

Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)

## Radio Address on Democratic Women's Day

*broadcast from the White House at 3:05 p.m. on September 27, 1949*

THANK YOU, Mrs. Edwards. It certainly was a great pleasure to listen to the talks of these three good American women.

I am glad to speak to the women of the United States on Democratic Women's Day.

As President, I know that women have an interest in the welfare of the Government that goes far beyond job holding  
5 or partisanship. I know that women are not misled by political slogans. They have learned that the real issues in political activity are the well-being of the country and the future of their families. Women look beneath the labels and see the facts.

It is my firm conviction that the Democratic Party offers more for the welfare of the country--and therefore more for the women of the country--than any other party or political group.

10 The Democratic Party has a program.

It is a program of practical measures. It is not a blueprint imposed from on high by a little group of theorists. Neither is it a set of platitudes concocted by a group of corporation lawyers in a smokefilled room. Our program is an expression of the desires of the people.

The Democratic Party does not dodge issues or seek to gloss them over. We state them boldly. We propose concrete  
15 and practical action to solve them.

Our program consists of measures which have come up from the grassroots--of ideas and proposals that have been discussed and hammered out among unions, in farm groups, in city councils, in county boards, and in State legislatures. Our program is as American as the soil we walk upon.

It is a program unshakably founded on the principle that the power of government should be used to promote the  
20 general welfare. It is a program based upon the experience of the Democratic Party in using the power of government to establish actual conditions in which the people can achieve a better life for themselves and for their children. It is a program of what should be done and what our experience tells us can be done.

We have just heard, from the ladies present here, the viewpoints of the farmer, the worker, and the businessman. It is interesting to see how these three points of view fit together. Each of these groups depends on the others. Farmers  
25 cannot be prosperous unless industrial workers have good wages and steady employment so they can buy the products that farmers raise. Workers cannot be prosperous unless the farmers have good incomes and can buy the things that industrial workers make. Businessmen cannot be prosperous unless both the farmers and the workers have the money to buy the things they sell.

All groups in our Nation depend on one another. That is what the term "general welfare" means. The general welfare  
30 is the sum total of the welfare of all the groups in our country.

The Constitution was established to "promote the general welfare." These are the words of its preamble. And that is the duty of our Government.

The Democratic Party proposes to see that the Federal Government carries out this constitutional responsibility. We will do that in spite of the outcries of certain people who say there is something alien or dangerous in the idea of a  
35 government that works for the welfare of all our citizens. Those people are just about 160 years behind the times. They want us to forget the language of the Constitution itself.

We have some serious problems in this country today. If we are to continue to promote the general welfare, we must devise modern methods to solve these modern problems.

One of our serious problems today is the fact that there are not enough good houses for our rapidly growing  
40 population. The Democratic Party is pledged to work for good housing. The 81st Congress has just passed a public housing bill to provide assistance in building homes for low-income groups. The 81st Congress and the administration

are working out solutions for the homebuilding problems of other groups. Since the 1948 election, and in spite of determined opposition, we have made great progress in the field of housing. We are going to keep right on making progress.

45 We are just as interested in good schools as we are in good houses. I think all of you know that many boys and girls are not getting the right kind of schooling. There are not enough teachers and there are not enough school buildings. Our schools are getting steadily more crowded. Women who serve on school boards and women who teach know that in many parts of the country better schools cannot be obtained unless there is financial assistance from the Federal Government.

50 This administration has pledged Federal aid to the States to help them improve their schools. A bill providing such aid has already passed the Senate and is now awaiting action in the House of Representatives. I shall continue to urge Congress to pass this legislation.

We must also act promptly to improve the health of our Nation. The women of the country, particularly, know that in many areas there are not enough doctors or hospitals and that many families cannot afford the medical care they need.

55 This administration has proposed a program of improved medical care. Some parts of this program, such as an expanded health service for schoolchildren and additional aid for hospital construction, have already passed the Senate. Our medical program will mean happier homes, healthier children, greater opportunity for useful lives for all the people.

A good system of social security is also essential to our welfare. We established the principle a long time ago that the  
60 people of this country can protect themselves against the hazards of life and the burdens of old age by a system of social insurance. We need to make improvements in our social insurance system at this time because its benefits are entirely too low to meet current living costs. We should bring this system up to date by increasing its benefits and extending its protection to more people. This is part of the program to which the Democratic Party is firmly committed. The 81st Congress is going to improve our social security system.

65 Another part of the Democratic Party program is to increase the minimum wage for industrial workers from 40 cents to 75 cents an hour. A bill for this purpose is well along toward final passage in the Congress, and I am confident that it will become law very shortly.

Minimum wages and social security together protect our working people against disastrously low incomes. Farmers need safeguards against low incomes, too. The Democratic Party has taken the lead in working out a program for  
70 lasting farm prosperity, for we know that the welfare of the country depends upon the welfare of our farmers.

We are determined to see that our economy continues to grow and expand. That is why we are enacting laws to provide for better use of our abundant natural resources, to develop more electric power, and to bring water to areas in need of it.

Above all else, we want to keep the United States prosperous and strong because we know that our prosperity is the  
75 best guarantee of peace. Every measure to promote the general welfare in this country is a measure to promote peace in the world.

The program of the Democratic Party is a program for prosperity and peace. It can be made effective only through the united efforts of our citizens.

It is not enough for the Congress to pass these measures. They have to be brought to life by the citizens of this  
80 country, and by our State and local governments. Our public housing program will not be effective unless local authorities, backed by alert citizens, are active in building and operating local housing projects. Our program of aid to education will not be effective unless there is efficient and public-spirited hometown and home-state administration. Our farm program depends upon the joint effort of our farmers in county committees and rural cooperatives.

Only the people, working together, can make our program a success.

85 I ask you to bear that in mind when you hear people saying that measures for the general welfare are merely Federal handouts to selfish or incompetent people. I ask you to bear it in mind when you hear our opponents saying that our program is undermining local government and the moral character of our citizens.

The facts are just the opposite. Our program increases opportunity and incentive among our citizens. It increases the

responsibilities and activities of our local governments.

- 90 The American people are not afraid of their Government, because they know it belongs to them and that they control it. Now, more than ever before, the people realize that they can use their Government to help achieve wider opportunity and greater security--to help achieve real independence for themselves and their children.

This concept of government has been greatly advanced by the increasing participation of women in our political life, with their straightforward approach to public affairs. I am confident that the women of the United States will continue  
95 to exercise their democratic rights in order to build a happier and more prosperous Nation.

(1549 Wörter)

Quelle: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13315&st=&st1=>

## Aufgaben

1. What group in American society is the target audience?
2. What approach does President Truman use to attract his intended audience?
3. What evidence does the president offer to support his claim that the Democratic Party offers more for women than any other group?
4. President Truman cites major differences between the Democrats and other groups. As you listen to or read his speech list three.
5. According to President Truman, how should the power of the government be used?
6. The president explains how different groups in society are dependent upon one another. Explain.
7. President Truman addresses six serious problems facing America in 1949. List 3 of the 6.
8. How does President Truman suggest that people respond to critics who claim that the program of the Democratic party "is undermining local government and the moral character of our citizens"?