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FAIR HOUSING CONFERENCE

APRIL 29, 1975

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU TO THE PLENARY SESSION OF HUD'S FAIR HOUSING CONFERENCE.

AT THE BEGINNING OF APRIL WE AT HUD OPENED FAIR HOUSING MONTH BY SIGNING A DISPLAY IN THE LOBBY OF OUR BUILDING TO DOCUMENT OUR REDEDICATION TO THE POLICY OF EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY.

TO CLOSE FAIR HOUSING MONTH IT IS FITTING THAT WE SPONSOR A CONFERENCE WHICH FEATURES WORKSHOPS THAT SEEK TO IMPLEMENT THE FAIR HOUSING CONCEPTS TO WHICH WE ARE DEDICATED.

THE PRINCIPLES OF FAIR HOUSING CANNOT BE BROUGHT OUT AND DUSTED OFF ONE MONTH EACH YEAR. THESE PRINCIPLES MUST BE TAUGHT, ADVANCED, AND SUPPORTED EACH AND EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR.

OUR NATION IS FOUNDED ON THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY CITIZEN, AND NO CONCEPT IS SO BASIC TO THE SURVIVAL OF OUR DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.



THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1968 PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION OR NATIONAL ORIGIN. THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974 PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING ON THE BASIS OF SEX.

THESE ENACTMENTS CONSTITUTE MAJOR STEPS FORWARD. BUT THEY ARE A BEGINNING, NOT AN END; THERE IS MUCH, MUCH MORE TO BE DONE.

AS MR. JUSTICE MARSHALL STATED LAST YEAR IN HIS DISSENTING OPINION IN MILLIKIN V. BRADLEY:

"RACIAL ATTITUDES ENGRAINED IN OUR NATION'S CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE ARE NOT QUICKLY THROWN ASIDE IN THE MIDDLE YEARS."

BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT SUCH ATTITUDES CAN BE CHANGED WITH BOTH COMMITMENT AND EDUCATION.



THERE IS MUCH PROMISE IN THE PHILOSOPHY EMBODIED IN THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974 WHICH RETURNS THE PLANNING AND THE DECISION-MAKING THAT AFFECT LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND TO THE LOCAL CITIZENS. IT PROVIDES REVENUE-SHARING FUNDS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO ENABLE THEM TO CARRY OUT THEIR PLANS AND DECISIONS.

THE ACT EMPOWERS THE SECRETARY OF HUD TO REDUCE OR CUT OFF THESE REVENUE-SHARING FUNDS FROM ANY COMMUNITY WHICH FAILS TO COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW. DISCRIMINATION IN THE USE OF THESE FUNDS IS UNLAWFUL, AND I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT I WILL NOT HESITATE TO USE THE POWERS ENTRUSTED TO ME UNDER THE ACT.

YET EVEN THESE GOOD AND NECESSARY PROVISIONS IN THE ACT WILL NOT GUARANTY EQUALITY UNLESS LOCAL CITIZENS ARE MADE AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD IN THE PROPOSED USE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUNDS. FOR EDUCATION IS THE STRONGEST TOOL OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.



AND EDUCATION IS THE GOAL OF THIS CONFERENCE ON FAIR HOUSING. WE WANT FAIR HOUSING GROUPS TO PARTICIPATE EQUALLY AND IN AN INFORMED FASHION WITH ALL OTHER ELIGIBLE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS.

IN THAT SPIRIT I WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO WASHINGTON AND TO THIS CONFERENCE. I AM EXCITED BY WHAT IS BEFORE YOU. I URGE YOU TO MAKE THE FULLEST USE OF THE WORKSHOP SESSIONS AND TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU THE KNOW-HOW TO MAKE FAIR HOUSING A REALITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

GOOD LUCK. I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS.

THANK YOU.

