

The original documents are located in Box 49, folder “6/19/76 - KMPC Radio Interview” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING BOOK
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

KMPC-RADIO INTERVIEW

THE WHITE HOUSE

JUNE 19, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE


WASHINGTON

RADIO INTERVIEW WITH TERRY MARTIN
OF KMPC RADIO, LOS ANGELES

Saturday, June 19, 1976

10:30-10:40 a.m.

Oval Office

From: Bob Mead 

I. PURPOSE

To record a ten minute radio interview with Mr. Terry Martin for broadcast in Los Angeles.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS, PRESS PLAN

- A. Background: Terry Martin is a physically-impaired reporter who specializes in news reports dealing with the handicapped and other physically impaired people. When Jack was in Los Angeles, Mr. Martin interviewed him and expressed a desire to interview you on your thoughts on providing a better atmosphere for physically handicapped people. Jack indicated to him that he was sure you would do such an interview if Mr. Martin ever came to Washington. Mr. Martin thus borrowed \$500 to make the trip and arrived at the first of the week. He has submitted five or six questions he would like to ask. Those questions have been provided to you in briefing form.

Mr. Martin does not receive any monies for his news reports or interviews. He is quite dedicated to his cause and does this work only to make California listeners aware of handicapped problems. The radio station provides him the time. He also is a member of a non-profit production house which produces public service announcements for radio and television for the deaf and blind community.

The interview will be broken up into short excerpts to be broadcast on KMPC when he arrives back in California.

- B. Participants: The President
Terry Martin
Bob Mead
Ron Nessen

- C. Press Plan: A White House photographer will be present. An official transcript will be made for the files.

SUGGESTED OPENING STATEMENT

Hello, Mr. Martin. I am happy to welcome you here today. Before answering your questions, I would like to say just a few words about our commitment to the physically impaired.

I believe America's handicapped citizens have a right to live with self-reliance, with dignity, to realize their full capacity as human beings and to achieve personal and professional fulfillment.

I recognize that the disabled, for reasons in many cases beyond their own control, have to be given some special attention. My Administration is taking steps to do just that.

Income and health security are very important to the disabled. I, therefore, proposed in my budget for FY 77 that the full cost of living increase in social security benefits be paid in the coming year. And I have submitted legislation to the Congress to provide catastrophic health insurance for everybody covered by Medicare. If this legislation is passed, disabled persons who qualify for Medicare will never have to pay more than \$500 a year for covered hospital or nursing home care nor more than \$250 for one year's doctor's bills.

Last October I signed the "1975 Revision and Extension of the Development Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act." The Act provides grants to the States to help meet the needs of persons, such as the mentally retarded, with developmental disabilities.

In December I approved the "Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975". I signed this Act because of my strong support for full educational opportunities for our handicapped children.

In April of this year I issued an Executive order barring discrimination against the handicapped in federally assisted programs.

And I have called a White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals to be held in the Spring of 1977. The purpose of this Conference is to stimulate a national assessment of problems facing individuals with handicaps and to develop recommendations to solve such problems. As I have said before, I am pleased that this conference involves government at all levels and private organizations and citizens. States and local officials, and private citizens as well, must turn their attention to the needs of the handicapped. The private sector can perform a creative role by contributing its talents and resources.

-2-

The White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals is a very important occasion which should contribute significantly to the health, education and welfare of handicapped individuals everywhere.

Massengale 6/18/76

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

- Q. Rep. Bell and Rep. Brademus have introduced legislation to guarantee handicapped children the right to an education. Do you support that bill?
- A The legislation to which you refer, "Education For Handicapped Children," was passed by Congress late last year. I signed it in November of 1975.

It is, in many ways, a ground-breaking piece of legislation. It provides that by September 1, 1978, each State must assure the Commissioner of Education that, as a matter of public policy, the State is committed to the education of all handicapped school-aged children.

As you are probably aware, California is looked to as a leader in the field of education for handicapped children. It is my understanding that a master plan to assure comprehensive educational services to all children has been adopted by both the California State Legislature and the California State Department of Education.

It is my hope that we will be able to say that each of the more than six million handicapped school aged children will be receiving the kind of education that will maximize his or her abilities and potential.

TAX DEDUCTIONS

- Q. Would you support legislation extending the same tax deduction offered to the blind to the physically impaired and deaf?
- A. I believe a special program of assistance is a much more desirable approach. Tax deductions offer nothing for those who owe no tax and provide more benefit to the wealthier taxpayer.

sgm/6-18/76

VEHICULAR ACCESSIBILITY

- Q. General Motors recently would not co-operate with the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRITD) in bidding on buses that people in wheelchairs could enter easily. Do you believe that the Urban Mass Transit Authority should require such accessibility for handicapped people?
- A. I believe that the physically handicapped should have public transportation which they can use effectively. The Federal Government has issued regulations that require all newly designed transit buses to offer, as an option which the transit operator can order, a wheelchair ramp or lift. Those buses should reach the market within the next 12 to 18 months.

Local communities will then have the choice of whether to serve the physically handicapped by special services--like lift-equipped vans in a Dial-A-Ride program--or by using the regular transit buses. That choice will often depend on local conditions, and it would be wrong for the federal government to mandate a single answer.

(NOTE: SCRITD recently sought bids on low floor buses. General Motors, AM General and Rohr did not respond to the SCRITD request for bids. There is no information that supports the claim that General Motors refused to cooperate with SCRITD except that they didn't respond to the request for bids.)

JRH/6/18/76

FREE BUS FARES

- Q. The blind are now offered free fares on bus systems funded by Congress. Would you support extending such a plan to people physically impaired in other ways?
- A. Current Federal Law does not go as far as you describe. The law requires only that bus systems receiving Federal operating assistance must give the elderly and handicapped at least half-fare privileges during non-peak hours.

I support the continuation of the Federal policy that encourages local transit authorities to develop their own fare policies including reduced fare or fare free programs without Federal restriction.

NOTE: UMTA informs us that free bus fares for the blind on bus systems funded by Congress is not a federal requirement.

If such a plan has been implemented in certain areas, it is because of a city or county decision, not a Congressional mandate. Some areas receiving Section Five money may have decided to eliminate fares for the blind, but it is certainly not a nationwide provision.

BRAILLE ELEVATOR NUMBERS

- Q. The blind often have difficulty using elevators because they cannot read the buttons to select the right floor. Would you support a plan to have Braille numbers in all government building elevators, and some system of identifying the floors as the elevator stops (perhaps a tape recorded voice calling out each floor)?
- A. We are already doing this in some parts of the Federal government. At HEW, for example, the elevator doors on each floor are labeled with a tangible number which the blind can touch to identify the floor number. Also, I know that Bill Usury, the Secretary of Labor, has ordered that all elevators at the Department of Labor be equipped with numbers in braille. I am asking GSA, which is responsible for taking care of Federal buildings, to look into the cost of these suggestions and others which might help the blind in all buildings.

MARKED MONEY

- Q. All U.S. coins are marked by size or grooves on the edge so that they can be readily identified by the blind. The Dutch use a somewhat similar system of raised dots on their paper currency. Have you thought of identifying U.S. paper money with raised dots to denote the various denominations, so that blind people can tell what type of paper money they are handling?
- A. Many suggestions have been received regarding the addition of Braille-type features to U.S. currency to make it easy for the blind to identify the denomination of notes. The Treasury has been studying such matters. The printing of our currency in Braille or some other system of embossing or special marking, such as notching and perforation, for the convenience of identification has been considered.

No practical method has been found, however, to differentiate the various denominations so they could be recognized by touch by the blind and at the same time prevent the possibility of tampering with that identification system.

Experiments were initiated in 1971 to incorporate such a feature on our currency notes. Soon after this program was begun, however, the Treasury was advised that the National Federation of the Blind opposed Braille identification of currency.

We are going to continue study of this program.