

Chronological: Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995-10-13

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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DRAFT REMARKS. SENATOR INOUE. DRAFT. DRAFT. DRAFT. DRAFT.

A FEDERAL ROLE IN PREPARING ADOLESCENTS FOR A NEW CENTURY

Opening Remarks by United States Senator
Daniel K. Inouye

At a meeting held by Carnegie Corporation of New York
GREAT TRANSITIONS: PREPARING ADOLESCENTS FOR A NEW CENTURY

October 13, 1995
Washington, DC



In June 1989, I addressed an earlier meeting of Carnegie Corporation on the education crisis and the future of our democratic society. More than six years have now passed, and the recommendations of the report released then are well along their way of being implemented in about 15 states. That is very encouraging, but more much must be done. As I reviewed my remarks for that meeting, I was sadly reminded that the scenarios I described then have not changed enough, and that the overall condition of children and youth in our country continues to worsen.

Finding Common Ground

I have been in elected, public service for more than forty years. My approach has always been to find common ground among competing interests, demands, and political positions. Can citizens and their elected representatives find common ground with respect to the fundamental issues regarding how we prepare today's adolescents for a new century?

I believe we can transcend our differences and agree that we want today's adolescents to be well prepared for:

- o The workplace. We want them to be prepared to earn a decent living and to support themselves and their families. This means that a much larger proportion of adolescents today must be better educated in our schools than they now are. High school education is not sufficient for the uncertainties of the workplace in the 21st century.

- o Healthy lifestyles and practices. We want today's adolescents to take responsibility for promoting their own health and preventing diseases and disabling conditions that are stretching our health care resources to their limits.

- o Citizenship and Strengthening Communities. We want today's adolescents to be active participants who are committed to creating strong, vibrant communities where people care about and for each other in a wide range of civic groups.

I believe we would all agree that strong families, good health, including mental health, and effective education would enable any young person to be well prepared for the new century. Great Transitions addresses how families, health care agencies, schools, community organizations and the media can better support young people. These are the pivotal institutions closest to young people in their daily lives. But there are also institutions not as close but just as powerful in affecting their life chances: business and the workplace, and local, state, and federal government. (5) >

In my opening remarks for this meeting, I would like to speak to the role and responsibilities of the federal government in the lives of young people. A quiet, yet major revolution is now occurring to alter the longstanding relationship of the national government in supporting the health and welfare of the most vulnerable among us. This revolution requires us to think clearly and carefully about that basic covenant.

Reaffirming a Federal Role in Preparing Adolescents for the 21st Century

In my judgment, a federal role in preparing adolescents for the next century could not be more clear: Our federal government is responsible for assuring that every young person in the United States is well educated and healthy, well prepared to be an adult member of our nation.

More than anytime in our history, a global economy requires that nations as a whole invest in developing all their young people. Those that do not invest in their young people face the real prospects of young people who have no hope in the future and no stake in their country and communities. The social and moral consequences are obvious.

In the current rush to devolve--to return authority to the states and local government--we are going much too far. While planning and implementation for education and health is best done at the state level in respect to local conditions, national leadership and guidelines are necessary to ensure that every

child in every community has the opportunity to learn and to be healthy. National leadership is necessary to ensure that no child is neglected or left behind, because of economic circumstances--whether their families or communities--or the color of his or her skin.

One concrete example of the necessity and value of such national leadership is exemplified in the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment study, Adolescent Health, conducted in collaboration with the Carnegie Council. Although Congress unwisely eliminated this nonpartisan analytic agency, the report--requested by a bipartisan group of my colleagues in the Congress--is a national resource of lasting value. No state or local entity could have conducted such a comprehensive review of the health status of American adolescents and knowledge base for prevention and treatment of a wide range of adolescent health problems. And the irony of this is that the states have relied on this OTA report in planning their responses to the needs of adolescents.

As both the OTA report and Great Transitions have recommended, informed approaches to health promotion among adolescents must be grounded in a strong research base, particularly one that understands the linkages between behavior and health outcomes. That is why I have consistently supported research in the behavioral and social sciences and in health promotion, particularly with developing children and youth. Such research support is one clear federal responsibility and must

continue.

The OTA report also made a convincing case to Congress that there be a federal locus of activity in adolescent health. That is why I have worked very hard to make sure that there is an operating U.S. Office of Adolescent Health in the Department of Health and Human Services. I am hopeful that full implementation of this office will take place in the coming months.

A third major recommendation of the OTA study was the experiences that adolescents have in their daily lives--in their schools, communities, youth organizations, and families--have a profound influence on their health and well-being. Government policies that shape those experiences play a major role, then, in ensuring that American adolescents emerge as productive adults.


Concluding Remarks

I am very proud to be a member of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. My colleagues in the United States Congress and I have worked with Council members to place the adolescent years higher on the nation's agenda. In the last nine years, we have erected the scaffolding for the future. The task of construction and finishing is urgent and must continue.

In closing, I share with you the central value of what my immigrant grandparents and my own parents had for their children: For the sake of the children (Kodomo no tame ni): Everything we do today is that our children and their children will have a better life than we have. They made great sacrifices and worked

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I congratulate Carnegie Corporation for its sustained commitment to creating better lives for children and their families, and to the Council on Adolescent Development for its leadership role in the development of young people during the second decade of life.

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While planning and implementation for education and health is best done at the state level in respect to local conditions, national leadership and guidelines are necessary to ensure that every child in every community has the opportunity to learn and to be healthy.

National leadership is necessary to ensure that no child is neglected or left behind, because of economic circumstances -- whether their families or communities -- or the color of his or her skin.

One concrete example of the necessity and value of such national leadership is exemplified in the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment study, Adolescent Health, conducted in collaboration with the Carnegie Council. Although Congress unwisely eliminated this nonpartisan analytic agency,

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Hyatt Park Hotel

Wash, D.C.

10/13/95-

*Speech was not presented
by the Senator*

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**The Carnegie Council on
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13 October 1995

I am very pleased to be here this morning on behalf of Senator Inouye, who deeply regrets that he cannot be here in person. When I discussed this meeting with him a few days ago, he talked about how much he was looking forward to being here.

● **He used the analogy that he was with you at the take-off and now wanted to be with you at the landing. But like all of us, he has many responsibilities and earlier this week, the Senator was asked by the leadership to go with some of his colleagues on a special mission. So, I bring you greetings from Senator Inouye and his appreciation for a decade of successful collaboration.**

On Wednesday, a joint session of the Congress was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Senator Inouye was one of the Members of Congress selected to address this joint session. I would like to share with you an excerpt from his remarks in which he recalled the "spirit of America" during World War II.

Something happened to America. I don't know what it was, but it was the same strange power that our founding fathers experienced in those early uncertain days. Let's call it the "spirit of America" -- a spirit that united and galvanized our people. We were ready for any challenge, any obstacle.

Today the obstacles and challenges are many. But I ask, where is that spirit?

Eight days ago, a verdict was announced in a Los Angeles courtroom. Experts throughout the land sadly suggested that our land was divided. All of us know, or at least we should know, that our land is dangerously divided and dangerously polarized.

What are we, the elected voices of America, doing? Sadly, what most Americans hear are the sounds of dissension, discord and division on Capitol Hill. Instead of the great and grand voice of reason, they hear angry shouts. They see party leaders congratulating themselves on party line votes in the Congress. Americans need not go to Los Angeles to see division -- they can just watch the Congress.

If we are to appropriately remember and honor those...men and women who gave their lives in the defense of freedom in that great war, let us begin by discarding those sounds of division. Let us begin by demonstrating that we are capable of calm and resolute leadership. Let us begin the process of restoring that spirit of America that blessed us at the time of our Revolution and the great war. We can do no less.

Senator Inouye has now been in elected, public service for more than 40 years. And throughout these many years, his approach has always been to find common ground among competing interests, demands, and political positions.

● **His remarks before the joint session this week clearly reflect that philosophy. The question before this council today is:**

Can citizens and their elected representatives find common ground with respect to the fundamental issues

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I believe that we can -- and must -- transcend our differences and agree that we want today's adolescents to be well prepared for tomorrow and all the tomorrow's after that. They must, therefore, be prepared, at a minimum, for three areas:

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This revolution requires us to think clearly and carefully about that basic covenant between the government and the governed.

A federal role in preparing adolescents for the next century could not be more clear: Our federal government is responsible for ensuring that every young person in the United States is well educated and healthy, and well prepared to be an adult member of our nation.

Today, more than at any other time in our history, a global economy requires that nations as a whole invest in developing all their young people.

Those that do not make this investment face the very real prospect of a nation of young people who have no hope in the future and no stake in their country and communities. The social and moral consequences are obvious -- and frightening.

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