

Senator Gaylord Nelson
404 Old Senate Office Building



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NEW HAVEN, CONN. -- If the U. S. population continues to escalate,

"we might as well forget about finding solutions to any of our other social and environmental problems," Sen. Gaylord Nelson said here Thursday.

Speaking at Southern Connecticut State College Teach-In on his sixth stop on a 17-stop Earth Day teach-in tour, Nelson said that an unrestrained, spiraling population growth is the most serious problem confronting mankind.

The Wisconsin Democrat argued that "the population problem is much more serious in America than in teeming Asia, because the average American is at least 20 times more destructive to the environment than the average non-American."

He pointed out that, while Americans comprise only 6 per cent of the world's population, they are responsible for almost one-half the world's pollution and consume 60 per cent of the world's resources.

The birth of the average American child represents the addition of another "super-consumer," he continued, "because he will personally pollute 3 million gallons of water, burn 21,000 gallons of leaded gasoline, and consume 28,000 pounds of milk and 10,000 pounds of meat in his lifetime."

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He pointed out that it was significant that in the past ten years Americans have consumed more minerals and fuels than the entire population of the earth in all of recorded history.

Recognized as one of the leading environmentalists in the country, Nelson said the nation's environment is rapidly reaching a crisis state where the air is poisoned and the lakes, rivers, streams and even the oceans are being polluted.

"Even if we began now to make solving the environmental problems a matter of highest national priority, both economically and philosophically," Nelson continued, "we would fail unless we could find a reasonable check on the nation's population growth."



Nelson argued that the addition of another 100 million people in this country in the next thirty years will precariously strain our housing, recreational facilities, minerals and energy resources, plant and animal life, education, health, transportation, social economic and political systems and waste disposal facilities."

To prepare for such a population growth, Nelson added, this nation would have to build a new city that would house 250,000 people every thirty days for the rest of the century," which is considered an impossibility.

"In reality, the ever-increasing population will force more people into the already crowded and decaying central cities and spread the already ugly, unplanned sprawl of suburbia."

"Desperately needed," Nelson continued, "is a broad-based educational effort that would inform the citizens of the social, environmental, economic and political consequences of an overpopulated planet.

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