

FOR THE SENATE

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THE JOINT SENATE-HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

Press Release

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Leadership Meeting

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FOR THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Charles A. Halleck,
Leader
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Gerald R. Ford, Jr.,
Chr of the Conference
Clarence J. Brown,
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Congressional Committee

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT BY SENATOR DIRKSEN:

There is a faltering effort now underway by apologists for the White House to blame the Congress because President Kennedy's legislative program is in a mess. This effort will fail because the blame lies squarely on the White House doorstep and any reasonable examination of the facts will show it.

Mr. Kennedy has been guilty of two major blunders.

First, he proposed that taxes be cut while he increased Federal deficit spending. This unprecedented proposal not only met heavy opposition in the Congress, but reliable samples of public opinion showed the American people were also opposed to a tax cut without a cut in spending.

Second, the President, who had promised major civil rights legislation in 1961, failed to live up to his promise. It was not until June 19, 1963 that he submitted a civil rights program, only after the crisis of demonstrations and violence forced his hand. Then he expected Congress to act in a few months on a program he had delayed two and a half years.

Historically, the passage of civil rights legislation is a long, drawn-out affair. This is because many members of Mr. Kennedy's own political party are opposed to civil rights legislation. Had the President kept his campaign pledge and sent his program to Congress in 1961, new civil rights statutes would have been on the books before demonstrations and violence were ever precipitated.

As for a tax cut, Mr. Kennedy could have had it this year had he cut spending. But he did the opposite: He asked for a \$4.5 billion increase in spending and \$7.8 billion in future authorizations. The opposition by the Congress and the American people has not been to a tax cut but to increased spending and a tax cut. As matters now stand Congress has decided to delay action on tax legislation until it has had a look at Mr. Kennedy's January budget for next year.

In the final analysis, it is President Kennedy's own mismanagement of his legislative program that has kept Congress in session since last January and everybody in Washington knows it.

In all the welter of criticism the meat of the coconut is overlooked -- it is the basic divergence of opinion between the President on the one hand and the American people and the Congress on the other.

(Halleck statement - pg. 2)

During the 1960 Presidential campaign, Mr. Kennedy filled the airwaves with what he called "the need for strong leadership," the need to "go forward with vigor." If we examine President Kennedy's handling of his legislative program for his first three years, his 1960 campaign cries are more applicable today than three years ago.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for an Alliance for Progress authorization for Latin America, and Congress gave it to him. The program has never even gotten off the ground.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for a Trade Expansion Act to facilitate his "Grand Design" for Europe, and Congress gave it to him. The "Grand Design" collapsed over a year ago and has not been heard of since.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for depressed areas and retraining legislation to solve unemployment, and Congress gave it to him. Not even a dent has been made in unemployment.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for an Urban Affairs Department, social security medical care, massive Federal aid to education and similar proposals. These Congress has not given to him. Why? For a number of reasons, but mainly because there has been no wide public support for them.

Together with the delayed tax cut and civil rights measures these legislative items and enactments have been the backbone of Mr. Kennedy's program. The list adds up to almost total failure for what undoubtedly will be known as the Three Empty Years.

With the Democrats in control of the White House and every government agency and with a two to one majority in the Senate and a three to two majority in the House of Representatives Mr. Kennedy can have no alibi. Any censure of Congress is a censure of the Democrat Party and of the lack of Presidential leadership.