

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210



ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARTHUR A. FLETCHER'S REPLY  
TO WCBS-TV EDITORIAL ON "BENIGN NEGLECT" - JULY 20, 1970

TIME WILL NOT ALLOW ME TO DEAL ADEQUATELY  
WITH THE ASSUMPTIONS CONTAINED IN THE WCBS-TV  
EDITORIAL ON "BENIGN NEGLECT." HOWEVER, I CAN STATE  
THE CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY THRUST OF THE ADMINISTRATION,  
THAT THRUST INVOLVES MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK. THIS  
INCLUDES MAKING EXISTING CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS PRODUCE  
THE DESIRED RESULTS AND PAVING THE WAY TOWARD  
ENDING ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION IN OUR TIME. IN PURSUING  
THIS COURSE WE INDEED BELIEVE OURSELVES TO BE THE  
BLACK MAN'S ALLY AND HIS ADVOCATE.

THUS, RATHER THAN "BENIGN NEGLECT" THE NIXON  
ADMINISTRATION'S CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY, TURNS OUT TO BE  
"RESULT-ORIENTED, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION."

PRESIDENT NIXON FEELS THAT AMERICA MUST BECOME AN "OPEN SOCIETY" BEFORE BLACKS AND OTHER NONWHITES CAN EXPERIENCE THE FULL BENEFITS MADE POSSIBLE BY CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATIONS AND JUDICIAL DECISIONS OF THE PAST.

THEREFORE, THE PRESIDENT INSISTS THAT A STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO MAKE EXISTING CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS WORK, IS NECESSARY, BEFORE AN "OPEN SOCIETY" BECOMES A REALITY.

THUS, THE PRIORITY CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY POSITIONS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, IS SIMPLY THAT OF DOING ALL WE CAN, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF OUR RESOURCES, TO MAKE EXISTING CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS WORK.

IN SEEKING THIS POLICY OBJECTIVE, THE PRESIDENT FEELS THAT THE ROLE OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE, IS ONE OF PROVIDING

AFFIRMATIVE, EFFECTIVE, THOUGH UNSPECTACULAR,  
LEADERSHIP IN THIS ENDEAVOR. THE FACT IS, IN  
COMMITTING GOVERNMENT TO ACHIEVING RESULTS,  
PRESIDENT NIXON HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF TO A STRONGER  
POSITION THAN PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS. HE BELIEVES  
ACHIEVING TRUE EQUALITY FOR ALL AMERICANS WITHIN  
A TIME FRAME, IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT AND MEANINGFUL  
TO BLACKS--AND THE NATION AS A WHOLE--THAN THE  
TEMPORARY POLITICAL GAINS MADE POSSIBLE FROM PROMISING  
MUCH AND DELIVERING LITTLE.

PRESIDENT NIXON BELIEVES THAT EVERY NONWHITE  
CITIZEN IN AMERICA WANTS TO SEE GOVERNMENT WORK  
FOR HIM, AND THE PRESIDENT IS COMMITTED TO SATISFYING  
THAT DESIRE.

HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT EVERY NONWHITE CITIZEN IN  
AMERICA IS EQUALLY DESIROUS OF SEEING AN IMMEDIATE  
END TO ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION.

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THE RECORD WILL SHOW THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS SUCCESSFULLY PURSUED ITS POLICY OBJECTIVE DURING ITS SHORT EXISTENCE. THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT THE NATION'S BLACK CITIZENS DESIRE THE END HE IS SEEKING. IN THIS REGARD, THIS ADMINISTRATION IS CLEARLY "THE BLACK MAN'S ALLY AND ADVOCATE."

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