

STATEMENT UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE URBAN COALITION
July 31, 1967
Washington, D.C.

PREAMBLE

The tangible results of the urban riots in terms of death, injury, and property damage are horrifying in themselves. The intangible damage in terms of the riots' effects on men's minds may yet be even greater.

At this moment, millions of Americans are forming attitudes that could mean disaster to our social structure: the home-owner who vows to shoot the next suspicious character he sees in his neighborhood; the businessman who decides to get out of the slums; the labor leader who determines to keep minorities out; the insurance man who refuses to cover slum properties; the Negro or White who goes out to take whatever he can get his hands on; the legislator who fails to meet his public responsibilities.

These people and others are reversing a trend that, however slowly, was working to the benefit of our cities' disadvantaged minorities. Let them realize that it is the citizen, in the end, who will keep our country united or will divide it. It is government's duty to maintain law and order. But all must understand that law and order is not an excuse for oppression. If law and order is to be accepted by the minorities, the majority must clearly and positively demonstrate its belief that justice, social progress, and equality are rights of every citizen.

We, the undersigned, pledge ourselves to this purpose. We will call upon the leaders of all segments of society, city by city, to publicly commit themselves to programs enabling the disadvantaged minorities to share in all of the benefits of our society.

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STATEMENT UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE URBAN COALITION

Page 2

This conference of leaders of business, labor, religions, education, civil rights, and city government has formed an Urban Coalition to bring about a sense of immediate urgency about the need for positive and progressive action for our cities.

Lawlessness and all its ingredients cannot be tolerated. Looting, burning, and bottle throwing are criminal acts and must be dealt with as such.

But let not a reaction to acts, committed by a small fraction of the population of the country's ghettos, blind us to the absolute necessity of moving dramatically and immediately to correct the desperate condition of our urban centers.

We call upon the Nation and the Congress to reorder our national priorities, with a commitment of national resources equal to the dimensions of the problems we face. The crisis requires a full new dimension in both the public and private sectors, working together for jobs, housing, education, and the other needs of our cities.

This Coalition believes the Congress must move without delay on urban programs. The country can wait no longer for model cities, antipoverty, housing, education, and job training legislation, and a host of other matters that have been too long denied the cities.

We call upon the Federal Government to develop an Emergency Work and Reconstruction Program to provide new training programs and jobs

STATEMENT UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE URBAN COALITION

Page 3

for the unemployed.

The Coalition also believes that the private sector of America must directly and vigorously involve itself in the crisis of the cities by a commitment to investment, job training and hiring, and all other things that are necessary to the full enjoyment of the free enterprise system, and also to its survival.

To carry this forward, the Coalition commits itself to proceed immediately to promote "Earn and Learn Centers" in the cities of the country to provide job training and jobs. The Coalition agrees these centers might well be the joint venture of business, labor, and local government.

The Coalition believes the sickness of the cities, including civic disorder within them, is the responsibility of the whole of America. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every American to join in the creation of a new political, social, economic and moral climate which will make possible the breaking up of the vicious cycle of the ghetto.

The Coalition's commitment can be for no less and its determination is for even more.

The Coalition further commits itself to convene an Urban Coalition Emergency Convocation in Washington near the end of August.

The Convocation will be attended by 1,000 leaders across the Nation of business, labor, religion, education, civil rights, and city government.