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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR  
and the New Deal**

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**File No. 1245**

**1939 October 9**

**Radio Address in Behalf of the  
Mobilization for Human Needs**

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT  
MOBILIZATION FOR HUMAN NEEDS  
OCTOBER 9, 1939

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CHAIRMAN TAFT, COMMUNITY CHEST WORKERS, FRIENDS OF HUMAN NEEDS:

Tonight our appeal is to the compassionate heart of the American people.

As we look out upon a world, unhappily torn by war with all of its attendant horrors of death and destruction, we must remember, no matter how broad our sympathies, that charity begins at home. I like the ringing challenge in that militant designation: Mobilization for Human Needs. It is a call for each and every one of us to enlist in the nationwide campaign to extend a helping hand to all who suffer privation or want within our borders.

We must work, each of us in our own neighborhood to support the local community chests.

The community chests, with their special responsibility to bring cheer and comfort to individuals and families made desolate by want and poverty, constitute, in a very special way, our home front -- and our home front must be defended at all hazards.

Let us, as we sit in our homes tonight, give thought to some of our less fortunate fellow Americans who live in homes less cheerful than ours, homes often on the border line of squalor, misery and privation. And let us not forget that it is just as important to keep the lamp of hope burning in our more humble homes as it is to maintain the elaborate establishments in which abundance and even luxury are the rule.

It is the survival of the old spirit of home that must be guaranteed. For the family still remains the basis of society as we know it, and must be preserved as an institution if democracy <sup>it</sup> <sub>A</sub> ~~as we have always understood it~~ is to be perpetuated. If we lose the home we are in grave risk of undermining all those other elements of stability and strength ~~which~~ <sup>That</sup> contribute to the well-being of our national life.

Best of all, our work as good neighbors through our community chests does not overlap either federal or local government relief work. It is well always to keep in mind and to emphasize again and again that the proper function of the Community Chest is to extend local or community relief.

Under the Federal Security Agency certain services have been organized for certain needs of the men, women and children of the United States. There is also provision for work relief through the Work Projects Administration, familiar to all as the

W. P. A.

This is not the time nor the place to go into details concerning the functions of these various federal agencies. I have referred to them because we must bear in mind constantly that the Mobilization for Human Needs, working through the various community chests in all parts of the country, has a separate and distinct field of service.

I desire, therefore, once more to reiterate that direct relief and work relief are separate and distinct means of attacking separate and distinct problems. Direct relief is aimed at many problems of human misfortune -- in short, the adjustment of maladjusted families, the tiding over of temporary crises in *and the support of character building organizations*, family life. That is the mission of the Community Chest.

On the other hand, work relief, as authorized by the Congress, attacks the problem of getting jobs for able-bodied persons who can give useful work in return for what they receive. It is aimed at the adjustment of maladjusted society.

I am reiterating all this because to my mind we must let nothing obscure our vision of the field which is the natural sphere of the community chests. To repeat, the community chests are a vital sector in our home front. And I am sure the Mobilization for Human Needs accepts the national policy of relief as outlined by the Congress while devoting all of its energies to the local problems which are its primary responsibility.

The challenge is to relieve individual distress no matter where it is found. One hundred per cent support of the community chest will greatly diminish want and suffering in every community in the land. To bring about that happy consummation, I appeal to the heart and soul, <sup>to</sup> the conscience and <sup>to</sup> every generous impulse of the American people.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*  
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*(Original reading copy)*

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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October 9, 1939

This address of the President, delivered in behalf  
of the 1939 Mobilization for Human Needs, is for release  
in editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets  
NOT EARLIER ~~than~~ 10:30 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, today,  
October 9, 1939.

CAUTION: Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

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1092 words

ADDRESS TO BE DELIVERED AT THE WHITE HOUSE,  
10:30 P.M., E.S.T., OCTOBER 9, 1939 IN CONNECTION  
WITH THE ANNUAL MOBILIZATION FOR HUMAN NEEDS.

CHAIRMAN TAFT, COMMUNITY CHEST WORKERS, FRIENDS OF HUMAN NEEDS:

Tonight our appeal is to the compassionate heart of the American people.

As we look out upon a world, unhappily torn by war with all of its attendant horrors of death and destruction, we must remember, no matter how broad our sympathies, that charity begins at home. I like the ringing challenge in that militant designation: Mobilization for Human Needs. It is a call for each and every one of us to enlist in the nationwide campaign to extend a helping hand to all who suffer privation or want.~~to our workers~~.

~~Our problem can best be reduced to its lowest terms if we face it in the spirit of the good neighbor. We must work, each in his own neighborhood to support the local community chests.~~

~~Alas, that other nations are torn with strife and that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse ride roughshod over lands where once reigned peace and prosperity, hope and happiness. Under the providence of God, we are at peace and with His help we shall remain at peace, and, if, in a distracted world we are in doubt as to where our duty to extend succor lies, let us simply do the duty that lies nearest us. If we do that, our second duty will already be plainer. Yes, charity begins at home. And the first duty of each of us under this militant call to mobilize for human needs is to extend a helping hand to our neighbor.~~

~~Who is our neighbor? The answer will be found in the familiar story related by the Master <sup>about</sup> the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho — and the neighbor was the good Samaritan who~~

bound up his wounds after the Levite had passed by on the other side.  
Our neighbor whom is whoever is in need in our community and the practical  
agency through which we can make our help effective is the Community Chest.

The community chests, with their special responsibility to bring cheer and comfort to individuals and families made desolate by want and poverty, constitute, in a very special way, our home front — and our home front must be defended at all hazards. Let us, as we sit in our comfortable homes tonight, give thought to some of our less fortunate fellow Americans who live in homes less cheerful than ours, homes often on the border line of squalor, misery and privation. And let us not forget that it is just as important to keep the lamp of hope burning in our more humble homes as it is to maintain the elaborate establishments in which abundance and ~~super~~ luxury are the rule.

It is the survival of the old spirit of home that must be guaranteed, ~~and what spirit can be maintained only in the home itself,~~  
~~no matter how humble.~~ For the family still remains the basis of society as we know it, and must be preserved as an institution if democracy as we have always understood it is to be perpetuated. If we lose the home we are in grave risk of undermining all those other elements of stability and strength which contribute to the well-being of our national life.

We must then with redoubled zeal guard our home front. And there is no better means of strengthening that front than to be a good neighbor in the simple, old-fashioned connotation of that term. Best of all, our work as good neighbors through our community chests does not overlap either federal or local government relief work. It is well always to keep in mind now to emphasize again and again that the proper function of the Community Chest is to extend local or community relief.

Under the Federal Security Agency certain services have been organized for certain needs of the men, women and children of the United States. There is also provision for work relief through the Works Projects Administration, ~~successor to the Works Progress Administration~~, familiar to all as the W.P.A.

This is not the time nor the place to go into details concerning the functions of these various federal agencies. I have referred to them because we must bear in mind constantly that the Mobilization for Human Needs, working through the various community chests in all parts of the country, has a separate and distinct field of service.

I desire, therefore, once more to reiterate that direct relief and work relief are separate and distinct means of attacking separate and distinct problems. Direct relief is aimed at many problems of human misfortune -- in short, the adjustment of maladjusted families, the tiding over of temporary crises in family life. That is the mission of the Community Chest. On the other hand, work relief, as authorized by the Congress, attacks the problem of getting jobs for able-bodied persons who can give useful work in return for what they receive. It is aimed at the adjustment of maladjusted society.

I am reiterating all this because to my mind we must let nothing obscure our vision of the field which is the natural sphere of the community chests. To repeat, the community chests are a vital sector in our home front. And I ~~think it worthwhile suggesting that~~ <sup>Am. W.H.C.</sup> ~~administer~~ the Mobilization for Human Needs accept<sup>y</sup> the national policy of relief as outlined by the Congress while devoting all of its energies to the local problems which are its primary responsibility.

To the American people who are a humane people as well as a generous people, I make one more appeal to give to the community chest. Those blessed with an abundance can give much; but all can give something for a work which transcends race, creed, section, class and condition.

The challenge is to relieve individual distress no matter where it is found. One hundred percent support of the community chest will ~~bring about~~ <sup>bring about</sup> relief and suffering in every community in the land. To bring about that happy consummation, I appeal to the heart and soul, the conscience and every generous impulse of the American people.

STATEMENTS FILE

*Mr. McIntyre*

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October 9, 1939

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CAUTION: Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

CHAIRMAN TAFT, COMMUNITY CHEST WORKERS, FRIENDS OF HUMAN NEEDS:

Tonight (<sup>our</sup>) appeal is to the compassionate heart of the American people.

As we look out (upon) a world, unhappily torn by war with all of its attendant horrors of death and destruction, we must remember: No matter how broad our sympathies, that charity begins at home. I like the ringing challenge in that militant designation: Mobilization for Human Needs. It is a call for each and every one of us to enlist in the nationwide campaign to extend a helping hand to all (who) suffer privation or want within our borders.

We must work, each of us in our own neighborhood, to support the local community chests.

The community chests, with their special responsibility to bring cheer and comfort to individuals and families made desolate by want and poverty, constitute, in a very special way, our home front — and our home front must be defended at all hazards. Let us, as we sit in our homes tonight, give thought to some of our less fortunate fellow Americans who live in homes less cheerful than ours, homes often on the border line of (equality), misery and privation. And let us not forget that it is just as important to keep the lamp of hope burning in our more humble homes as it is to maintain the elaborate establishments in which abundance and even luxury are the rule.

It is the survival of the old spirit (of) home that must be guaranteed. For, the family still remains the basis of society as we know it, and must be preserved as an institution if democracy (as we have always understood it) is to be perpetuated. If we lose the home we are in grave risk of undermining all those other elements of stability and strength which contribute to the well-being of our national life.

Best of all, our work as good neighbors through our community chests does not overlap either federal or local government relief work. It is well (always) to keep in mind and to emphasize again and again that the proper function of the Community Chest is to extend local or community relief.

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*which we are starting*

reject

I desire, therefore, once more to (reiterate) that direct relief and work relief are separate and distinct means of attacking separate and distinct problems. Direct relief is aimed at many problems of human misfortune -- in short, the adjustment of mal-adjusted families, the tiding over of temporary crises in family life. That is the mission of the Community Chest. On the other hand, work relief, as authorized by the Congress, attacks the problem of getting jobs for able-bodied persons who can give useful work in return for what they receive. It is aimed at the adjustment of maladjusted society.

*the function  
of the chest  
is to collect  
and disburse  
charitable funds*

I am reiterating all this because to my mind we must let nothing obscure our vision of the field which is the natural sphere of the community chests. To repeat, the community chests are a vital sector in our home front. And I am sure the Mobilization for Human Needs accepts the national policy of relief as outlined by the Congress while devoting all of its energies to the local problems which are its primary responsibility.

*for 212-3-1  
Community Chest*

The challenge is to relieve individual distress no matter where it is found. One hundred percent support of the community chest will greatly diminish want and suffering in every community in the land. We bring about that happy consummation. I appeal to the heart and soul, the conscience and every generous impulse of the American people.

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*Dugay* *To*

*Vergess* *To*

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
In behalf of the 1939 Mobilization for Human Needs  
Delivered from the White House  
October 9, 1939, 10.30 P. M., E. S. T.

CHAIRMAN TAFT, COMMUNITY CHEST WORKERS, FRIENDS OF  
HUMAN NEEDS:

Tonight (our) my appeal is to the compassionate heart of the American people.

As we look out (up)on a world, unhappily torn by war with all of its attendant horrors of death and destruction, we must remember that no matter how broad our sympathies, (that) our charity begins at home. I like the ringing challenge in that militant designation: Mobilization for Human Needs. It is a call for each and every one of us to enlist in the nationwide campaign to extend a helping hand to all (who) suffering privation or want within our borders.

We must work, each of us in our own neighborhood, to support the local community chests.

These community chests, with their special responsibility to bring cheer and comfort to individual(s) (and) families who have been made desolate by want and poverty, constitute, in a very special way, our home front -- and our home front must be defended at all hazards. Let us, as we sit in our homes tonight, give thought to some of our less fortunate fellow Americans who live in homes less cheerful than ours, homes often on the border line of

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

(equalor) poverty, misery and privation. And let us not forget that it is just as important to keep the lamp of hope burning in our more humble homes as it is to maintain the elaborate establishments in which abundance and even luxury are the rule.

It is the survival of the old spirit (of) that the home (that) must be guaranteed. For the family still remains the basis of society as we know it, and it must be preserved as an institution if our democracy (as we have always understood it) is to be perpetuated. If we lose the home we are in grave risk of undermining all those other elements of stability and strength which contribute to the well-being of our national life.

And, best of all, our work as good neighbors through our community chests does not overlap either federal or local government relief work. It is well (always) for us all to keep in mind and to emphasize again and again that the proper function of the Community Chest is to extend local or community relief.

Under the Federal Security Agency, which was set up only a few months ago, certain services have been organized for certain needs of the men, women and children of the United States. There is also provision for work relief through the Work Projects Administration, familiar to all of us as the W. P. A.

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I desire, therefore, once more to (reiterate) repeat that direct relief and work relief are separate and distinct means of attacking separate and distinct problems. Direct relief is aimed at many problems of human misfortune -- in short, the adjustment of maladjusted families, the tiding over of temporary crises in family life and the support of character building organizations. That is the mission of the Community Chest. On the other hand, work relief, as authorized by the Congress, attacks the problem of getting jobs for able-bodied persons who can give useful work in return for what they receive. It is aimed at the adjustment of maledjusted society.

I am reiterating all this because to my mind we must let nothing obscure our vision of the field which is the natural sphere of the community chests. To repeat, the community chests are a vital sector in our home front. And I am sure the Mobilization for Human Needs accepts for every community the national policy (of) for relief as outlined by the Congress while devoting all of its energies to the local problems which are its primary responsibility.

The challenge is to relieve individual distress no matter where it is found. One hundred percent support of the community chest will greatly diminish want and suffering in every community in the land. To bring about that happy consummation, I appeal to the heart and the soul, I appeal to the conscience and I appeal to every generous impulse of the American people.