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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN DIEGO

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Statement to the Board Of Education, August 14, 1973, presented by Joyce Beers, President, League Of Women Voters Of San Diego

The League Of Women Voters of San Diego wishes to clarify our recent involvement as petitioners in a state-wide lawsuit regarding the use of public funds in the replacement of pre-Field Act schools. The League has a long history of committment to integration and to equal educational opportunity. Over the past 10 years we have appeared before the Board of Education to express our positions on quality education and our support of local positive action and leadership to eliminate defacto segregation in the schools.

It is difficult, therefore, to understand how anyone familiar with the process of League decision-making and the history of our efforts can dismiss our latest action in this area as "irresponsible". The League considers litigation as a viable, dynamic process for making the nation's laws live and function. It is one of the strategies for citizens to use, and in some cases it may be the only strategy to get results. The courts exist to serve the people, but unlike other branches of government, courts can't initiate corrective efforts. It is the responsibility of organizations such as ours to recognize that litigation is a tool for change and go to the courts in the public interest to achieve that change.

A summary of the facts of the case in which we are involved along with the NAACP, Western Region and CURE and individuals is attached. The suit is asking that the State Allocation Board apportion funds only after receiving assurance from a local school district applicant that the proposed project will not promote or perpetuate racial or ethnic segration. The Allocation Board has maintained that Proposition 21 repealed the laws which would required this.

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Some lower court rulings have declared that Proposition 21 violates the guarantee of equal protection of the laws found in the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution and provisions of the California Constitution. The final decision will most likely rest with the State Supreme Court within the next few months.

The League of Women Voters of San Diego wishes to assure you of our continued support for quality education for all of the children of San Diego. In working with the city to develop and promote a balenced housing policy we are recognizing the responsibility of the total community to work toward permanent solutions to segregated living patterns.

We sincerely hope that the Board of Education will give its best efforts to developing programs which will insure equal educational opportunity for all children who will attend the schools to be rebuilt with state funds for pre-Field Act schools