



“I’ll Spend the Goddamn Money”

Date: 1965-03-06

Conversation: WH6503-02-7024-7025

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.

Start Time: 11:25

Duration: 01:30

Place: Mansion

SCENE SETTER: Speaking with Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey Jr., President Johnson explained his philosophy on the Great Society, how he believed it would help the administration politically, and Humphrey’s role in it.

President Johnson: And in talking to groups, I wouldn’t say we got 104 bills. I’d say, “What we’re really shooting at, we’ve got the good program, and everybody puts more on their platform than they can do. What we want to do is take care of this unemployment where it’s really distressed, and that’s Appalachia. We’ll do it. The next thing we want to do is get these people who can’t read and write, we want to educate them, and make taxpayers out of them instead of tax-eaters. That’s education; we’ve solved that. The next thing’s health. Now, that’s basic.” That’s what I’m after, Humphrey. That’s my program. Then the other [*slight chuckle*] hundred will be incidental, so if you don’t get any but those three—

Now, we’re going to get them. I went up 500 million [dollars] on this health, extry. So don’t ever argue with me: I’ll go 100 million [dollars] or a billion on health or education. I don’t argue about that any more than I argue about Lady Bird [Johnson] buying flour. You got to have flour and coffee in your house. And [on] education and health, I’ll spend the goddamn money. I may cut back some tanks, but not on health. So that’s the go sign I gave them.

End of excerpt 1.

President Johnson: Now, the sky’s the limit for you. There are 104 bills, and they’re all yours and mine on the ticket, because that’s what we ran on; that’s our platform; that’s our program. You’re half of it, and you’re there every day. And you just help us if you can. And when you get it passed—then ‘62 [*sic*], when you go out and speak, you can say, “We passed education. We passed Appalachia. We passed medical care.” And if you give me those, I’ll get—I’ll have a majority two years from now.

Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

President Johnson: OK.

End of excerpt 2.

CITATION: “Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey on 6 March 1965,” Conversation WH6503-02-7024-7025, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Lyndon B. Johnson and Civil Rights, vol. 2, ed. Kent B. Germany] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4005077>

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Full information about this conversation: [“I’ll Spend the Goddamn Money”](#)