

## Atlanta Joins Urban Coalition

Urban Coalition is a term gaining increasing currency these days and one on which an increasing number of people concerned and involved with the growing frustrations of city life are staking their desperate hopes that our society can survive without undergoing a wrenching upheaval that would surely threaten its very foundations.

What is the Urban Coalition? Nationally it is an organization formed last summer by 1,200 leaders representing city government, business, labor, religious and civil rights interests. Its broad goals are to focus attention on the problems of our cities and, more important, to develop action programs to solve these problems.

Our cities are where three-fourths of 190 million Americans live, yet their problems are rapidly approaching a crisis—indeed, the day of crisis is here in many cities—and these problems are being met by unconscionable indifference. The indifference is not total, but its magnitude is what makes it unconscionable.

When state governments turned their backs to the cities' plight, the federal government stepped in to lend a hand. Many of the federal programs show great promise, but Congress has yet to recognize or sense the urgency. When a city burns, Congress immediately wrings its collective hands, bewails the manifold sins and wickedness of the burners, but effectively ignores the despair that really struck the matches.

Of course we should punish and stop the

burners, but potential match lighters are being born and growing up every day in the slums where frustrations and frictions are causing the matches to flare. It is to those frustrations and frictions that more energy and effort must be addressed.

And it is here where the national Urban Coalition intends to concentrate its energy and efforts. As a "super lobby" for the cities, it will focus attention and seek solutions in these problem areas: poverty, lack of job skills, unsound housing, inadequate parks, schools, absence of adequate municipal services, lack of motivation and the increasing desperation among our ghetto poor.

To bring about the "total commitment of all community resources and a reassessment of priorities" so necessary if we are to solve these and other problems facing our cities, the national Urban Coalition is urging local "counterpart" coalitions to join the fight.

This week Atlanta joined New York, Detroit and other great cities in answering this call and this opportunity to "get across to the people and the Congress the urgency of the problems of the cities . . . and encourage private initiative." Atlanta already has an effective informal coalition. Judging from records of men named to the steering committee for the formal coalition, we have a very good chance to bolster national and local efforts.

Success in these efforts is absolutely necessary, and the time is late. Failure to solve the growing problems of our cities is unthinkable.

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## Allen Seeks Urban Coalition

### Summit Group, C of C, Labor Urged to Work for Jobs, Housing

By LORRAINE M. BENNETT

Mayor Ivan Allen Wednesday called on six leaders of various phases of Atlanta life to form an urban coalition whose goals will be to provide decent jobs, housing and education in urban areas.

The mayor and Dan Sweat, director of governmental liaison, presented a statement to the leaders which they will carry back to their respective groups for approval.

Accepting the statement were Al Bows and Opie Shelton of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the Rev. Sam Williams of the Summit Leadership Conference, Robert J. Butler of the Atlanta Labor Council, Dr. Harmon Moore of the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, Dr. John W. Letson, superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools and Erwin Stevens of the Citizens Central Advisory Council (EOA).

Mayor Allen recently attended an emergency convocation of the urban coalition in Washington at which 1,200 leaders representing city governments, business, labor, religious and civil rights interests offered their views on how to deal with the urban crisis.

THE LEADERS agreed to carry back to their own cities the determination to form local coalitions made up of the same leadership cross-section to implement the program on a local level.

The statement Mayor Allen presented to the heads of Atlanta's interest groups said that although the federal government has expressed concern for the plight of the cities, Congress failed to register the sense of urgency of the urban crisis.

"The result is now a tragic chapter in American history. Riots, racial disturbances, civil disobedience in city after city throughout all parts of the country have cast a lasting imprint of inaction and indifference," the statement continues.

LACK OF job skills, unemployment, unsound housing, inadequate parks and schools, the absence of realistic municipal services, lack of motivation and loss of faith and of hope — these are the problems of the cities.

The urban coalition hopes to bring a "total commitment of all community resources and a reassessment of priorities by national and state government." The working together of these forces, the coalition hopes, "can produce results on a scale large enough to sufficiently change the direction of our cities," the statement reads.