

The original documents are located in Box 35, “6/29/76 - Remarks to Members of the Committee on Urban Development and Neighborhood Revitalization” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT THE
MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT
AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

JUNE 29, 1976

TODAY WE ARE HOLDING THE FIRST MEETING OF A
NEWLY ESTABLISHED PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT
AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION.

I AM GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE NATIONWIDE PROBLEM
OF URBAN DECAY AND NEIGHBORHOOD DECLINE.

THEREFORE, I HAVE ESTABLISHED THIS COMMITTEE, UNDER THE
LEADERSHIP OF SECRETARY CARLA HILLS, TO DEVELOP POLICIES
TO OVERCOME THOSE FORCES WHICH ARE THREATENING THE VIABILITY
OF OUR CITIES / AND THE NEIGHBORHOODS WHICH DO SO MUCH TO
GIVE OUR CITIES THEIR VITALITY AND STABILITY.

OUR SOCIETY IS ONE OF CONSTANT CHANGE AND MOVEMENT●

THIS FACT HAS BOTH ITS POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS●

THE AREAS MOST LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM TECHNOLOGICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC,

AND SOCIAL CHANGE ARE OUR OLDER CITIES●

IN RECENT YEARS, RAPID CHANGES IN COMMUNICATIONS,
MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND SOCIAL
EXPECTATIONS HAVE COMBINED TO CAUSE MIGRATION FROM OLDER
CITIES TO THE SUBURBS AND TO EXPANDING AREAS IN THE SOUTH
AND WEST.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE PRODUCED SEVERE STRAINS
ON OLDER CITIES, FORCING CITY GOVERNMENTS TO COPE WITH
THE POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING PRESSURES OF A STAGNANT OR
DECLINING ECONOMIC BASE / COUPLED WITH A GROWING NEED FOR
SERVICES WHICH ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE EXPENSIVE.

ONE OF AMERICA'S OLDEST, PROUDEST, AND STRONGEST
TRADITIONS -- THE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD -- IS BEING SEVERELY
THREATENED BY THESE FORCES. IN MANY WAYS, THE CITY IS
ITS NEIGHBORHOODS. THE CITY DRAWS ITS STRENGTH FROM THE
STABILITY AND COHESION THAT FAMILIES HAVE ESTABLISHED AND
NURTURED IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS.

IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT AS OUR OLDER CITIES DECLINE, SO ALSO
DO THE NEIGHBORHOODS IN THOSE CITIES.

FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS IS NOT A SIMPLE
MATTER. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS NOT ALWAYS SUCCEEDED
IN ITS WELL-INTENTIONED EFFORTS TO AID THE CITIES.

ONE MAJOR PROBLEM IS THE COMPLEX AND OVERLAPPING FEDERAL
RULES WHICH OFTEN ACCOMPANY FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

IT IS MY PHILOSOPHY THAT DECISION-MAKING

RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD REMAIN AS CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

LOCALLY ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE MOST ACCOUNTABLE TO LOCAL

CITIZENS AND CAN BEST REFLECT THEIR CONCERNS.

THEREFORE, I HAVE STRONGLY ADVOCATED GENERAL REVENUE SHARING
AND HAVE PROPOSED A SERIES OF OTHER GRANT CONSOLIDATION
PROPOSALS INTENDED TO MINIMIZE THE STRINGS ON FEDERAL AID
AND TO MAXIMIZE LOCAL CONTROL OVER HOW THE FUNDS ARE SPENT.

I INTEND TO PURSUE THIS COURSE VIGOROUSLY,
BUT IT CLEARLY IS NOT ENOUGH -- BY ITSELF -- TO SOLVE OUR
URBAN PROBLEMS. THEREFORE, I AM CHARGING THIS
COMMITTEE WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CARRYING OUT A
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF URBAN PROBLEMS AND OF THOSE FEDERAL
PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE CITIES.

IT IS CHARGED WITH MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WHAT SHOULD BE DONE, AND, IN PARTICULAR, WHAT THE FEDERAL ROLE SHOULD BE, TO COUNTER THE FORCES LEADING TO URBAN DECLINE.

OBVIOUSLY, THIS IS A VERY BIG ASSIGNMENT.

BUT I HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF SECRETARY HILLS, THE OTHER CABINET MEMBERS, AND THE AGENCY HEADS WHO WILL SHARE IN THIS ENDEAVOR.

I KNOW YOU WILL DO A GOOD JOB. I WILL SUPPORT YOU IN
ANY WAY I CAN. AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE SUCCESSFUL
COMPLETION OF YOUR EFFORTS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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