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STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN STENNIS

FOR RELEASE 12 NOON (EDST), TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1959,
SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH RELEASE OF COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
PRESS RELEASE

The recommendations of the Civil Rights Commission in its Report are both extreme and shocking. The Report in itself is a mere blueprint for complete federalization of all walks of life. The far-reaching proposals would extinguish more rights than they would protect.

If carried out, the proposals would effectively destroy the relationship between the States and the Federal Government in the field of suffrage, even providing for registration of voters by Federal officials in some instances. The Federal Government would assume virtually complete control in the field of education. And further, there would be complete Federal control over all housing for which any Federal funds have been used in any way in years past.

The only step remaining to assure complete federalization of the nation would be enactment of an FEPC bill to bring all employment under Federal control.

In education, the role of the Federal Government has been one of leadership and assistance, with some financial aid in limited fields. As outstanding examples, we can point with pride to our Land-Grant Colleges, our Extension Service and Vocational Education, as well as grants for Research.

Yet the Commission recommends that we reverse completely this role of leadership and assistance to one of bribery, coercion and punishment, resulting in the absolute destruction of these worthy programs. Coercion in the field of education has never been -- and I trust it never shall be -- the policy of the Congress.

Most of the recommendations in this Report are clearly visionary and impractical. And there are remedies within present law for any evils, real or imaginary, about which complaint has been made.

The division of thought among the members themselves shows how unwise and futile would be any attempt to enact Federal legislation in these fields.

Commissioner Battle has accurately described the Report as being "neither impartial or factual, but a mere argument in the field of race relations."

I am confident these unprecedented recommendations will be rejected flatly by the American people and the Congress.

All thinking Americans will arise to the challenge. Thus, in sounding the alarm, this Report will have served its only useful purpose.