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**KENNEDY
FOR PRESIDENT**

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March

REMARKS OF SENATOR ROBERT F.
KENNEDY, March 24, 1968
OLVERA STREET, LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA

Two weeks ago, I came to California to pay homage to one of the great living Americans: Cesar Chavez. For more than two years from his base in the grape fields of California Cesar Chavez has been sending the rest of America a message.

The message says that Americans of Mexican descent were walking taller than ever before. The message says that dignity is not something awarded coldly in a welfare office. The message says that dignity is something a man attains with his mind, with the labor of his body, with his belief in himself. It is not something you buy in a supermarket.

I come here to honor Cesar Chavez, and to honor his message. I come here today for other reasons. But my concerns remain the same concerns of Cesar Chavez.

I come here because America is a divided nation. I come here because America has become a nation which will spend 36 billion dollars this year on the far side of the earth in Vietnam, and somehow cannot raise money for a school milk program.

I come here because there are two million people in our country who no longer feel that the government cares for them. I come here because I believe that it is the business of government to allow free men to live in dignity.

How can a man retain his dignity when a welfare system shames him.

I believe that men would rather work at disagreeable jobs than accept the humiliation of a handout. I believe that we are capable of judging. I believe that we can and must judge.

That is why I am here. That is why I ask for your help. That is why I run for President of the United States.

Here before us today there are hundreds of young people. America should allow them to be anything which their talent and intelligence can make them. If America fails these young people, if through indifference or callousness they are denied jobs, opportunities, or education, then the American dream will have failed. I do not believe that America will fail.

Together we can build an America that can give these children the open door to the future. That is why I am here. I am here to run for the President of the United States and I need your help.

I need your help because I believe all Americans can work together. Together we can destroy the slums, together we can harness rivers and preserve forests.

Together we can make ourselves a nation that spends more on books than on bombs, more on hospitals than the terrible tools of war, more on decent houses than on military aircraft. Together we do all of this. United we are a nation. Divided we are nothing. I think we can build a new America. We can start building that new America now.

I want to see an America that guarantees dignity now. I want to see an America that guarantees that freedom, equality and hope are not empty abstractions, but realities. Now.

I want to see an America where a young man who is asked to bleed in Vietnam for the freedom of strangers is guaranteed freedom of equality and hope ~~in~~ in his own country.

Together we can make a beginning and tomorrow our children can go forth together to explore the stars.

That is why I am here. That is why I am asking for your help. That is why I run for President of the United States.

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