



news release

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PRESIDENT JOHNSON ASKS CONGRESS TO QUIT "FIDDLING" AND PASS CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

WASHINGTON, D. C. (Special) -- "I think the conscience of America calls on the Congress to quit fiddling and piddling and take action on the Civil Rights Bill. The time for excuses has ended. The time for action is here."

With these words Wednesday at a White House ceremony, President Lyndon B. Johnson once again urged Congress to "put the law on the side of a man who seeks a home for his family."

The President spoke at the ceremony for the signing of the Jury Selection and Service Act in the Fish Room of the White House. Praising the new law which assures everyone a chance to serve on juries, President Johnson said: "Every move that we can make in this country toward the goal of complete equality for all of our people, I think, is a very good step on a very proud journey."

Emphasizing the need for fair housing legislation, the President said: "I am shocked to even think that the boys I put on the plane at the 82nd Airborne -- more than half of whom were Negro boys going back to Vietnam the second time to protect the flag and preserve our freedom -- that they can't live near the base where they have to train in this country; they must drive 15, 20 or 30 miles sometimes to get to their homes in the evening."

The President continued: "We are drawing closer, I think, ever closer to the fulfillment of a promise that this nation made to ourselves and to the world many years ago. More than 100 years ago Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. But emancipation was a proclamation -- it wasn't a fact."

Among those present at the ceremony were Clarence Mitchell, NAACP Washington Representative and a number of civil rights leaders. President Johnson concluded by thanking the group. He said, "For those of you who have joined in the years of fighting that has been going on, I want to say to each of you: You have my deep gratitude and you have my personal thanks."

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