



ROBERT F. KENNON
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
BATON ROUGE

November 20, 1953

THE WHITE HOUSE

Nov 23 9 18 AM '53

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The Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Eisenhower:

I was pleased to note from press reports that you will give personal consideration to the answers to be submitted by the Department of Justice to the United States Supreme Court in connection with the public school litigation now pending.

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Throughout the history of our public school system every state has exercised the right to operate its own schools, and the United States Supreme Court has sustained this right in a series of cases extending back some three-quarters of a century. State laws have required parents to send their children to school and under state laws the state and local communities have accepted the responsibility of providing the best schools which their resources permitted. During the past ten years great progress has been made in improving public school systems in the South. For instance, Louisiana has increased its minimum salary for beginner teachers holding a BA degree in both its white and colored schools to \$2400.00 for the nine months school year. Modern high schools for colored citizens have been constructed, particularly in our larger cities where better financial resources exist and further development is in prospect.

The states are presently finding it difficult to provide the additional school facilities needed for the fast-growing school population. The effect of the increased postwar birth rate is being felt heavily in the lower age classrooms. Yet the states have met the problem to date without federal aid. A federal edict contrary to the established order and customs

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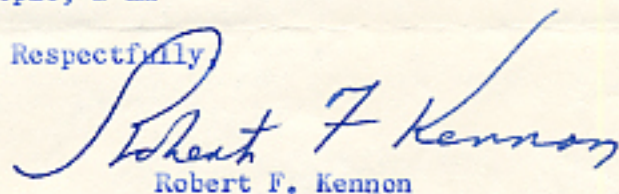
could well disrupt many local systems, particularly in the rural areas. Such a disruption would interrupt the present orderly improvement and do great damage to the fine racial relationships that have existed -- and improved -- over the years.

Every true American must believe in the principle of fair treatment to every citizen, regardless of race, color or religion, but, as in the case of the subject matter commonly referred to as FEPC, the solution of the school problem rightfully rests on the state and local level. The states have the financial responsibility of providing school buildings, as well as teachers and transportation facilities where needed. A federal edict would require drastic and sudden major changes and expenditures for which funds are not available.

However, the controlling consideration is not money or even segregation. It is one of preserving our dual system of federal and state government. I trust that the guiding principle of states rights, local self-government and community responsibility will be given the prime consideration it deserves, and that the position of the Department of Justice will be towards sustaining the fundamental American conception of state sovereignty.

With good wishes for your continued health and happiness and appreciation for the fine service you are rendering the American people, I am

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Robert F. Kennon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Kennon" clearly legible.

Robert F. Kennon

RFK:CD:I