

172 Letter to Representative Charles C. Diggs, Jr., in  
Response to Recommendations of the Congressional  
Black Caucus. *May 19, 1971*

*Dear Congressman Diggs:*

I valued the opportunity to meet with you and your colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus<sup>1</sup> on March 25. The sixty recommendations for governmental action which you presented to me at that meeting have served as a framework for review of the matters we discussed.

The Administration has examined these recommendations in depth over the past seven weeks. A fresh assessment of all the alternatives in each area characterized this review process, both at the operating

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<sup>1</sup>The Congressional Black Caucus included the 12 black Members of the House of Representatives and the District of Columbia Delegate to Congress.

department level and then at the White House. Present policies served as a starting point, but we went beyond these in attempting to draw our conclusions on the merits in each case. We found that your broad goals are largely the same as those of the Administration, and we used this review as an occasion for measuring actual results against these goals and for considering appropriate changes where results seemed inadequate.

This review, culminating in the preparation of detailed responses to each of your proposals, was conducted under the overall supervision of the Domestic Council and the Office of Management and Budget. At the same time, George Shultz,

Director of OMB, prepared at my request a summary report on this Administration's major programs and activities in the field of civil rights and related social and economic programs. Having reviewed and concurred in this report and the sixty responses, I am pleased to transmit them to you and your colleagues herewith.

These documents constitute a progress report on our efforts to achieve equality, justice, and full opportunity for all Americans. We have tried to make them candid and factual. They measure both successes and shortcomings. In those instances in which we have found ourselves in disagreement with your recommendations, we have acknowledged the disagreement but also spelled out our alternative approaches. In many cases, we have found a basic accord between your recommendations and our policies.

I am encouraged to note that there is such accord in three especially critical areas: We share a determination to reform the welfare system so that it will help solve, rather than aggravate, the problems of those who lack a minimum income. You attach high priority, as I do, to a program of revenue sharing that will enable our cities and States to serve the people better. And you are committed, as I am, to a concerted drive for expanded economic opportunities for minorities and all other Americans—a drive to validate with jobs, income, and tangible benefits the pledges this society has made to the disadvantaged in the past decade.

This is the building work of the Seventies, and it is bound to be more difficult than the legislative efforts of the Sixties. Equality of opportunity has been affirmed in American law; conscience and public resolve brought that much to pass. But

now we have entered a new and much harder phase. The steady gains of the years ahead will inevitably be less dramatic than the bright hopes raised a few years ago. We continue to honor those hopes. At issue now is whether all of us have the realism and stamina to persist in the long, hard task of realizing them in American life, of translating rhetorical promise into concrete results.

We are already making significant progress as noted in the attached report and the detailed responses. Much more remains to be done to realize our shared goals. I am determined to press forward vigorously—believing as I do that full opportunity and equal justice for all are basic to the American ideal.

I have directed that the process of monitoring and evaluation reflected by the report and responses be continued, and my Administration will remain receptive to your views and those of your Congressional colleagues as we continue to search for the best ways of achieving progress on matters of common concern.

Sincerely,

RICHARD NIXON

[Honorable Charles C. Diggs, Jr., House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515]

NOTE: The letter, dated May 18, 1971, was made available to the press on May 19, together with a document detailing the recommendations of the Caucus and Administration response to them and a memorandum to the President from George P. Shultz, Director, Office of Management and Budget, summarizing Administration progress in civil rights and related social programs.

On May 19, the White House released the transcript of a news briefing on the Administration's response to the recommendations to Director Shultz and Arnold R. Weber, Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget.