

**The original documents are located in Box 119, folder “Ethnic Purity” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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ETHNIC PURITY

- Q. Can you tell us your response to Governor Carter's statements about "ethnic purity"?
- A. As the Governor himself has recognized, that was an unfortunate choice of words. Neither he nor I nor any other candidate, I believe, would use those words to describe our policies.

Basically, I believe that our ethnic heritage is one of the greatest treasures our nation has, and the powers of the government should never be misused to destroy that treasure.

At the same time, I am firmly opposed to racial discrimination against individual American citizens who are seeking to buy or rent a new home. Their rights are protected by law, and as President, I will continue to enforce our laws.

Under the law, the Federal government also has a responsibility to assist State and local governments in meeting the housing needs of their low-income citizens, as determined by those governments. That law shall also be enforced.

Over the long run, I believe that the key to improving the quality of housing for our low-income citizens is a

growing economy -- an economy that will provide better-paying jobs without devastating inflation. This is the central goal we are pursuing in this Administration, and if we stick to our policies, it is a goal that is attainable.

GERGEN  
4/13/76

(Note: You may wish to be generous toward Carter with remarks such as:

As the Governor himself has fully recognized, that was an unfortunate choice of words. It really seems like a slip of the tongue made in the tension and exhaustion of a campaign. Personally, I sympathize with his view that he should be judged on his record -- not on the basis of one ill-chosen remark.

PROS: Shows a President above the battle; shows understanding where others are villifying; recognizes that most people are going to forgive him anyway.

CONS: Might ease Carter's problem in winning Pennsylvania and beating HHH; might insert GRF too far into controversy.)

GERGEN  
4/13/76

ETHNIC PURITY - NEW JERSEY

Q: Could you elaborate on your views, as first expressed in the Rose Garden news conference with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, on what role the Federal and State governments should play in opening up suburbs or racially restricted areas of cities to member of minority groups and specifically to blacks.

A: I stated at that time that I supported existing Federal housing laws. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the first law that I signed when I took office, provides for greater participation by State and local governments in the use of Federal funds for housing and urban needs.

The law also provides, however, that communities which apply for Federal Community Development Block Grants must provide a housing assistance plan for low-income people residing in the community or expected to reside, which complies with civil rights legislation and provides adequate citizen participation.

Another part of the law, Section 8, provides direct cash assistance for lower-income families to meet their housing needs. This provision avoids the massive housing projects that characterized former Federal public housing programs, which antagonized many suburban communities.

Taken together, the various provisions of the 1974 Act provide a sensible and flexible guideline for the interaction of Federal, State and local governments in the matter of low-income housing.

FLM  
6/2/76

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