

# Capital



# Capsule

from the desk of

Mrs. Margaret Price

VICE CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES • DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

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## THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION

In going over my notes from the White House Conference on Education held last month, it struck me that the look into the future presented there would be of interest to every Democratic woman.

Those of you who are readying children to return to school this fall have a special personal interest. But everyone who cares about the quality of American life both today and in the future -- particularly those whose work and support made the Johnson Administration possible -- should have a sense of pride in the deep and continuing commitment to education this country is evidencing.

President Johnson summoned to The White House in July, 700 leaders in American education to "think big and think boldly -- to pool our best ideas about how to stimulate and enrich the nation's adventure in learning."

I could not help but compare the two days of provocative, open discussion with the mood that prevailed at the last White House Conference on Education I attended 10 years ago. At that time, the Federal Government seemed to act as a brake on the professional educators and civic leaders who wanted to forge ahead with broader programs. The Republican Administration of ten years ago was indifferent to Federal Aid to Education and hostile to the idea of any real leadership being provided nationally.

After the 1955 Conference got underway -- following a year of intensive grass roots preparation and debate -- it was the delegates themselves who demanded Federal Government involvement. Without any planning on the part of the Eisenhower Administration, the Conference voted better than 2 to 1 for Federal Aid to Education.

In 1955, the educators and the public were far ahead of the Federal Government in accepting the education of all our citizens as a national responsibility and trust. There has been a dramatic shift of positions during the intervening 10 years, however. Under President Johnson, a former elementary school teacher himself, our Government is now providing the leadership and hammering out the solutions to problems long swept under the rug.

The President has often said that education is the indispensable cornerstone of The Great Society. Early in the year, he proposed to Congress that "we declare a national goal of Full Educational Opportunity" so that every child would be encouraged "to get as much education as he has the ability to take...not only for his sake -- but for the nation's sake."



In outlining his program for education to the conferees at The White House Conference on Education, President Johnson told them that the Administration had been "quite busy catching up with our past failures, and we do not intend to fall behind again."

Among the steps taken by the Johnson Administration to "catch up" are:

- passage of the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1964 providing Federal grants and loans for construction of classrooms, laboratories and libraries, with both public and private schools eligible for funds.
- increased loan authorization for college housing and for student loans.
- programs for Adult Education -- through the Economic Opportunity Act to meet the illiteracy problems of over 11.5 million adults and through matching grants, the construction of educational television broadcasting facilities.
- expanding Vocational Education through the Manpower Training and Development Act and the Vocational Education Act of 1963 which provides facilities and training for high school students and high school drop-outs.
- passage of the Library Services Act to improve local public libraries as storehouses of learning.
- providing for special educational needs in medical training, with the blind, with training teachers for the deaf and the handicapped. Also by assisting school districts which are burdened by the children of federal personnel, or by providing educational assistance to children of disabled veterans.

And the capstone of the President's program of Full Educational Opportunity was achieved in April when he signed into law The Elementary and Secondary Education Bill which will invest in the first year alone, \$1.3 billion to develop our nation's most priceless resource.

A few weeks ago President Johnson sent to Congress another far-reaching proposal to raise the quality of education. He called for the establishment of a National Teachers Corps to enlist dedicated teachers and students who intend to make teaching a career to work alongside local teachers in city slums and in areas of rural poverty "to offer what these troubled regions need most -- light and learning; help and hope."

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This adds up to a revolutionary change in thinking -- the acceptance as a national commitment the education of every child to the extent of his ability. Democratic women in every state have been a part of this revolution. Through participation in local P.T.A.'s, through serving on school boards, working with state boards of education, helping to pass school bond issues -- they have laid the groundwork for the "Century of the Educated Man." And to give the leadership required to turn goals into realities, they helped elect a President who believes that only an educated people can be a great nation.

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Have you written for your DEMOCRATIC WOMAN'S DAY KIT?

Please keep us informed of your plans for Democratic Woman's Day.

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