

The White House  
Washington

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THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

DEAR MR PRESIDENT: THE UNFORTUNATE SITUATION CONCERNING OUR  
SCHOOLS, WHICH CAN RAPIDLY AND STEADILY WORSEN, PRESENTS THE  
MOST SERIOUS AND THE GRAVEST DOMESTIC CRISIS OF THIS CENTURY. I  
AM CONVINCED WE HAVE NOT YET MADE CLEAR TO YOU THE STRONG AND ALMOST  
UNANIMOUS SENTIMENT PREVAILING AMONG THE MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF  
THE SOUTH AGAINST ENFORCED INTEGRATION OF OUR SCHOOLS. THIS

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APPLIES TO BOTH WHITE AND COLORED PARENTS. NOR HAVE WE MADE  
CLEAR TO YOU WHAT WILL BE THE ULTIMATE AND FATAL CONSEQUENCES  
OF ENFORCED INTEGRATION. THIS IS NO LONGER A QUESTION MERELY OF  
CIVIL RIGHTS, NOR A QUESTION OF STATE'S RIGHTS. THE REAL ISSUE  
AT STAKE IS THE SURVIVAL OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. SCHOOLS  
ORIGINATE AND ARE SUSTAINED THROUGH THE COMBINED ACTIVE SUPPORT  
AND COOPERATION OF PARENTS AND THE EFFORTS OF DEDICATED TEACHERS.  
THIS SUPPORT AND COOPERATION CANNOT EXIST WITH SCHOOLS INTEGRATED  
BY FORCE. CONTINUED OPERATIONS OF A MILITANT DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AT THE STATE LEVEL,

WITH THE USE OR THREATENED USE OF SOLDIERS MARCHING FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL, WILL TOTALLY DESTROY THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN GREAT AREAS OF THE SOUTH. THE INNOCENT VICTIMS WILL BE THE CHILDREN OF BOTH RACES. OPPOSITION TO INTEGRATION IS ACTUALLY THE OVERWHELMING VOICE OF THE MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF THESE CHILDREN, THOSE MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED. THEIR OBJECTION IS IN NO SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE OR LAWLESSNESS ON THEIR PART, THEY ARE SINCERE, PATRIOTIC AND LAW ABIDING CITIZENS. TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS FOR A PATTERN OF SEPARATE SOCIAL AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE RACES HAVE BEEN HANDLED DOWN FROM MOTHER TO DAUGHTER, FROM FATHER TO SON.

THIS PATTERN HAS AFFORDED GENERATIONS OF PEACEFUL AND HARMONIOUS COOPERATION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE TWO RACES. THESE TRADITIONS CANNOT BE ERASED BY COURT ORDERS, NOT SWEEPED ASIDE BY FORCE. I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR YOUR SINCERE DESIRE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE AND YOUR DEEP CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL CITIZENS. TO GET THE TRUE FACTS AND TO CHART ANY SOUND COURSE OF ACTION, I BELIEVE YOU MUST SEEK INFORMATION AND ADVICE BEYOND YOUR ORDINARY CHANNELS. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT YOU SELECT A GROUP OF TWENTY OR MORE PERSONAL ADVISORS IN EACH SOUTHERN STATE, REQUESTING EACH OF THEM TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH A MINIMUM OF

FIFTY SCHOOL PATRONS, AND THEN TO REPORT THEIR COLLECTIVE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS DIRECTLY TO YOU. I PLEAD FOR YOUR EARNEST PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THESE FACTS. ANY DECISION ON YOUR PART FOR ACTION IN THE PRESENT CRISIS WHICH FAILS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE BASIC DESIRES AND FIRM CONVICTIONS OF THOSE MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED WILL PLAGUE OUR NATION FOR GENERATIONS TO COME, COMPLETELY WIPING OUT PROGRESS MADE THUS FAR IN PEACEFUL AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO RACES, AND TOTALLY DESTROYING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. RESPECTFULLY YOURS

JOHN STENNIS UNITED STATES SENATOR.