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Congressional Record S. 9086 - 'To Serve and Not to be Served'

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on the faculty at the University of Montana and a woman of great ability and integrity. Thank you so much for such a warm welcome.

Mister President, Madame President, officers, staff and delegates: I am most pleased to have this opportunity to address your Biennial Convention.

This is perhaps a fitting occasion for me, my last year in the United States Senate. But I can honestly say it is entirely coincidental, for your invitation arrived several days before I announced my retirement. Perhaps I should state one other qualification for being here. Before becoming a Member of the Congress in 1943, I had the honor of teaching history at the University of Montana. So I am not only about to be a retired Senator, I've been a retired teacher for 34 years.

In just a few weeks, we will celebrate the 200th birthday of our Nation. We have much to celebrate and much that we can be proud of. We are a young Nation, but we are the world's oldest constitutional democracy. Our wise founding fathers fashioned a system of government that has withstood the test of time—a civil war, two world wars, a great depression, and, more recently, a senseless and tragic war in Southeast Asia and the subversion of our public institutions by the first President to resign from office.

We have not only survived these crises; we have learned from them. We are a more healthy society for having been through them.

We now seem to be in a period of reaction, a reaction manifested in part by an anti-Washington, anti-government mood in the country. But it is important, I think, as we celebrate our 200th birthday, that we put this mood in perspective. It is important that we keep in mind the accomplishments as well as the mistakes and failures of past years.

The question, I think, is not whether we shall have a period of retrenchment. It is how best to get on with the Nation's unfinished business after more than a decade of war, the abuses of Watergate, the lawless violations of our civil liberties by intelligence agencies and the economic and psychological consequences of these tragic events.

The agenda of unfinished business is a long one. At the end of this century, in the year 2000, we will reach the bimillennial of the modern era. We will be at the threshold of the next one-thousand years of human history. The quarter of a century which remains of the 20th Century is crucial. These are years of basic decision. There are three fundamental questions we must answer, and answer affirmatively.

First, can we successfully reduce world tensions and achieve a lasting peace so that in the lives of our grandchildren, if not our children, we will no longer be faced with the threat of nuclear war. In the next 25 years, we may see the last chance to define an international structure that can support a durable peace. Indeed, if we do not bring to an end the Damoclean threat of nuclear war in these years, then we may see a doomsday end of civilization.

To achieve that lasting peace we must change the policies of the past 25 years.

—We must end, once and for all, our aimless military adventuring in Asia, Africa and anywhere else;

—We must build a lasting peace, not on the quicksands of the mutual threat of nuclear annihilation, but on strengthened institutions of international stability;

—We must end the obsessive arms race and lift the dead weight of armaments from the backs of the world's people.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TO SERVE AND NOT TO BE SERVED

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on June 8, it was my privilege to address the Biennial Convention of the National Association of Retired Persons in Bal Harbour, Fla. It was a pleasure for me to meet with this outstanding group which has contributed so much to making the desires, the needs and the objectives of their organizations so well known, who have done so much to advance their objectives through legislation, and who now number collectively something on the order of 10 million members.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my remarks on that occasion may be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the remarks were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D-MONT.) BEFORE THE BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS, BAL HARBOUR, FLORIDA, JUNE 8, 1976

It is a privilege to be introduced by Harriet Miller, an old friend, a former colleague.

Second, can we return to a period of stable economic prosperity with full employment and at the same time end the spiral of inflation which hurts every American but is so disastrous for those on fixed incomes. I think we can, but we must reject the economic philosophy of the past decade which has tolerated five, six, seven and even eight percent unemployment in the name of economic progress.

We must turn away from policies which would build economic prosperity on the blind and wasteful production of armaments and a balance-of-payments on international arms sales at bargain-basement prices by the United States government.

We must find the means other than arms production and high unemployment levels to sustain the country's economy. No unemployment level can ever be acceptable while there is work to be done and willing hands and heads to do it.

The third great question which we must answer in the next quarter century is this: Can we reverse the ever-increasing pollution of our environment and at the same time enjoy the fruits of continued industrial expansion and material prosperity? The next decades are years of choice between a hell-bent waste and defilement of air, water, fuel and other vital resources in the interest of so-called economic growth and a rational usage of the great natural gifts of this land for human needs. In these years we may well be exercising a final option to insure the sheer physical livability of the United States for centuries to come. A world at peace with mutual disarmament and without the threat of nuclear holocaust, an end to the pollution of our air and water, and economic prosperity with full employment but without inflation—these must be our goals now and in the next generation. But we will not achieve these or other goals unless we reaffirm the basic premises of our independence as a Nation which we celebrate this July 4th.

We are all Americans. Our birthright is the same. To all who live within the borders of the Nation, that birthright is the promise of a decent chance for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our policies and programs must reach out equally to all Americans, to the sick and to the well, to the old and to the young, to the poor and the prosperous, to men and to women and to all minority and ethnic groups whatever their circumstances. We must not turn away from those who have not shared in the Nation's well-being.

There are those who say we must do less. They would leave much of the agenda of unfinished business to state and local government, or even just unfinished. But I want to say to you, and to the next Administration and the next generation of political leaders: Our problems are national problems. They require a national effort. Our goals for the remainder of this century cannot be achieved without federal laws and programs and the funds to implement them—laws enacted by the Congress and administered by the national Executive.

So let us not succumb to rhetoric that implies that every federal program to help those who cannot help themselves has failed. Let us not be fooled by those who imply we should do nothing because we cannot do everything at once.

Indeed, we cannot do everything at once. But we can and must provide opportunities for those who do not have them and are dependent on others for their survival. We can and must, for example, fulfill the commitment to our senior citizens which the Congress made more than a decade ago when it enacted the Older Americans Act.

"In keeping with the traditional concept of the inherent dignity of the individual in our democratic society," the Congress declared, "the older people of our Nation are

entitled to . . . secure equal opportunity to the full and free enjoyment" of these ten objectives.

An adequate income.
The best possible physical and mental health,

Suitable housing.
Full services for those who require institutional care,

Employment opportunities without discrimination on account of age,
Retirement in health, honor and dignity.

The meaningful pursuit of civic, cultural and recreational opportunities,
The availability of efficient community services,

The benefits of proven research, and
Freedom, independence and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives.

We have made considerable progress toward these objectives, but we are a long way from fulfilling the promises of the Older Americans Act.

Social security benefits have increased substantially. Yet, the average elderly couple still receives only \$310 a month and nearly a third of elderly Americans still live below the federal government's meager poverty income line. Four and three-quarters million elderly households have less than \$2000 a year to live on more than a decade after we declared war on poverty. That is a tragic testimonial to how far we still have to go to fulfill Lyndon Johnson's dream of a Great Society.

Medicare has helped to pay the costs of illness for most of our senior citizens, yet the beneficiaries of Medicare are paying more now each year out of their own pockets than the year before Medicare became effective. In 1974, those out-of-pocket medical costs were \$178 more than in 1964.

Seventy percent of our elderly own their own homes, but housing costs, especially utilities and taxes, have skyrocketed so that now the average person over sixty-five pays 35 percent of his or her income for housing costs alone. And six million older persons live in substandard housing and more than one and a half million are without even basic plumbing facilities.

Medicaid pays the daily costs of nursing home care, but as my colleague Senator Frank Moss has worked so tirelessly to demonstrate, many of the Nation's 23 thousand nursing homes are cruel warehouses operated by unscrupulous rip-off artists.

Employment opportunities for the elderly have been increased through programs such as the Older American Community Service Employment Act. But 70 percent of male and 86 percent of elderly female heads of households are still not in the labor force. Most workers are forced to retire at 65 because of the antiquated notion that the older you get the less efficient and less creative you become. And once retired, there is little incentive to work even part time because of the social security earnings limitation.

Yes, my friends, we have a long way to go before the promises of the Older Americans Act are fulfilled, and I might say the performance of the present Administration in Washington has been, to put it charitably, disappointing when it comes to helping our senior citizens. In fact, President Ford, during his brief tenure in the White House, has sought to cut back nearly every program for the aging.

The present Administration's policies have been expressed principally through vetoes, budget recessions and extreme reluctance to propose anything new or even implement programs already on the books. It has only been through the most determined resistance by the Congress that we have counteracted the Ford Administration's attacks on senior citizen programs.

The Administration would have put a five percent ceiling on the first automatic so-

cial security cost-of-living increase. The Congress made it eight percent.

The President vetoed an emergency employment appropriations bill which included \$30 million for the Older American Community Service Employment program. The Congress provided that \$30 million in another bill.

The Congress overrode the President's veto of the special Health Revenue Sharing Act which established new home health agencies, created a study of mental health problems of the elderly, and provided training programs for home nursing aides and nurse practitioners.

The Congress overrode the President's veto of the 1976 Education Appropriations bill which provides three and a half million dollars to launch the community schools program.

The President vetoed the Labor/HEW Appropriations bill. Again, the Congress overrode. That bill contained \$125 million for the nutrition program for the elderly, \$25 million more than the President requested. And it provided \$17.5 million for the National Institute on Aging, three million dollars more than the President requested.

The Congress increased funds for the Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions programs, \$4.4 million more than the President's budget.

We continued the Senior Opportunities and Services program and the Emergency Services Conservation and Community Food and Nutrition programs which the Administration had proposed to phase out.

The present Administration has attempted repeatedly to increase food stamp charges, to the point that most elderly citizens would find it uneconomical to participate in the food stamp program. It has coupled this with proposed cutbacks in the nutrition program for the elderly which would have reduced participation in the food stamp program by nearly thirty-five thousand. Congress rejected this proposal and now two hundred and forty-five thousand elderly persons receive hot meals at senior citizens centers, schools, churches and in other settings.

These were the actions the Congress took to counter the present Administration's attacks on programs for the elderly for the current fiscal year.

The attacks continue, and the Congress will have to continue to hold the line. The President's Fiscal 1977 Budget submitted to the Congress last January offered practically no new initiatives. On the contrary, the Administration has recommended a fifty-two-million-dollar reduction in funding for the Older Americans Act.

It has even proposed to increase, yes increase—the fees that must be paid by elderly and disabled persons under Medicare. Its proposed catastrophic health insurance program would actually help only three percent of Medicare hospital patients, while the other 97 percent will pay more—a lot more. In fact, the President's proposal will add \$1.3 billion to out-of-pocket payments of Medicare beneficiaries, and a Medicare patient hospitalized for 30 days would pay \$450, compared with \$104, the present Medicare deductible for the first 60 days of hospitalization.

So the Congress will have to hold the line on Medicare. But we will have to do better than that. When Medicare started it covered 46 percent of the elderly's health care costs. It now covers only 38 percent. Instead of increasing out-of-pocket costs for Medicare benefits, we should be working toward the elimination of deductibles and premiums. We should expand eligibility to all citizens over 65. We should eliminate copayments for low-income persons. We should have a catastrophic health insurance program for all our citizens, not one that benefits only three percent of the elderly. And we should expand Medicare to provide new services—

out-of-hospital prescription drugs, glasses, hearing aids, dentures, physical checkups, and above all, preventive health services—benefits not now provided.

We could provide all this new coverage for less than the cost—nearly six billion dollars—of one antiballistic missile facility which was built and will be closed down within a year after its completion.

We could do this and more for less than half what the Pentagon proposes to spend building the new B-1 bomber. Yes, we could have full health insurance for the elderly and the disabled. We could build two hundred thousand new housing units for the elderly each year until we catch up to the White House Conference on Aging's goal of a hundred and twenty thousand units that was recommended in 1971.

We could expand the direct loan program for housing for the elderly and handicapped under Section 202 and we could renovate existing housing for the elderly.

We can and should do this and more.

We must end all vestiges of discrimination against senior citizens. We should, as your organizations have so effectively advocated, guarantee jobs to those under 65, work toward the end of mandatory retirement policies and provide incentives for those over 65 to work if they want.

Age discrimination takes many forms. The elderly have had less than their share of federal funds and programs to help all our citizens. Revenue sharing is, of course, the most conspicuous example. Only four cents of every revenue sharing dollar has been spent on social services for the poor and the aged. Less than one-half of one percent of revenue sharing funds have been channeled into programs for the elderly, 10 percent of our population. There is also discrimination in the administration of programs for the elderly. Too often, senior citizens are either uninvolved or just members of advisory boards whose advice is never taken. It's time the elderly were invited into the councils of decision-making and implementation of programs which are for their benefit.

But discrimination is not only a matter of public policy. It is a matter of attitude.

Dr. Robert Butler has written in his recently published book, *Why Survive?* "The tragedy of old age is not that each of us must grow old and die, but that the process of doing so has been made unnecessarily and at times excruciatingly painful, humiliating, debilitating and isolating through insensitivity, ignorance and poverty."

That process must change. But it will change only when Americans start realizing and assuming that old people have great contributions to make to society.

Let us, as Americans, on our 200th Birthday take to heart the motto of your Associations: "To Serve and Not to be Served."