

The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “Industrial Relations Group, Davenport College, Grand Rapids, MI, November 20, 1970” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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11/20/70

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Congressman Gerald R. Ford today hailed the Unemployment Compensation Amendment of 1970 as a "major legislative achievement of the 91st Congress."

Speaking before the Grand Rapids Industrial Relations Group at Davenport College, Ford noted that the new unemployment compensation law gives coverage to an additional 4,750,000 jobs. This, he said, is the largest single increase in coverage since the Workman's compensation program was started 35 years ago.

The new law, Ford said, eliminates the two chief complaints leveled against state administration of unemployment compensation. The new statute prohibits States from denying Workman's Compensation to persons taking approved job training and declares that compensation shall not be denied or reduced if a person filed his claim in another state.

Ford also pointed to other significant provisions in the new legislation - establishment of an unemployment compensation research program, federal grants to train unemployment compensation personnel, and a federal advisory commission on unemployment compensation to review the entire program and make recommendations to the Congress.

To provide for the expanded coverage under the new law, employer contributions will be increased by 1/10th of 1% to a new rate of .5%. The base to which the new rate is applied will be increased on January 1, 1972 to \$4,000 from the present base of \$3,500.

Ford also reviewed the status of other legislation in the Labor-Management field still pending in the 91st Congress.

The Administration's Manpower Training Bill has passed the Senate and will be the first order of business in the House when Congress reconvenes. It is scheduled for November 17. This is a bipartisan bill and should encounter no difficulties, Ford said.



The status of Occupational Safety legislation is the same in the House and the Senate. Virtually identical bills have been reported out by House and Senate Labor Committees, and administration substitutes for these committee bills will be offered on the House and Senate floors. The Senate will take up the legislation immediately upon reconvening. The House will act after disposing of the Manpower Training Bill.

Under the Committee bills the Secretary of Labor would set the safety standards, order inspections, conduct hearings, issue orders, and take appeals into court. Under the Administration substitute, a special committee would set the safety standards. This Committee, appointed by the President, must be made up of experts in the fields of safety and health. The Secretary of Labor would investigate complaints. If his inspectors find violations, hearings would be conducted before an independent committee, different in membership from the Committee which set the standards. The Secretary could appeal the findings of this committee to the courts.

Industry favors the Committee approach, as provided by the Administration Bill; Labor favors granting complete authority to the Secretary of Labor.

Ford said there almost certainly will be no further action this year on Fair Employment Practices legislation.

He pointed out that although the legislation has passed the Senate, the House bill has not yet been granted a rule for the consideration of it on the House floor.

The basic disagreement over Fair Employment Practices legislation is over methods of enforcement. However, objectives of the competing bills are the same.

An administration bill would give the equal employment opportunity commission expanded powers but would require the committee to go into court for enforcement of its ruling.



The Senate approved bill would transform the E.E.O.C. into a quasi-judicial body which would issue cease and desist orders.

Ford said there is no movement on legislation to supplant the National Labor Relations Board with Labor Courts. He said however, that the complexion of the Board is tending to become more conservative with the appointment of a new chairman, Edward Miller and the pending appointment of a new member, Ralph Kennedy.

There are no developments in the area of "right to work", Ford added. He said there currently is no push on the part of the unions for the repeal of Section 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act, which leaves the union shop question to the States.

NOTE TO MR. FORD: The Press Release data on this statement will omit all references to the NLRB and right to work, also the detail with regard to the new Unemployment Compensation Law.

