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MAY 20, 1975

Office of the Vice President
Washington, D. C.

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
BLACK CAUCUS FULL EMPLOYMENT FORUM LUNCHEON
RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 20, 1975

I have enormous admiration for the active and meaningful role the Congressional Black Caucus seeks to play in resolving the nation's economic and employment problems. The Caucus is to be commended for holding this conference and inviting useful contributions from those of you who have come from all across the country to be here.

I have long admired the work of the Black Caucus as it has sought from its inception to bring to the attention of America many of our problems and to dramatize the urgent need for solutions through the constructive legislative process.

And, personally, I shall always be grateful for the support and vote of confidence which many of the members of this Caucus placed in me during my confirmation as Vice President.

We have come here today to discuss the need to achieve as full employment of our nation's people as possible.

Today, unemployment cuts right across middle and low-income Americans. Most recent unemployment figures show a national rate of 8.9 percent. But let us not forget that black unemployment has consistently been above 8 percent since 1969. Most recently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that black unemployment is at 14.6 percent and black teenage unemployment about 40 percent.

These are startling figures. Accordingly, the Administration recommended to the Congress nearly two months ago an additional emergency employment appropriation of \$1.6 billion, including \$412.7 million for summer youth employment in urban areas. This summer program would create nearly one million more jobs for teenagers who otherwise would be idle during the summer. And last week the Congress enacted this administration proposal.

Admittedly, the impact of public service employment programs on massive unemployment is at best limited. It leaves the larger need for growing job opportunities in the private sector unsolved. The 1.6 billion level recommended by the President will, however, sustain existing public service employment programs through Fiscal Year 1976, with over 310,000 jobs created.

When we discuss employment, we must keep in mind the need for jobs to be meaningful and constructive. We must press for equal employment opportunity among the races and between men and women. For, as you well know, throughout our urban life many women serve as heads of households. We must insure that the jobs of permanent public employees are not threatened by cheaper temporary public service jobs. And finally, we must coordinate job training programs with industrial needs -- to insure that people are trained in areas where genuine job needs exist.

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I pledge myself to work with the Congressional Black Caucus in pursuit of increased employment opportunities for all Americans. For the only real weapons that either low or moderate income families have against inflation or recession are jobs. We must all be committed, business, industry, labor, government, black and white, no matter how much we differ in approach, to the proposition that as long as we expect every American to make a contribution to the betterment of our society, we must insure him or her of the opportunity to make that contribution with both pride and dignity. And that means opportunity to find a job.

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