

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Craddock  
Vice Chairman Foley  
Mr. Beyer  
Mr. Coulter  
Mrs. Hayes  
Mr. Horn  
Mr. Malone  
Mr. Rackley  
Mr. Vergiels

GUESTS PRESENT: Assemblyman Bennett  
Assemblyman Chaney  
Shirley Holst, Clark County School Board  
Chuck Neely, Clark County School Board  
Lovell Gaines, Las Vegas NAACP  
Ed Vogel, Review-Journal, Las Vegas

Chairman Craddock called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m., and noted this was a continuation hearing on AJR 35.

AJR 35 Calls on Congress to submit an amendment to the Constitution to eliminate school busing for integration.

Chairman Craddock noted a telegram received from Mr. & Mrs. Roy Dupree, Mrs. Ernestine Mcullah and Mrs. Alice Moore urging a no vote on AJR 35.

Shirley Holst, Clark County School Board Trustee, said she was testifying not to show support or lack of support for this measure, she simply wanted to make a statement concerning the Clark County School District Board. She said their main concern was that every child in Clark County had an opportunity for good education.

She continued: "That's what we're going to be looking at no matter what kind of program comes up. We currently have a six grade center program where children are bused in to one area and out of another area. Currently, Virginia Brewster is heading a committee to look at this program. What this committee's recommendation will be when they are through studying the situation, I do not know. But I just want you to know that the main concern of the school district is an opportunity for all of the children to get a good education."

Mr. Coulter asked if she liked the bill or did not like the bill. Mrs. Holst replied that she could not really respond to that because it was only asking the Federal Government to adopt an amendment. If they do adopt an amendment, then she could respond, she said.

Mr. Coulter further questioned her on her opinion of the measure and Chairman Craddock interjected that he thought she was saying it was out of line for her to express an opinion outside of that committee that was appointed to study the situation.

Mrs. Holst agreed, saying anything she could say personally at this time would be inappropriate.

Vice Chairman Foley asked Mrs. Holst if she thought the children were getting a better education since the six grade centers have been in effect. Mrs. Holst replied that she thought they now have a better opportunity for education and this may or may not have been true before; she was not on the Board then.

Vice Chairman Foley asked if the centers were changed back, would those schools on the westside deteriorate back to the condition that Assemblyman Chaney had described in earlier testimony as very pathetic shape. Mrs. Holst said she could not answer that question and noted that other schools in other areas had been in that same circumstance, such as the small school in Whitney, so all of the schools are not alike. She said she could not answer about maintenance but felt the main concern of the school board is to not let any of their schools deteriorate from any condition they are now in.

Ms. Foley asked how the white families in Mrs. Holst's community felt about the six grade centers. Mrs. Holst replied that the bus ride is inconvenient, but as far as the education, she has had no complaints. The parents have assured her that the children are getting a good education at the centers. She said that they have to realize just how far Paradise Valley is from the centers.

Mrs. Hayes said that her own children have had many more opportunities since attending the six grade centers such as band.

Mr. Malone said this is all great, but why are the other schools not brought up to these standards, since they have said that all of the schools are treated equally. Mrs. Holst responded that there is no way you can make the schools equal because you are in a constant state of building new schools. She said it is very difficult to bring an old school up to the standards of a new school in the district.

Mr. Lovell Gaines, Las Vegas NAACP, told the committee he wanted to refute a statement from the Review-Journal that the local chapter of NAACP was supporting this resolution. He said this is totally untrue.

Mr. Gaines continued that he thought the kids in Las Vegas have begun to intermingle with each other, making strong social citizens, productive citizens, by intermingling with each other at an early age. They have grown with each other.

Mr. Gaines said our biggest concern should be that the children are receiving a good education in the three R's and oral communication. That's what Nevadans want, he said, they are different from other states. He said there is harmony now and he hoped no one would try to ruin this with a political issue.

He said we should be concerned with more teacher training, more education in multicultural areas, and education relationship between the teacher and the student. He said there are a lot more large problems than busing to be worrying about. He said busing is the price they have to pay to gain equality of education in Nevada.

Mr. Gaines said they are for busing -- it is the only tool they have at this time. He said this is the best they have had and they should try to improve upon what they have, and stopping busing is not an improvement. He said let's not turn back thirty years.

Mr. Malone asked if he had any specific suggestions for improvement besides continuing busing. Mr. Gaines said he did not have any specific suggestions, just continue to see that they receive the best education in the basics.

Assemblyman Marion Bennett, District 6, said he was head of the NAACP for six years in Clark County. He said during his six years the primary goal was quality education for all people, but especially for the poor and oppressed people in Clark County.

He said there have never been other than elementary schools on the westside and the children there were experiencing an 80-90% failure rate. He said not even looking at the buildings, the educational materials were appalling, and it was very difficult to retain a teacher for a full year there. He said they had to get their children to the schools where quality education was being given.

Mr. Bennett said that 24,000 students in Clark County are now being bused and you hear nothing about that, but when it is done for integration purposes, you hear about it. He said if anyone should be complaining about busing, it should be the Black community because they are bused for eleven years.

He said his daughter has always been bused and she is now a more balanced person and is holding her own at the university.

He said that as soon as busing was started, all kinds of money was spent on enrichment at their schools because other children would now be attending there. He said you would not believe what happened overnight. He said the achievement level of the Black children is now up and the busing is just a price they have to pay for that.

He said we do not live in a Black or a White world, and the earlier these kids come to respect a person for a person and be judged on the content of their character and their ability as opposed to color, we all will be a lot better off.

Mr. Bennett said the Black people were at the front line in Viet Nam, their bones are at the bottom of every major sea from battles, they are equal in that way but when it comes to education they are not. When it comes to getting a quality education so that they can participate in the so called democratic society, he said, the Black people are held back in isolation somewhere.

He said it costs about \$189 per year per student to insure they have a good education and a balanced life. He said it is a small fee to pay for this and let's not cut it off now.

Mr. Bennett concluded saying the biggest problem is the fear of the unknown. These children must be brought up together so that they can live in the world together as adults.

Considerable discussion followed with the committee and Mr. Bennett.

Dr. Chuck Neely, Clark County School District, said that the school buildings are now different as has been brought out in previous testimony. He said, though, that if you look back at all of the district buildings, Clark County was growing at a rapid rate and new schools were being built as fast as possible rather than money being put into school grounds for instance. He said many school grounds were improved due to a joint effort by the city and the school district to initiate neighborhood parks, not specifically due to school monies. He said now that the growth rate is down, they have concentrated on improving the older schools instead of building new ones. He said all programs have been improved, not just the six grade centers.

Vice Chairman Foley asked how soon the schools were upgraded after the new monies arrived. Dr. Neely said that a committee made up a schedule with the priority being of helping the greatest number of students first.

Mrs. Hayes asked if there were any plans that Dr. Neely knew of for a junior high or high school on the westside. Dr. Neely said not at this time, it has been discussed, but at the present time there are no plans to build a school there.

Dr. Neely further clarified that he had heard there was a desire to have a school there, but that there were greater needs in other parts of the area such as the new Chapparral School in Paradise Valley where growth has been greater there. He said the population of the westside area has actually decreased. He said the district responsibility is to assign all students to schools within the district and their records show that the Black population within the westside is decreasing. He said the district is becoming naturally integrated because the Black population is growing in other areas and they are being served by those schools.

Assemblyman Lonie Chaney briefly spoke to the committee to thank the committee for continuing the hearing on this measure to obtain as much information from the community as possible. He said their main concern is that the resolution addresses busing for integration, not all busing in general.

Vice Chairman Foley asked if Mr. Bennett could answer the question on how the schools changed due to busing. Mr. Bennett said that immediately upon losing the court battle, the schools were refurbished with crews working 24 hours to get the work done as fast as possible so the new children could attend there. He said this was after the westside schools were going to all be closed and they went to court to get an injunction to leave them open.

Mr. Coulter asked if the committee was ready for a motion on the resolution. Chairman Craddock said that more testimony would be taken tomorrow first. 279

(Committee Minutes)