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Civil Rights file

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

CARL MARCY, CHIEF OF STAFF
DARRELL ST. CLAIRE, CLERK

May 23, 1963

The Honorable Everett McKinley Dirksen
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Everett:

Today, Senator Cooper and I will introduce two civil rights bills.

We would very much like to have you join with us as a co-sponsor of either one or both of these proposals.

The first bill is intended to implement the 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka. It would authorize the Attorney General, upon receipt of a written allegation, on oath or affirmation, to institute a civil action against any person who deprives or threatens to deprive any individual of the right of equal protection of the laws with respect to public school attendance.

It is 9 years since the Supreme Court ruled that all qualified persons, regardless of race, color, religion or national origin, have a right to attend desegregated public schools. The actual application of this ruling has been disappointing, however, and a recent Civil Rights Commission report states that of some 3 million Negro students in all 11 Southern states, less than 12,000 attend desegregated schools.

Giving the Attorney General this authority to institute suits, should help considerably in speeding up the desegregation of public schools.

The second bill is concerned with public accommodations, and would prohibit discrimination against persons seeking to patronize businesses, operating under a state license, which hold themselves out as offering for sale to the public food, goods, accommodations, facilities or transportation.

Under this proposal, the Attorney General would be authorized to initiate suits in the Federal courts to secure the rights of persons who are subject to discrimination in hotels, theaters, restaurants and other businesses licensed by the respective states.

The text of each bill will be printed in today's Congressional Record, as will our introductory remarks and a brief explanation of their main provisions.

Senator Cooper and I decided on a definite date to introduce the two bills only a few days ago. Since we did not have a chance to get in touch with each Senator in this short time, we will request that the bills be left at the desk until May 31. Please have one of your assistants call Miss Wegner (Extension 2434) if you would like to be a co-sponsor.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



THOMAS J. DODD

TJD:wf