctrine~~ doctrine of ~~racial hatred and violence~~ racial hatred and violence.

It is the light which can drive away the shadows cast by those who cry out that only by violent means can the black man attain equality in America.

In his inaugural address on Jan. 20, 1969, President Nixon said:

"To go forward at all is to go forward together. This means black and white together as one nation, not two."

The good people of America, the people who see the true light, are committed to racial equality in the United States.

The good people of America recognize that the vast majority of black Americans work every day, keep their children in school, pay their taxes and have never taken part in a riot--but that these honest, hard-working, law-abiding black citizens are being shouted down by a handful of black militants.

The good people of America are dedicated to progress for black Americans, and we see ample evidence of that progress all around us although there is still a long road to travel.

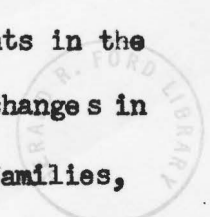
~~Let's look at the record of that progress.~~ Let's look at the record of that progress. We look at that record and we can be proud.

We can be proud that in recent years gains in real income, education and standard of living have been proportionately greater for blacks than for whites.

We can be proud that the proportion of blacks earning middle incomes has more than doubled since 1950.

We can be proud that the proportion of black students in American colleges has increased more than 50 per cent in the last two decades.

There are other areas of black progress--the number of black appointments in the Nixon Administration, inauguration of the Philadelphia Plan, the proposed changes in welfare and manpower training, the proposal for health insurance for poor families,



increased support for black colleges, efforts at school desegregation, and support for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Let me point out to you that President Nixon has appointed 64 per cent more ~~blacks~~ non-whites to top executive positions than the previous Administration.

Among the many prominent blacks named to executive posts are Washington, D.C., Mayor ~~Walter~~ Walter Washington, Equal Opportunity ~~Commission~~ Commission Chairman William Brown, Assistant Labor Secretary Arthur ~~Fletcher~~ Fletcher, Assistant Housing and Urban Development Secretary Samuel Jackson, James Farmer at Health-Education-and-Welfare, and many others.

At the level just below that of Cabinet secretary there are 102 Presidential appointments of non-whites. This is an increase of five over the previous Administration.

I would also point out to you that although the number ~~of~~ of Federal employes is declining at this time the number of minority group members in the Government is increasing.

During a two-year period--November 1967 to November 1969--Federal jobs dropped by 16,400 in 41 metropolitan areas. During the same period, however, minority group employment in Federal jobs rose by about 4,600.

In the area of school desegregation this has been a very significant year.

The volume of school desegregation this year has been greater than that for any year since the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the end of dual school systems in 1954.

Three hundred and thirty six school districts were desegregated in 14 states this year under voluntary plans. Of these, 227 ~~eliminated~~ eliminated segregation altogether, and 109 were ~~taking~~ taking important steps toward complete desegregation in the next school year.

These 336 school districts compare with only 55 desegregated during the previous school year. So ~~this shows~~ ^{this shows} ~~that progress is being made.~~ that progress is ~~being~~ being made.

A look at the percentage of black students in the 11 states still containing the greatest number of dual school systems shows additional progress.

In 1967, ~~only~~ ^{not quite} 14 per cent of the black students in these states attended majority white schools. This figure rose to 20 per cent in 1968. ~~Estimates~~ ^{Estimates} for ~~the~~ the 1970-71 school year range from 33 to 40 per cent.

This is real progress, and we can all ~~be~~ be pleased that desegregation is taking place with a minimum of disorder.

The Equal Opportunity Commission now is taking a new policy direction.



Under President Nixon, the budget for the EEOC has been more than doubled compared with the previous Administration.

In fiscal year 1968, the last full year of the previous Administration, the EEOC had a budget of \$6.6 million. In the next fiscal year, 1969, the EEOC budget was \$9.1 million. In fiscal year 1970, the first full year of the Nixon Administration, the EEOC had a budget of \$13.5 million, more than twice the amount spent during the last year of the previous Administration.

Commission Chairman William Brown points out that many of the EEOC's problems could be traced to the meager budgets provided the commission during the previous Administration.

You have all heard of the Philadelphia Plan, which was developed by the Nixon Administration to increase minority group employment in six higher-paying construction trades in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area. You know the trouble the Administration got into on account of the Philadelphia Plan. But the Administration stuck to its guns and made the Philadelphia Plan stick.

Now the Philadelphia Plan is being expanded to 18 other cities in the United States.

But of course the Federal Government is encouraging hometown solutions to the minority group employment problems that may exist in each area.

I have talked much this year about welfare reform. I firmly believe we must overhaul the present welfare system and convert it into a system that encourages the idle to work, improves the lot of the working poor, and keeps families together.

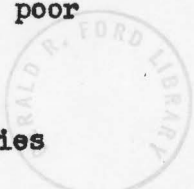
That is the purpose of President Nixon's welfare reform program. It would create a national floor of income support for poor families and yet would offer the incentive to work.

I also have great hopes for another Nixon reform--the consolidation of all Federal manpower training and job placement programs. Legislation to implement this reform will be enacted by the Congress yet this year. It will give the States and local communities greater control over manpower training programs and will create a job computer bank to match men with jobs.

I turn now to the President's proposal for basic reforms in health care for poor families. These reforms will be proposed as amendments to the welfare reform program, the Family Assistance Act, by the middle of next February.

The new health insurance program will not discriminate against the working poor and low-income male-headed families the way the present Medicaid system does.

The new program will be graduated with respect to contributions from families



participating in the Family Assistance Program.

It would establish national standards for eligibility which would be uniform and would provide a reasonable Federal floor of health benefits for poor families with children.

These are among the areas of national progress for black Americans.

Now let us look much closer to home. Let us consider the tremendous amounts of Federal aid which have been channeled into Grand Rapids for the betterment of black citizens and the entire community.

The Federal Government provided \$638,430 to help finance the multi-purpose neighborhood center known as the Sheldon Complex.

The Federal Government provided \$640,781 for the West Side Complex.

The Federal Government provided \$2,384,000 for the Grand Rapids Model Cities Program aimed at improving social, economic and physical conditions within the Model Cities area.

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The Federal Government last June 30 allocated \$72,893 for anti-poverty program planning and youth development in low-income neighborhoods.

The Federal Government provided \$2,792,760 for acquisition and development of 15 neighborhood school parks in Grand Rapids--more than half of them in or near the Model Cities area.

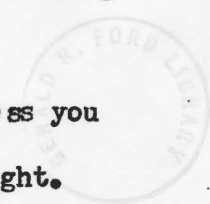
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In fact, if one were to add up all of the Federal anti-poverty grants, school aid allocations, public housing and parkland grants to Kent County from 1968 through 1970--grants which in large measure benefited the black citizens of Grand Rapids--the total would come to more than \$12 million. This is Federal aid entirely apart from additional millions for urban renewal and sewer and water improvements.

So the good people of America are concerned about the underprivileged, and they are working for the betterment of individual citizens and of our local communities.

And blacks throughout America are making progress, and they are making progress in Grand Rapids.

Let me tell you now that the *finest* progress you can make is the progress you make by yourselves--the progress illustrated by what you are doing here tonight.



Every time people like you get together under a good shepherd like Rev. Patterson to raise money to pay off a church debt or otherwise work for community advancement you are making progress and you are living the American dream.

Martin Luther King had a dream, and you here have a dream too. You are making it come true.

And ~~_____~~ in crowning your queen tonight you are saying she is ~~_____~~ the best, she is tops in making the American dream come true.

Now there is one more thing I want to tell you. I want you to know that I am a friend to all of you here and that my door is always open to you.

I have an office on Cherry Street, and if I am not there my assistant will be there to help you with any problems you might have.

I am your congressman, and that means I am at your disposal. I will help you in any way I can. Let us go forward together.

I will ~~_____~~ add ~~_____~~ I said at the outset--blessed ~~_____~~ ^{are} those who have seen the true light, for that is the path to ~~_____~~ happiness.

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