

THE URBAN COALITION ACTION COUNCIL

JOHN W. GARDNER
CHAIRMAN
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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

June 27, 1968

Honorable
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear

I am writing to you out of personal conviction and a deep concern for the future of our country. But also I write on the express instruction of 38 prominent Americans who form the Urban Coalition Action Council. A list of their names is attached.

We are united in the certainty that this nation is going through an unprecedented crisis -- a crisis that could tear it apart.

No one has a perfect understanding of the crisis. No one knows all the answers. But there are some positive measures that we can take and it is of supreme importance that we take them promptly. We cannot allow this great nation to falter while things that can reasonably be done go undone. We must not bicker and equivocate when the nation's fate hangs in the balance.

We must act. And we must act in a constructive spirit. It is unthinkable that we would turn our backs on this nation's great tradition of positive problem-solving and retreat into fearful inaction.

We must face forward. We must do the things we can do now to solve real problems, correct real injustices, alleviate real suffering.

At this writing no group more surely holds the key to the nation's future than the Congress of the United States. Uniquely, Congress has the power to take immediate and effective action. It must not leave undone the significant things it can do.

The nation watches.

This is not just any year. This is a year of sorrow, of confusion, of explosive anger. Congress must lead, and the only path compatible with our future greatness as a nation is the path of constructive action to combat known evils -- crippling poverty, inadequate housing, educational disparities, discrimination and all the conditions that blight individual lives.

There are some measures that seem to us especially critical. The proposed \$75 million supplemental appropriation for summer jobs is one. Another is the \$25 million supplemental for Head Start.

The Congress should create at this session a public service employment program with the funding to make it effective. It should pass the Administration's housing bill. Budget cuts should not be made in programs aimed at helping the nation's deprived with jobs, housing and education.

The men who make up the Urban Coalition Action Council represent many different segments of American life. They are realists who know the costs of the programs they are asking you to support. But they know the far greater costs to the nation of unproductive human beings and decaying cities. They appreciate as you do the vast range of requirements which you must consider as you set the priorities and allocate the resources of this country. But they believe that this is a time for extraordinary measures in behalf of the nation.

Sincerely,

John W. Gardner
Chairman

Attachment