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WILLIAMS SAYS NATIONAL CONSENSUS NEEDED IN ORDER TO CONTROL INFLATION

SAN FRANCISCO -- Efforts to Control inflation will not be successful until Americans generally, accept the need to make certain sacrifices in terms of standard of living and the services they expect from government, Chairman Harold M. Williams said in remarks prepared for delivery here Thursday evening.

"Stated bluntly," he said, "if we are to have less inflation, we must, individually and collectively, choose less inflation and choose it over other desires -- choose a lowering of our standard of living as an essential investment in the future of our society -- and make our choices clear in the marketplace and to our government."

Chairman Williams' remarks were prepared for delivery at a dinner of the Central Pacific Region of the Anti-Defamation League at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, Thursday evening.

He warned that a nation beset by economic instability "becomes weakened in every sense," and termed rampant inflation "the ultimate economic instability that could befall a society."

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Attributing the causes of inflation to the demands and expectations of Americans generally, Mr. Williams argued that it will be brought under control only if there is a national consensus in favor of the difficult choices that will be required.

"As a people," he said, "we need to make the political decision that inflation will not be tolerated as a way of life -- and as a threat to our way of life... What we must do is to impose a discipline over the process by which we respond to the demands of the society's many components and interests."

Pointing out that government leaders are often faced with simultaneous and conflicting demands for more programs and services, and at the same time less government interference and lower taxes, Chairman Williams said that, "It is time that the citizenry began to discharge their own duties and obligations as well as to express their demands.

"Although I would not argue with any citizen's right to petition his government," he said, "I take some exception to the growth of special-interest lobbies and how this has tilted our economy towards perpetual inflation."

If elected government leaders are to be able to make the fiscal and monetary decisions necessary to controlling inflation, Mr. Williams said, they will need the support of a broad constituency willing to "accept personal sacrifice in order to regain our economic equilibrium and well-being.

"We need to build a consensus," he said, "that, until we are again earning our way, we will cut back. And, we need to establish rational economic priorities. Our political decision making must give greatest emphasis to those investments and economic decisions which best advance the economic strength and competitive posture of our productive resources. And, business's role as the keystone of our economic base must be acknowledged and supported. We no longer can cavalierly draw from its well without injuring the very essence of our national well-being."

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