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Senator Stennis Civil Rights Correspondence B03F20L02

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cc: WEC
EJ

June 17, 1971

Memo to : Senator Stennis
From : RGM
Re : HEW School Desegregation Figures

HEW figures, comparing school desegregation in the 1968-69 and 1970-71 school years, are released for use in morning papers on June 17. Extracts follow.

The 11-State South more than doubled the percentage of Negro students in majority white schools, from 18% in the fall of 1968 to 39% in the fall of 1970. The percentage increased five-fold in Mississippi. In the 32 Northern and Western States, the percentage remained unchanged at 28%.

There were 756,000 more Negro students in majority white schools. Of these, 690,000 were in the 11-State South. The HEW press release says that the other 66,000 "were in 38 other States." What it did not say is that the percentage of Negroes in majority white schools decreased in a number of States, including Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Nor did it say that in the entire 32 Northern and Western States there were 115,486 more Negro students in 80-100% minority schools, or that 90,169 of these were in 95-100% minority schools.

While the South was making all this progress and the North and West were standing still or retrogressing, what kind of increases in Negro student population did these areas have to deal with?

The answer is that the 32 Northern and Western States had 186,802 additional Negro students, but the 11 Southern States alone had an increase of 208,232 Negro students.

Of total enrollment in the South, 27.2% are Negroes. In the North and West, it is 9.8%.

Mississippi is the only State where more than half the students are Negro (50.8%). Yet the percentage of Negro students in majority white schools increased from 6.7% to 26.4%.

In Minnesota, only 1.1% of the students are Negro, but there was a decline in the percentage of them enrolled in majority white schools. The same is true in Massachusetts, which has a Negro enrollment of only 4.5%.

The HEW press release indicates that in the 11-State South, the percentage of Negro enrollment in 80-100% minority schools was more than cut in half in two years. What it did not say is that in the 32 Northern and Western States, the percentage in these racially isolated schools increased, and so did it also increase in 90-100% minority schools, and 95-100% schools, and 99-100% schools. In every one of those categories there was a physical increase of tens of thousands of black students in these schools. So there had to be more schools. What kind of schools did they build? Obviously, they built a lot of schools for Negroes.

The HEW press release says that in the 100 largest school systems, the percentage of Negroes who attend majority white schools increased from 13% in 1968 to 16%.

Sounds fine. This means 128,947 black students were added to the rolls of majority white schools.

A closer look, however, reveals that 37,006 of them were in the State of Florida alone. Another 16,346 were in one school district in North Carolina.

Of the 100 largest school districts, how many increased the percentage of Negroes attending majority white schools? There were 59.

But 40 of them were in the South and Border States. This leaves 19 districts in the Northern and Western States that increased this percentage.

However, the numbers of black students, in these 19 districts, that were added to majority white schools, are insignificant. Los

Angeles had 2,109. Newark added 446. Pittsburgh added 527. Toledo added 229; Dayton, 502. Gary, Indiana, added 144.

What of the 41 school districts that did not increase the percentage of blacks in majority white schools?

Obviously, they changed the other way, and the Southern and Border schools had to make up the difference in order for HEW to make the proud statement in the press release.

Of the 15 largest school districts in the country, only one Northern or Western district increased the percentage. That was Los Angeles; and, as I mentioned, there were only 2,109 students involved there.

Twice that many black students were involved in the change in Detroit; there were that many fewer in majority white schools in 1970.

Percentages declined in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and so on down the line.

Boston accomplished a startling degree of racial isolation in two years.

Negroes in majority black schools increased 5.3%. Those in 90-100% minority increased 9.7%. Those in 100% minority, all-black, schools increased 10.7%.

The over-all figures on those of the 100 largest school districts that are in the 32 Northern and Western States are revealing. The percentages of black students who are enrolled in majority black schools have increased in every category: 50 to 100%, 80-100%, 90-100%, 95-100%, 99-100%, and even 100% Negro.

In every category in the 11 Southern States, those same percentages decreased, showing accelerated desegregation.

Your amendment on a single national policy in dealing with conditions of segregation by race in schools was passed on April 22, 1971, as a part of the Emergency School Aid Bill, which awaits action in the House.

