



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 21, 1967

DC - 239

PRESIDENT JOHNSON CITES FAILURE OF CONGRESS TO ACT ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN CITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Special) -- President Lyndon B. Johnson at his press conference Friday said that Congress so far has failed to act on "some 15 or 20 measures to try to bring about an improvement of living conditions in our cities."

The President's remarks were in answer to a question regarding a proposal announced by Congressman John Conyers of Michigan which would allocate \$30 billion to rebuild the Nation's ghettos.

The President said, in view of the inaction thus far, "I think we will be rather fortunate if we can pass the measures that are now pending before the Congress without material reduction in our recommendations."

Describing the difficulties before him, President Johnson said: "For instance, the model cities program is designed to improve ghettos in the cities in the land. We asked the Congress for \$2 billion \$300 million. They reduced that to about a billion -- almost half. Then we asked for the funding of \$600 million of model cities of that billion this year. They have cut that \$600 million to \$200 million."

With reference to the Congress and the proposal by Congressman Conyers, the President indicated that he intended to keep up the pressure for action and welcomed any new ideas. He said: "We are going to urge upon them the program we have recommended. We will be glad to consider any other recommendations that may come."

The President expressed confidence in the future despite the current difficulties. He said: "Over the long run -- many years ahead -- I am confident that we will make substantial increases in our expenditures in the cities. If we can get the model cities passed this year, if we can get the Kaiser Commission's recommendations on the pilot projects for housing, if we can get good, sound poverty measures, if we can get our rent supplements -- the programs that have already been thought out and worked out -- I would be very pleased."

"In the meantime, we have a group in the Housing and Urban Development Organization under Secretary Weaver and Secretary Wood -- as well as Mr. Kaiser's committee -- which has taken a look at every proposal with a view to determining what merit they hold and how far we can go in embracing them."

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