



AMERICAN G I FORUM OF THE U.S.

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Honorable John Tower
U.S. Senator from Texas
Office of the U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Tower:

Persons who are not experienced or involved in the school segregation and discrimination of Mexican American children in the Southwest and specially in Texas often make statements as:

1. I approve of good schools for all children concerned. Separate and equal schools are fine.
2. The neighborhood plans of school zoning is a very fundamental American democratic principle. Free choice is the answer.
3. I am for integration of all children provided there is no bussing or breaking up of the neighborhood concept.

Those of us who have been fighting school discrimination and segregation of Mexican American children for over 25 years are appalled and surprised at the naivety and ignorance of public officials making such statements.

Suffice it to say that the whole pattern of school segregation and discrimination of the Mexican American child has always been illegal and unconstitutional even by the "Texas Constitution" that merely stated there will be separate schools for the "Blacks".

The neighborhood concept, free choice, separate schools, gerrymandering of school districts have always been used and are still being used in Texas and in the Southwest United States to perpetuate the segregation of Mexican American children. This has not only been accepted by the Texas Education Agency but has also been stated by every federal court and the United States Supreme Court hearing such cases.

I am enclosing a report of the Texas Department of Health and their investigation of such three schools in Corpus Christi, Texas the survey having been done on June 29, 1971. Please read the report in detail.

These three schools, the Austin Elementary, the De Zavala, and the Southgate are in a shocking state. All three are fire hazards and health hazards. These are typical schools that are a product and result of the above ennumerated policies. It is a great shame that all of us specially public officials have condoned such schools for the Mexican children.

Note that in all three schools some of them over 30 years old, there is not a "single hydrant of hot running water". This is not the exception but rather

it is the typical example of the damage that has been done to the education, life, and state of mind of the Mexican American child by the educational system of Texas and the Southwest.

The American G I Forum, LULACS, Gustavo Garcia, Dr. George I. Sanchez and myself have been exposing these shameful conditions for over 25 years. Our voices have been unheard by the state officials. Our petitions have been written off as irrelevant and unnecessary. Our documentation has been tagged as coming from "trouble makers" or worse.

Yet today in 1971, the conditions of the education of the Mexican American child is only slightly better than 25 years ago. We are still victims of "de facto and de jure segregation".

Please read the report and let me know what answer you have for such conditions. Who is responsible? Why have the health authorities and the fire departments tolerated such horrible conditions? Why have the state officers and the Texas elected officers to the U.S. Congress not passed legislation to stop this exploitation?

What is it that you can do to help such statewide and Southwest wide school systems? I am not an elective official but I feel that I must keep on seeking a solution to give the Mexican American child better education. You must join me in this responsibility.

It is easy when the other side, and the Concerned Parents ask you to oppose "bussing" or "forced bussing" to listen to them, but bussing is not the issue. The issue is the poor school system in Texas and the Southwest that have produced such a poor level of education and attainment of the Mexican American child.

Before anymore public statements are made by public officials concerning "bussing" I am asking you to solve the main statewide problem of such schools, as Austin, Zavala, and Southgate which are typical in Texas.

Do not be only concerned with affluent and articulate "Concerned Parents" but be concerned with the horrible indictment of the system of which you and I have been either silent parents or willing partners.

Perhaps a congressional investigation is in order of the statewide educational system. For documentation you not only have the enclosed report but also you can find this information in may U.S. Commission on Civil Rights books specifically: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights "Mexican American Education Study" dated August 1971 Report 1 "Ethnic Isolation of Mexican Americans in Public Schools of the Southwest".

If there is any way in which we can help you with this sad situation please feel free to call on us. I am submitting this letter to ask you for help. Please help the Mexican American children.

Respectfully submitted,

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Founder

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