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HA 7-7722

February 24, 1964

Honorable Everett M. Dirksen  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C.

Dear Senator Dirksen:

This week debate begins in the Senate on the omnibus civil rights bill. Until recently, little detailed information was available to the public on the proposed legislation. Of course, in certain quarters, much was made of it as a curative for most of our social ills from discrimination on ethnic grounds to unemployment and poverty (for which President Johnson has the government decked out in full battle dress).

After reading some of the now available material on the fine points of the bill (the recent series of articles and editorials in the Chicago Tribune for example), I feel that some searching questions need to be asked and answered.

One of the most obvious flaws in the bill is its ambiguity. It lacks a satisfactory definition of "discrimination" and of "civil rights." Can so-called civil rights really be defined? I feel that they can be in a limited way, and it is in the limited areas where the federal government has most of its proper authority. It is the right of everyone to have access to schools, parks, and other facilities wholly supported by public funds and to the voting booth.

The attempt to extend federal jurisdiction by arguing that anything touched by federal monies comes under federal

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control is fraudulent, unconstitutional, and dangerous.

You are on record as opposing Title II of the bill for these reasons. I maintain that the entire bill should be opposed for the same reasons. Every section of the bill indicates to me motives more political than social. It calls for the establishment of a commission here, a study group there, and the showering of great quantities of funds on almost any community, group, or individual who can claim even a remote concern with so-called civil rights.

The really shocking thing about the bill, however, is that in opposing "discrimination" it discriminates. Under the title covering discrimination in employment, the bill states that an employer may not deny someone a job on the bases of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, etc. It goes on to state, however, that employment may be denied an atheist, a Communist, or a person listed by the Attorney General as subversive. I can understand the latter two, but to deny someone protection because he does not have a religion and to do it under the law is appalling. Freedom of religion must include freedom from religion.

There is no doubt that such needs to be done in the area of civil rights. But this bill succeeds only in extending federal powers in the most brazenly unconstitutional way. True, minorities are guaranteed protection from the majority, but the majority deserves protection from minority legislation such as this which, in the long run, will be detrimental to both.

Sincerely,

*Bruce Butterfield*

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