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**Fred Harris**  
**Chair**  
**The Eisenhower Foundation**

**MR. HARRIS:** Well, thank you very much, President Epps, for those words of welcome and also for all of the hospitality and arrangements here.

I'm Fred Harris. I was a member of the Kerner Commission and a member of the Senate, US Senate. I'm now the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, which is the private sector follow-on to the Kerner Commission, and what we are undertaking now is an update of the Kerner Report 40 years later and we'll be coming out with a report in early next year, 40 years after the disorders, one of the most terrible of which, as you know, took place here in Newark.

We're not so much interested in what happened then. What we're interested in is what the situation is now, where we are 40 years later and what ought to be done.

The Kerner Commission, as you know, was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson. It was called a President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, and he asked us three questions; what happened, why did it happen, what can we do to prevent it happening again and again.

The Kerner Commission Report said in some famous words America is moving toward two societies, one white, one black, today we would add Hispanic, separate and unequal, and the commission recommended very vigorous enforcement of the new civil rights laws, they were then new, and for massive new programs in regards to jobs and education, open housing.

The country made significant progress on virtually every aspect of race and poverty for about ten years after the Kerner Report and then that progress slowed, in some cases stopped, and often was reversed. We began to go backwards for about 12 years or so, particularly during the Reagan/Bush administration.

Then with the advent of the administration of President Clinton in the '90s, we began to make the progress again, and in more recent times with this president administration in particular, that progress has largely stopped and again we've begun to go backward.

So, for example, in overall numbers of poverty, there's more poverty today than there was 40 years ago. Then about 25 and a half million Americans were poor. By the same standards that are standards today, 36 and a half million Americans are poor.

Poverty is deeper for those who are poor. 43 percent of those who are poor in America today are living in what's called deep poverty, that is one half the poverty level income, and poverty is more concentrated, which makes it a lot harder to get out of.

For African Americans and for Hispanics the poverty rate is about triple what it is today - what it is today for non-Hispanic whites, and those African Americans and Hispanics are twice as likely today to be living in deep poverty.

What we want to talk about here is the situation in Newark. And we've already had one of these hearings in Detroit and we've also commissioned a number of series of studies and papers on various aspects of race and poverty in the United States, and, as I said, we'll be coming out with a report 40 years later early in the coming year.

Thank you every one of you for being here, and now I want to call on the President and CEO of the Eisenhower Foundation, Dr. Alan Curtis.