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ACTION

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 14, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: JIM CANNON   
SUBJECT: Supplemental Food Program  
In Detroit

BACKGROUND

Governor Milliken (R-Michigan) has requested that you direct the Secretary of Agriculture to expand the number of persons to be eligible to receive commodities in the Project Focus Hope Program in Detroit.

The Secretary of Agriculture recommends against the Governor's request. This program will be phased out by the end of this fiscal year and he is of the opinion that it should not be expanded for the few remaining months.

Detroit now has the largest Supplemental Food Program in the Nation encompassing 15,000 participants. Detroit has repeatedly requested Agriculture to increase this caseload from 15,000 to 35,000 but requests have been denied because limited amounts of available commodities and logistics difficulties. Secondly, an extensive evaluation is being conducted in Agriculture and they prefer to hold pending the outcome and a report to the Congress. The Governor has appealed to us to ask you to overrule Secretary Butz. (See Tab A) Senator Griffin supports the Governor. (See Tab B)

The Governor believes that this program could go a long way to preventing inner city tension, and that Agriculture is insensitive to the real needs that this expansion would help satisfy, even if only for a few months. A Free Press editorial is at Tab C.

The Secretary has the discretion to approve or deny the request. He has personally reviewed the case and disapproved, pending your review. The cost of the requested increase is estimated by Agriculture to be approximately \$2.4 million. Insured unemployment in Detroit is 14.9% but unofficial estimates are as high as 20%, the highest of any major metropolitan area.

OPTIONS

- A. Deny Governor Milliken's appeal that you direct the Secretary of Agriculture to expand from approximately 15,000 to 35,000 the number of persons to be eligible for commodities in the Project Focus Hope Feeding Program in Detroit.

Recommend: Secretary Butz and OMB (O'Neill)

- B. Direct the Secretary of Agriculture to expand the caseload to 35,000 for the Project Focus Hope Feeding Program in Detroit.

Recommend: Bob Hartmann, Bill Seidman and Jim Cannon

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approve Option A

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Approve Option B

\_\_\_\_\_  
See Me





STATE OF MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LANSING

WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN  
GOVERNOR

TELEGRAM SENT FEBRUARY 7, 1975

PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THE URGENCY OF THE REQUEST I CONVEYED TO YOU THROUGH JIM FALK FOR EXPANSION OF THE FOCUS: HOPE FEEDING PROGRAM IN DETROIT.

I BELIEVE THE IMMEDIATE HUMAN NEEDS FAR OUTWEIGH THE ARGUMENTS THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT HAS USED AGAINST EXPANSION. ONE ARGUMENT IS THAT MICHIGAN ALREADY GETS A SUBSTANTIAL SHARE OF THE TOTAL FOOD COMMODITIES. THE FACT IS, MUCH OF THE NEED IS CONCENTRATED IN MICHIGAN, WHICH ACCORDING TO A 1974 FEA REPORT ACCOUNTED FOR 47 PERCENT OF ALL OF THE NATION'S LAYOFFS ATTRIBUTED TO THE ENERGY CRISIS. FURTHERMORE, BECAUSE OF AUTO INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION, MICHIGAN HAS BEEN HARDEST HIT BY THE RECESSION, WITH UNEMPLOYMENT REACHING 13.7 PERCENT IN JANUARY STATEWIDE, AND 14.6 PERCENT IN THE DETROIT METROPOLITAN AREA.

WHILE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS MAY WELL HAVE POTENTIAL, THE FOCUS PROGRAM IS A PROVEN SUCCESS THAT HAS BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HAS SUCCEEDED IN MOBILIZING HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEER WORKERS.

I KNOW YOU SHARE MY CONCERN THAT WE NOT LET MALNOURISHED POOR PEOPLE AND CHILDREN GO WITHOUT ASSISTANCE. THOSE BEING FED BY FOCUS: HOPE CLEARLY ARE NEEDY. THREE-FOURTHS ARE ON PUBLIC

ASSISTANCE, AND ALL QUALIFY AS MEDICALLY INDIGENT BY OEO OR  
HEW DEFINITION. THE NEED TO EXPAND TO 35,000 AUTHORIZED PER-  
SONS IS CLEAR, IMMEDIATE AND URGENT. I HAVE PERSONALLY VISITED  
THE PROJECT AND I PERSONALLY URGE YOUR SUPPORT OF ITS EXPANSION  
DURING THIS CRITICAL TIME.

GOVERNOR WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN

*B*

Michigan  
United States Senate

OFFICE OF  
THE ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 10, 1975

374  
The Honorable Gerald R. Ford  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

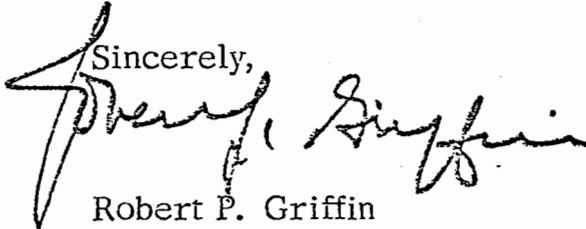
Dear Mr. President:

I have been furnished with a copy of Governor Milliken's telegram to you dated February 7 in which he emphasizes the urgent importance of expanding the FOCUS: HOPE feeding program in Detroit.

For a period of years I have followed and supported the FOCUS: HOPE effort. It actively involves a large number of dedicated volunteers in a program of feeding many poor and needy people in Detroit's inner city.

I wish to attest to the facts and underscore the arguments set forth in Governor Milliken's telegram. Most importantly, I wish to register my strong support for the expansion he seeks during this critical period of unemployment which has hit Detroit so hard.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Griffin  
U. S. Senator

RPG:jc





## As We See It

# Ford Has the Responsibility To End Federal Food Block

THE DECISION on whether to expand a federal surplus food program in Detroit to feed the undernourished is now up to President Ford. Along with a lot of other people, we hope the president will understand the pressing need to expand the program, even though that means overruling the U.S. Agriculture Department.

The apparent insensitivity and stubbornness of the Agriculture Department and Secretary Earl Butz is hard to fathom in this controversy. But the issue of the Detroit food program is a chance for the president to show that his administration is committed to people and can be compassionate and humane in dealing with today's real economic problems.

The program in Detroit has been run by Focus: HOPE, a private, volunteer agency which has been feeding 17,000 malnourished mothers and infants with surplus food provided by the federal government.

Such unbiased outside observers as businessmen, lawyers and the Detroit Chamber of Commerce have agreed the program is far better run than most administered by government bureaucracies. The U.S. Office

of Economic Opportunity (though Focus: HOPE was doing such a good job that it provided the money to expand the administrative end of the program to feed 35,000. The catch is that Mr. Butz and his department will not provide the surplus food.

Gov. Milliken, who has recently assumed a strong leadership role in trying to overturn the Butz decision, spent much of his time in Washington last week seeking to persuade the White House to approve the food distribution. Mr. Milliken spelled out the human reasons to do so in a meeting with Vice-President Rockefeller, whose recommendation would be extremely helpful.

According to one report, the governor was told by White House aides to the president that the Butz decision on the Focus: HOPE program was not so much a practical one as a "political decision." If that is the case, President Ford ought to recognize the good politics of making sure that hungry and malnourished people are decently fed in these hard times.

Sen. Robert Griffin, who can have a powerful influence at the White House when he wants to, has supported the expansion of the Focus: HOPE program. Now is the time, if Sen. Griffin wants to make his support really count, for him to add a final push by personally making it clear to the White House how important this program is. According to the reports we get, the president will make up his mind within the next few days whether to expand the program or endorse the hard-line position of the Agriculture Department. We hope Mr. Ford listens to the good case made by Gov. Milliken, a fellow Michigan Republican, and undoes the bad mistake made by Earl Butz.



Griffin

*Influence could help on food program*



Rockefeller

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM CANNON  
FROM: JERRY H. JONES  
SUBJECT: Supplemental Food Program  
in Detroit

Your memorandum to the President of March 14 on the above subject has been reviewed and Option B -- direct the Secretary of Agriculture to expand the caseload to 35,000 for the Project Focus Hope Feeding Program in Detroit -- was approved.

Please follow-up with the appropriate action.

Thank you.

cc: Don Rumsfeld