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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1978

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maintain our existing housing stock.

Each year, Senator Brooke has had to fight the Administration, Republican or Democratic, and other members of Congress to secure an adequate level of funding for operating subsidies.

Vendor Payments

In October of this year, Brooke offered an amendment to the social security bill striking the authority that let welfare departments make unlimited "voluntary" two-party checks to welfare recipients and their landlords or utility companies. Brooke knew this provision in the bill would have resulted in coercion of recipients to agree to such payments, while providing a guaranteed income for landlords with no requirement that their buildings be adequately maintained or repaired. In addition, tenants would lose whatever remedies they currently have to withhold rent or make necessary repairs and deduct them from rent to assure compliance with local housing codes.

Brooke fought Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-New York) and Ranking Republican Carl Curtis (R-Michigan) when they supported this provision. He forged an alliance including HUD, AFL-CIO, legal service organizations, tenant groups, welfare rights organizations, public interest groups and state public welfare administrators which resulted in an overwhelming vote in favor of the Brooke amendment. As Senator Brooke pointed out:

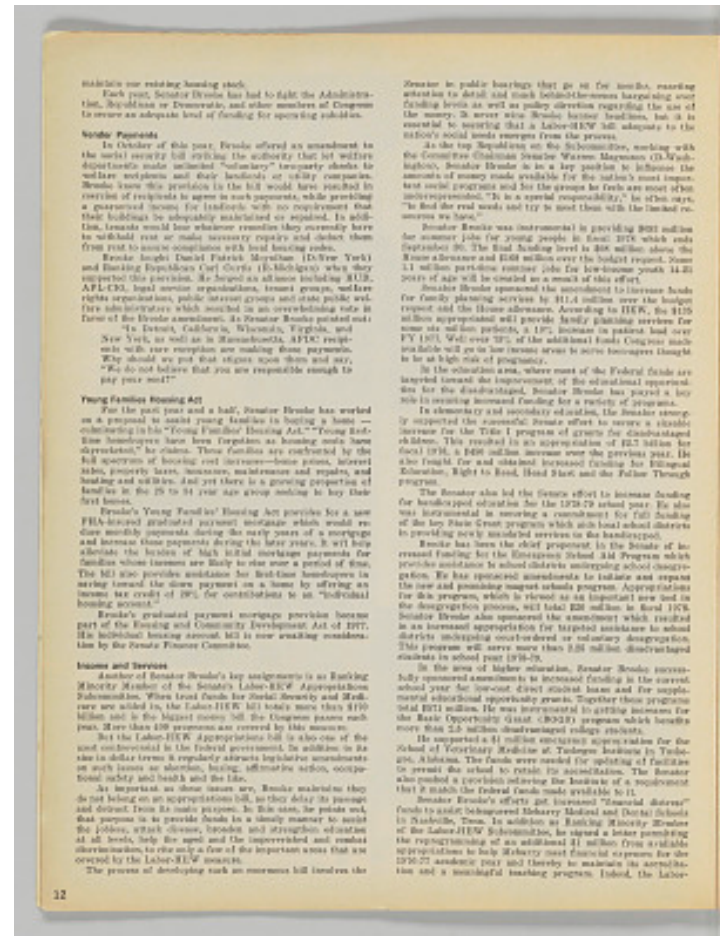
"In Detroit, California, Wisconsin, Virginia, and New York, as well as in Massachusetts, AFDC recipients with rare exception are making those payments. Why should we put that stigma upon them and say, 'We do not believe that you are responsible enough to pay your rent?'"

Young Families Housing Act

For the past year and a half, Senator Brooke has worked on a proposal to assist young families in buying a home - culminating in his "Young Families' Housing Act." "Young first-time homebuyers have been forgotten as housing costs have skyrocketed," he claims. These families are confronted by the full spectrum of housing cost increases - home prices, interest rates, property taxes, insurance, maintenance and repairs, and heating and utilities. And yet there is a growing proportion of families in the 25 to 34 year age range seeking to buy their first homes.

Brooke's Young Families' Housing Act provides for a new FHA-insured graduated payment mortgage which would reduce monthly payments during the early years of a mortgage and increase those payments during the later years. It will help alleviate the burden of high initial mortgage payments for families whose incomes are likely to rise over a period of time. The bill also provides assistance for first-time homebuyers in saving toward the down payment on a home by offering an income tax credit of 20% for contributions to an "individual housing account."

Brooke's graduated payment mortgage provision became part of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977. His individual



housing account bill is now awaiting consideration by the Senate Finance Committee.

Income and Services

Another of Senator Brooke's key assignments is as Ranking Minority Member of the Senate's Labor-HEW Appropriations Subcommittee. When trust funds for Social Security and Medicare are added in, the Labor-HEW bill totals more than \$170 billion and is the biggest money bill the Congress passes each year. More than 400 programs are covered by this measure.

But the Labor-HEW Appropriations bill is also one of the most controversial in the federal government. In addition to its size in dollar terms it regularly attracts legislative amendments on such issues as abortion, busing, affirmative action, occupational safety and health and the like.

As important as these issues are, Brooke maintains they do not belong on an appropriations bill, as they delay its passage and detract from its main purpose. In this case, he points out, that purpose is to provide funds in a timely manner to assist the jobless, attack disease, broaden and strengthen education at all levels, help the aged and the impoverished and combat discrimination, to cite only a few of the important areas that are covered by the Labor-HEW measure.

The process of developing such an enormous bill involves the

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Senator in public hearings that go on for months, exacting attention to detail and much behind-the-scenes bargaining over funding levels as well as policy direction regarding the use of the money. It never wins Brooke banner headlines, but it is essential to assuring that a Labor-HEW bill adequate to the nation's social needs emerges from the process.

As the top Republican on the Subcommittee, working with the Committee Chairman Senator Warren Magnuson (D-Washington), Senator Brooke is in a key position to influence the amounts of money made available for the nation's most important social programs and for the groups he feels are most often underrepresented. "It is a special responsibility," he often says, "to find the real needs and try to meet them with the limited resources we have."

Senator Brooke was instrumental in providing \$693 million for summer jobs for young people in fiscal 1978 which ends September 30. The final funding level is \$98 million above the House allowance and \$168 million over the budget request. Some 1.1 million part-time summer jobs for low-income youth 14-21 years of age will be created as a result of this effort.

Senator Brooke sponsored the amendment to increase funds for family planning services by \$11.4 million over the budget request and the House allowance. According to HEW, the \$135 million appropriated will provide family planning services for some six million patients, a 10% increase in patient load over FY 1977. Well over 75% of the additional

funds Congress made available will go to low income areas to serve teen-agers thought to be at high risk of pregnancy.

In the education area, where most of the Federal funds are targeted toward the improvement of the educational opportunities for the disadvantaged, Senator Brooke has played a key role in securing increased funding for a variety of programs.

In elementary and secondary education, the Senator strongly supported the successful Senate effort to secure a sizable increase for the Title I program of grants for disadvantaged children. This resulted in an appropriation of \$2.7 billion for fiscal 1978, a \$450 million increase over the previous year. He also fought for and obtained increased funding for Bilingual Education, Right to Read, Head Start and the Follow Through program.

The Senator also led the Senate effort to increase funding for handicapped education for the 1978-79 school year. He also was instrumental in securing a commitment for full funding of the key State Grant program which aids local school districts in providing newly mandated services to the handicapped.

Brooke has been the chief proponent in the Senate of increased funding for the Emergency School Aid Program which provides assistance to school districts undergoing school desegregation. He has sponsored amendments to initiate and expand the new and promising magnet schools program. Appropriations for this program, which is viewed as an important new tool in the desegregation process, will total \$20 million in fiscal 1978. Senator Brooke also sponsored the amendment which resulted in an increased appropriation for targeted assistance to school districts undergoing court-ordered or voluntary desegregation. This program will serve more than 2.25 million disadvantaged students in school year 1978-79.

In the area of higher education, Senator Brooke successfully sponsored amendments to increased funding in the current school year for low-cost direct student loans and for supplemental educational opportunity grants. Together these programs total \$571 million. He was instrumental in getting increases for the Basic Opportunity Grant (BOGS) program which benefits more than 2.5 million disadvantaged college students.

He supported a \$1 million emergency appropriation for the School of Veterinary Medicine at Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. The funds were needed for updating of facilities to permit the school to retain its accreditation. The Senator also pushed a provision relieving the Institute of a requirement that it match the federal funds made available to it.

Senator Brooke's efforts got increased "financial distress" funds to assist beleaguered Meharry Medical and Dental Schools in Nashville, Tenn. In addition as Ranking Minority Member of the Labor-HEW Subcommittee, he signed a letter permitting the reprogramming of an additional \$1 million from available appropriations to help Meharry meet financial expenses for the 1976-77 academic year and thereby to maintain its accreditation and a meaningful teaching program. Indeed, the Labor-
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