

Fight for continued revenue sharing not worth it

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.



The grandest of all boondoggles, the general revenue sharing program, is scheduled to expire at the end of 1976 and a massive lobbying campaign is already under way to extend the program as well as to increase the money for it.

The present program spreads over \$30 billion to state and local governments with a mini-

mum of restrictions over a five-year period. Its supporters are trying to get that extended through 1982, and want the litty sweetened to a total of \$40 billion.

Not surprisingly one of the key backers of the lobbying effort is the National League of Cities, whose convention I attended last month. Most of the mayors and city officials I met there insisted on the need for an extended program, while at the same time refusing to pass a resolution urging the use of revenue sharing money for social service programs.

Therein lies the reason why the general revenue sharing program should be scrapped. It amounts to a deficit ridden federal government shoveling money taken from federal social service programs into localities that use them to cut local taxes as to beef up police forces. The program thus far amounts to a waste of scarce resources.

General revenue sharing was supposed to put additional monies into the cities; it was supposed to encourage

local governments to put money into priority areas, and it was supposed to increase local citizen participation in government decisions.

The money has not gone into priority areas. The poor and the aged have received only a tiny fraction of the funds, while the bulk of the money has gone into uses that ought to be funded through local taxes, if at all.

It has accomplished none of these goals.

For every federal dollar under revenue sharing going into the cities, another dollar was taken away in the form of cuts in federal social service programs, so the money was not "new" or additional funds, it was just recycled cash.

And the much vaunted "citizen participation" that was supposed to "bring government closer to the people" hasn't materialized. Not only has there been little citizen consultation in local use of revenue sharing funds, but there appears to have been considerable violation of the civil rights provisions of the law.

The city of Chicago enjoying the dubious honor of being the first city to have its revenue sharing funds suspended because it is charged with using them in a discriminatory fashion. Other cities are lining up for similar court actions.

Anyone who still clings to delusions that the masses of local governmental units are more

capable of spending federal money than the federal government is, ought to look at the scandal of the national public service employment program funded through local governmental hiring.

Although Congress appropriated enough money to hire well over 100,000 people last year, far fewer were actually put on payrolls or given training. New York City for example, hired only a fourth of the unemployed it was entitled to hire and provided services to about half of its entitlement.

All this is at a time of skyrocketing joblessness and increased need! Some local officials have given the incredible explanation that they did not hire people under the pro-

gram because it was a temporary program and they'd just have to fire them later on. But the whole point of the program is that it is a temporary work-relief measure.

I can understand why mayors want continuation of revenue sharing. Most cities are in such a financial bind that any money from any source would be welcomed. But the record does not justify continuation, much less a funding increase, in the general revenue sharing program.

It is an inefficient means of distributing scarce resources and it impeded the necessary setting of national priorities, including the revitalization of the cities. It only encourages continued neglect of the poor.

A WOMAN'S PLACE

The movement to change women's status in society is stronger now than ever before. This year, for the first time, the majority of women see the need to improve woman's place in society.

According to the Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll, just released, women are now in favor of most efforts to improve their status.

In the first Poll, conducted in 1970, as many women opposed as favored such efforts.

The latest Poll shows that men are no longer an obstacle to women's liberation. In fact, they are now the most enthusiastic backers of the women's movement -- moreso than women themselves!

Today, those most in favor of improving women's lot include:

- More than 2 out of 3 college-educated women, and 3 out of 4 college-educated men.
- More than 2 out of 3 black women and men.
- Nearly 2 out of 3 women living in the Northeast, both men and women living in the largest cities and their suburbs.
- 7 out of 10 women under 30 and nearly as many men under 40.

Who are the people with the most satisfying lives? Contrary to youth cult notions, women seem to be happiest over 30. More than 58% of women 30 and over are "very satisfied" with life compared to 53% of women under 30. In addition, women living in the suburbs of the nation's largest cities are more content with their lives than those who live in the cities.

How does marital status affect happiness? According to the Poll, married women are happier than single women, and far happier than women who are divorced or separated or widowed.

LEGISLATIVE HOT-LINE

The Legislative hot-line, sponsored by the Nevada Library Association and the Nevada State Library is now operational. The hot-line service will answer specific and general questions on what's happening in the legislature status of legislation, time and place of hearings, and other questions of interest to the general public.

Patrons needing information can contact their local library, the local library will then call the Nevada State Library on a special phone line for the needed information. The hot-line will operate 8-5 Monday through Friday during the legislative session.

The hot-line service is made possible by a grant from the Nevada Library Association to the Nevada State Library.

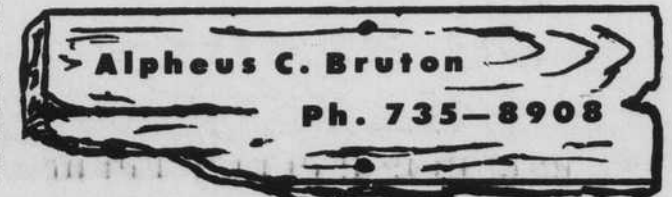


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FORD'S PROGRAM A DISASTER FOR BLACKS

by BAYARD RUSTIN



President Ford has told the nation the "bad news" about the economy. But the President has greatly understated the situation. We are experiencing a crisis, pure and simple, and it will take much more than candor or gimmicks to lead us to recovery.

In Atlanta, unemployed men and women began lining up at 3 a.m. for a paltry 225 public service jobs. By morning, a crowd of over 3,000 desperate, hungry persons had assembled, and a riot was narrowly averted as they crowded and surged forward. In Los Angeles, Cleveland, and Detroit, the situation is much the same--thousands are out of work, with young blacks suffering the most severe consequences.

The recession is for blacks the most severe since World War II; 12.8 per cent of the blacks work force is unemployed, and the figures are much higher for younger workers.

President Ford has responded to this crisis with a program that is inadequate and which, in many respects, will further worsen the plight of the poor, the jobless, and working people. The intent of the program may be commendable, but the results are most surely to be disastrous.

It is a program more noteworthy for what it does not propose than for what it does. There is no proposal for enlarging the totally inadequate number of public service jobs; indeed, the President, by threatening to veto new spending measures, seems to rule out an enlarged public jobs program. There are no proposals to deal with those social services--housing, health care, public

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