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Statement to the Board of Education
August 14, 1973 - CURE

Citizens United for Racial Equality joined in the suit to petition the court to compel the State Allocation Board to insure that public funds now being allocated by it for school construction not be used to perpetuate racial and ethnic segregation. CURE joined for the following reasons:

The School Board was put on notice of its responsibilities concerning segregation and the resulting unequal education that ensues by the Supreme Court decision in 1954. Since that date the courts have moved inexorably to broaden that decision and to nullify the argument that there is such a thing as de facto segregation for which the school board is not responsible.

In 1964 Congress passed the Civil Rights Act which gave further emphasis to solving racial problems, including school segregation. The State has also passed legislation aimed at preventing and reducing racial segregation. In response to this legislation the State Attorney General brought suit against the Board in 1969 to require it to reduce racial imbalance.

The Pupil Ethnic Survey and Test Results by School, data collected by the school administration, clearly show San Diego schools to be segregated and the results of segregated education to be unequal. The U. S. Civil Rights Commission called attention to the segregation in San Diego Schools in 1965. In 1966 the Board appointed Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities confirmed that serious racial imbalance was denying students an equal education and made thirty nine recommendations to correct these conditions. In 1967 a County Grand Jury study reaffirmed previous findings of segregation and unequal opportunity and recommended reducing racial imbalance.

In 1963 the San Diego Chapter of the NAACP submitted recommendations to the board for reducing school segregation. Since then numerous citizens and citizen groups have appeared regularly before the School Board calling attention to the problem, suggesting solutions, and urging action. In addition many of these same citizens and citizen groups have met with Board members and members of the school administration privately to discuss the problem, suggest solutions and even offer help. CURE and the League of Women Voters have been very active in this respect. In 1967 a group of t en racially mixed children brought suit against the Board to correct the problems of

segregation, a suit still pending.

The School Board has not been unresponsive. In 1965 they adopted a resolution "to exert all effort to avoid and elminate segregation." They did appoint the Lindsley committee, (Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities) and have implemented some of the 39 recommendations. They did establish a voluntary ethnic transfer policy. They did establish the Silvergate-Fremont program. They did oppose Proposition 21.

In summary, the courts have clearly and regularly pointed to the School Boards responsibility to reduce and eliminate segregation. State and Federal legislation has given further support and direction. Citizens and citizen groups have continuously offered suggestions and urged action. And not least, the Board has acknowledged the problem through their policy statements and actions.

The point is that the Board has long been aware of the problem and on notice to take action. CURE's action is not percipitate. The Board's action has been slow.

It should be noted that the School Board has had almost 40 years to deal with the problem of pre-Field Act school buildings. They have had almost 20 years to deal with the problem of segregation. The pre-Field Act schools threaten grievous harm to students. Segregated schools have demonstrably harmed students, and still are. Both are painfully serious problems. But the School Board has moved hesitantly and ineffectively. Now there is an opportunity to use the same funds to work towards reducing both problems. There is an opportunity for these funds to do double duty. CURE feels that it is irresponsible not to make these funds do double duty. It is irresponsible to permit one demonstrable harm to continue, while reducing one potential harm, when both problems can be reduced with the same funds.

CURE joined the suit because appeals and suggestions over a long period of time have not been responded to effectively. Both problems can be reduced with the same funds. A choice does not have to be made between them. Because it is our understanding that the law required that the funds be used in this way, we are now turning to the law to seek justice.