

WASHINGTON REPORTS - - -

to STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Office of Field Operations, Washington, D.C. 20425

November and December 1975

Dear Advisory Committee Member:

The Commissioners in November announced the new 10-month agencywide study on school desegregation. This special emphasis project - and others I anticipate will follow it - meets some of the need, expressed by Advisory Committee Chairpersons during the August conference, for more coordinated efforts between Advisory Committees and the Commission, for more focus in the utilization of resources, and for more centralized planning.

Chairman Arthur Flemming and Staff Director John Buggs discussed the project with many of you during the three regional conferences held in November. In early December, Chairman Flemming wrote to all Advisory Committee members outlining the new study. You should have received this communication, so I will only briefly describe the schedule for Advisory Committee-regional office projects.

Originally, Advisory Committees were asked to participate in 40 case studies of school districts and 6 open meetings. The schedule now calls for a minimum of 24 case studies - 3 in each region - and 4 open meetings. Sites for open meetings will be selected from recommendations made by the regional office directors in consultation with Advisory Committee Chairpersons.

The basis for the case studies is a questionnaire which was submitted to regional offices for comment in late November. Refinements were made in response to that review as well as to suggestions and criticisms of members of the education subcommittees in the six-State Mid-Atlantic Region (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia).

The interview guides and selection criteria have been submitted to the office of Management and Budget for approval. Gregg Jackson, Kathleen Buto, and James Corey, the Commission team assigned to coordinate the case studies, will conduct three training sessions for Advisory Committee members and regional office staff who will conduct interviews. These training sessions are scheduled as follows:

January 12-13: Washington, D.C.  
 January 15-16: Chicago  
 January 18-19: Denver

The training sessions will set out the basic issues and provide the format for the case study reports and the open meetings. Training material will be mailed to participants in mid-December. Field work on case studies will be conducted in late January and early February, and reports will be due in the Office of Field Operations in March. Open meetings will be scheduled for late March and early April, and final reports will be due in June for incorporation in the Commission's report scheduled for release in August.

During their December meeting, the Commissioners accepted the Kansas Advisory Committee report, Availability of Credit to Kansas Women, and the Florida Advisory Committee report, Toward Police/Community Detente in Jacksonville. They also approved additional appointments to the Kentucky and Alabama Advisory Committees.

During the past several weeks, the Commission has testified on several bills in Congress. Chairman Flemming presented testimony prior to House-passed legislation which would extend the benefits of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974. The Senate is also considering legislation to expand provisions of the act to prevent creditors from denying credit on the basis of race, age, religion, national origin, receipt of public assistance, or political affiliation. Staff Director Buggs testified on the Bilingual Courts Act before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights. Deputy Staff Director Louis Nunez appeared before the Senate Subcommittee on Communications regarding proposed Federal Communications Commission rules on equal employment opportunity.

Advisory Committee members from 21 States participated in the three regional conferences held in November. The Western Regional Conference was held in Las Vegas, Nev. November 7-8 for the seven States of that region - Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. California Lt. Gov. Mervyn Dymally, who served for 13 years on the California Advisory Committee, was a featured speaker.

A total of 45 Advisory Committee members attended the North-eastern Regional Conference November 14-16 in Woburn, Mass. They represented the eight States of that region including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode

Island, and Vermont. Staff Director Buggs met with the group during their opening session to discuss the Commission's school desegregation effort.

Chairman Flemming, Staff Director Buggs, Deputy Staff Director Louis Nunez met with Advisory Committee members attending the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference in Washington, D.C. November 16-18.

As part of its ongoing investigation of the problems of Native Americans, the Arizona Advisory Committee conducted 4 days of informal hearings November 17-21. Meeting 2 days in Flagstaff and 2 days in Tucson, the Advisory Committee heard testimony on the administration of justice as it affects American Indians in the off-reservation areas of Arizona.

The Michigan Advisory Committee held its third informal hearing November 12-13 in its examination of the civil rights implications of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The Advisory Committee, meeting in Sault Ste. Marie, looked at the services and public improvements made available through the act to the city's sizeable Native American community. The Advisory Committee's first report on Livonia has been printed, and a second report on the phase-out of Model Cities programs in eight Michigan cities will be ready for publication in early 1976.

The Hon. Franklin P. Williams, New York Advisory Committee Chairperson and Regional Director Jacques Wilmore have met New York City officials to discuss the effect of recent and proposed city personnel cuts on minorities and women. Although they did not have this information at hand, the two city officials promised to supply data on terminations by race, ethnicity, and sex.

Dr. A.B. Britton, Chairperson of the Mississippi Advisory Committee, was recently honored with the Pathfinder Award of Project Media, a group of black communication professionals in Mississippi. Dr. Britton was cited for his efforts in furthering the employment of blacks in local media.

Julius Bernstein, Chairperson of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee, has been active in civil rights for a quarter of a century. A year ago, his friends paid him tribute at a testimonial dinner in Boston. Since many of his friends in the three northern States were unable to attend that dinner, on November 22 of this year they held "Northern New England's Tribute to Bernstein" in Concord, N.H.

The New Mexico Advisory Committee report, "Indian Employment in New Mexico State Government," was released November 12 in Albuquerque. The report is a followup to the Commission's Southwest Indian Report issued in 1973.

Gary Jackson, member of the Colorado Advisory Committee, was a recipient of the U.S. Attorney General's Special Commendation for Service award. The award was presented in Washington, D.C. December 11. Mr. Jackson is an assistant U.S. Attorney from Denver.

State Senator Pam Fargo, member of the North Dakota Advisory Committee, was recently elected Chairwoman of the Business Advisory Council for the Dakota Association of Native Americans.

As followup to the New Jersey Advisory Committee's investigation of participation by Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics in federally funded manpower programs, meetings have been held with Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson. Mayor Gibson has agreed to increase Hispanic participation as staff and clients in manpower programs and to increase their participation in all city employment. The mayor also recommended a meeting with the Newark Human Rights Commission to discuss ways to improve Hispanic participation in all city agencies and activities.

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ISAIAH T. CRESWELL  
Assistant Staff Director  
for Field Operations

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