

December 19, 1969
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The civil rights policy to which this Administration is committed is one of the demonstrable deeds -- focused where they count. One of the things that counts most is earning power. Nothing is more unfair than that the same Americans who pay taxes should by any pattern of discriminatory practices be deprived an equal opportunity to work on Federal construction contracts.

The Philadelphia Plan does not set quotas; it points to goals. It does not presume automatic violation of laws if the goals are not met; it does require affirmative action if a review of the totality of a contractor's employment practices shows that he^{is}/not affording equal employment opportunity.

The Attorney General has assured the Secretary of Labor that the Philadelphia Plan is not in conflict with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I, of course, respect the right and duty of the Comptroller General to render his honest and candid views to the Congress. If, in effect, we have here a disagreement in legal interpretation between the Attorney

General and Comptroller General, the place for the resolution of this issue is in the courts.

However, the rider adopted by the Senate last night would not only prevent the Federal Departments from implementing the Philadelphia Plan; it could even bar a judicial determination of the issue.

Therefore, I urge the conferees to permit the continued implementation of the Philadelphia Plan while the courts resolve this difference between congressional and executive legal opinions.
