

The original documents are located in Box 35, “6/24/76 - Television Message Upon Proposing to Congress the School Desegregation Standards and Assistance Act of 1976” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT'S TELEVISION MESSAGE

PRESIDENT'S TELEVISION MESSAGE ON BUSING

JUNE 24, 1976

TO MANY AMERICANS, BUSING APPEARS THE ONLY WAY TO
ACHIEVE THE EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY SO LONG DENIED THEM.

TO MANY OTHER AMERICANS, BUSING APPEARS TO
RESTRICT THEIR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THE BEST SCHOOL
FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO ATTEND.

IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF
THE CONGRESS, TO SEEK A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM / - A SOLUTION
TRUE TO OUR COMMON BELIEFS IN CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL AMERICANS,
INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM FOR EVERY AMERICAN, AND THE BEST POSSIBLE
PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN.

TODAY I AM SENDING LEGISLATION TO THE CONGRESS WHICH
I BELIEVE OFFERS SUCH A SOLUTION.

I ASK THE CONGRESS TO JOIN WITH ME IN ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES

FOR THE LOWER FEDERAL COURTS TO FOLLOW. BUSING AS A

REMEDY OUGHT TO BE THE LAST RESORT; AND IT OUGHT TO BE

LIMITED IN DURATION; AND IN SCOPE TO CORRECTING THE EFFECTS

OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS.

legislative

THESE GUIDELINES ARE DRAWN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF

THE CONSTITUTION.

I BELIEVE EVERY AMERICAN COMMUNITY SHOULD DESEGREGATE

ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.

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THEREFORE I AM PROPOSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE
COMPOSED OF CITIZENS WHO HAVE HAD COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE
IN SCHOOL DESEGREGATION, AND WHO ARE WILLING TO ASSIST
OTHER COMMUNITIES IN VOLUNTARILY DESEGREGATING THEIR
SCHOOLS.

CITIZENS GROUPS I HAVE CONSULTED ON BOTH SIDES OF
THE BUSING ISSUE HAVE TOLD ME SUCH A COMMITTEE WOULD BE A
WELCOME RESOURCE TO COMMUNITIES WHICH FACE UP TO THE ISSUE
HONESTLY, VOLUNTARILY AND IN THE BEST SPIRIT OF AMERICAN
DEMOCRACY.

CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED THAT BY SUBMITTING
THIS BILL AT THIS TIME, WE RISK ENCOURAGING THOSE WHO ARE
RESISTING COURT-ORDERED DESEGREGATION - SOMETIMES TO THE
POINT OF VIOLENCE.

LET ME STATE HERE AND NOW THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION
WILL NOT TOLERATE UNLAWFUL SEGREGATION.

WE WILL ACT SWIFTLY AND EFFECTIVELY AGAINST ANYONE

WHO ENGAGES IN VIOLENCE.

THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL DO WHATEVER IT MUST TO

PRESERVE ORDER AND TO PROTECT THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF

OUR CITIZENS.

THE PURPOSE OF SUBMITTING THIS LEGISLATION NOW IS

TO PLACE THE DEBATE ON THIS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE IN THE HALLS OF

CONGRESS / A RESPONSIBLE AND ORDERLY DEBATE WITHIN THE

DEMOCRATIC PROCESS -- AND NOT ON THE STREETS OF OUR CITIES.

END OF TEXT