

Richmond, Virginia 23234
August 15, 1975

RECEIVED
AUG 19 1975
MAYOR'S OFFICE

Honorable Kevin White
Mayor
Boston, Massachusetts.

Dear Mayor White:

I am very sorry to hear of all the trouble you are having with racial integration. It is a bit ironic that laws passed by our august federal judges, who are supposed to be the epitomy of justice, end up having even more of an unjust result.

Here in Richmond we citizens are in the unique (and I believe the only) position of not having had a city council election since 1970 because of our supposed illegal annexation of a portion of the county. This annexation was of mostly white citizens thus supposedly diluting the black vote of the city proper citizens. I am one of those citizens of the "occupied territory" or annexed area. The 300% increase in property taxes was bad enough, but the worst offense is "forced bussing" eleven miles across to an all black section of town for the sake of integration. There are schools one and two miles up the road.

Have we had integration? Not really. What has really happened is resegregation. The whites who have money, or who were able to borrow it, put their children in private schools. Many more people just plain moved out of the city. So the black ratio in our schools is about 8 to 2. The learning and teaching status? Well, that leaves much to be desired in a lot of public schools, but ours is even more negative. As one teacher told me, she has all she can do to keep some resemblance of order in her class, let alone do a good job of teaching. My three youngest children who still attend public schools sound more like black "jive" kids than the blacks; when they imitate their school peers. I have had to really assert my maternal authority in making my kids stop from using all those jive terms and improper language.

You cannot take a youngster and put him in school for 5-6 hours a day and expect to change the home ethnic background and culture to which he is exposed at home for the remaining 24 hours. The neighborhood school concept has been destroyed; loss of the sense of security which emitted from that area is not really conducive to our youngsters already facing enough problems of change which is typical of our contemporary family life style. Too bad the persons making all these decisions are persons who are too old to have any young children, or who themselves have children in private schools. (Witness your Senator Ted Kennedy, a strong proponent of forced bussing.)

Several months ago, a young white child was playing on the school grounds when a youngster, 17 years old, who was supposed to be shooting at "pigeons" struck the child in the head with a bullet. The girl survived with paralysis on one side and other disabilities. The hospital cost was tremendous as will be the ensuing therapy. This does not include the personal anguish of herself and her family. My son was getting off his bus at this time and it could have been him instead, or just as easily. About 4 weeks later, a white boy was beat up badly in the basement of that same school by 2 black boys from that neighborhood. My own son was roughed up when he went to the bathroom, in the basement of the school, the only one they have.

All this money that is spent in the name of integration could be more profitably applied to teacher increased salaries, better schools and equipment. PTA's and other local citizen interest in schools of the "neighborhood" is just about gone. I wouldn't attempt to go to the black area of town where my son's school is; I'm a coward, especially at night. I do not have the same cultural interests though I respect the blacks for theirs. My children are not too happy about having "Black History" shoved down their throat. I did explain that the blacks had to learn white history but that doesn't always satisfy my independent thinking children. Granted my kids have made friends with their black peers, but that was taught them at home. My own interests do not know any racial lines; I can eat, ride, learn and socialize with blacks as readily as with white persons. And there are cop-outs in all races.

The incidents I stated at my son's school were politically termed "not racial." Well, not really. But if that young girl would not have been forced to go to a school in an all black area, she would not have been shot. And an air of hostility does prevail amongst ^{some of} the young black students who go to school in that area, as it does amongst the many other youngsters who do not go to school and are out to get "a crack at the honkies." Racial incidents? What ~~else~~ ^{else} in the name of heaven can you call it? When are the politicians who sit in air-conditioned offices, drive in expensive chauffeured cars paid for by the tax-payers, engage in parties beyond the normal sensible costs, and all other means of political rip-off, when are those persons going to start to identify with their constituents and not just ^{with} the lobbyists?

The southern states have had this forced bussing and integration shoved down their throats; now that the Northern states are getting the same treatment, I do believe the "shoe fits too tightly." I do not envy you your job when school starts, and wish you and your city the best of luck. Whether you accomplish integration, or re-segregation, or not, it will not go down easily. I know the Irish and I honestly don't blame them for fighting something that is "poured down their Irish beer mugs." Hopefully your situation will result in some sort of saner plan of integration.

Lest you think I'm a southern bigot, just running my mouth, allow me to state that I moved to Richmond from Reading, Pennsylvania nine years ago. No southern belle am I, but a damned disgusted transplanted Yankee. There really is a dual type of federal evaluation for southern and northern states.

Again, the best of luck, patience and prayers in the days to come.

Mother of seven, grandmother of one,
and an Irish-Slovak transplanted Yankee
who really loves the city of Richmond.

Isn't also a lousy typist!

Busing

August 20, 1975

Mrs. [REDACTED]

Richmond, Virginia 23234

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED]

Thank you very much for your letter about the problems of busing in Richmond.

I understand your views quite well... as you know I do not favor busing, but am equally committed to the goals of quality and equal education and am doing all I can to uphold the Federal Court order.

The violence that has accompanied busing in Boston and other cities is unfortunate and senseless. What we must hope for is that the views of citizens such as yourself, who may disagree with a law but will not resort to violence to oppose it, will prevail, so that citizens may sit together to work for a better way.

I, like yourself, have the safety of our school children foremost in my mind, and have been preparing all summer to prevent outburst of violence this fall.

Thanks again for your letter.. I appreciate both your prayers and wishes for good luck.

Sincerely,

Kevin H. White
Mayor

KHW/T