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Bussing Statement

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'No Way to Avoid It'

Editor—On Monday extensive busing will be introduced into the San Francisco School system. There is no way, at this time, to avoid it. A federal court has issued its order, a stay of that order has been denied by the United States Supreme Court.

The only question before us now is how we accept the rule of law. That question is of particular significance today because violence is in the air. It has struck other cities where extensive school busing has been inaugurated. But violence and defiance of state law and federal orders simply cannot be tolerated in San Francisco.

Anyone who encourages defiance of law at this point in our history must accept the moral responsibility for any damage to our children. And anyone who ignores his duty to support the rule of law will be equally culpable.

Violations of the compulsory education law are not "soft crimes." All crimes against children are "hard crimes," and that is especially the case when children are deprived in any way of an education.

Our children should not be made the tools of a political disagreement or their classrooms the battleground for ideological conflict.

Although defiance must be dealt with sternly, it should not be confused with dissent. The neighborhood school has been an integral part of the fabric of our society and its virtues are manifest.

Those who wish to preserve that institution should be encouraged not to defy the law but to seek their ends through every legal means available to them. The courts remain one such avenue.

Judge Weigel's ruling is now on appeal to the United States Court of Appeals, where it is being vigorously prosecuted in favor of the neighborhood school, by the City.

If that appeal should prove unsuccessful, the City fully intends to take the matter to the United States Supreme Court.

The courts are not the only means for constructive dissent. All that the Constitution requires are racially integrated schools. No particular busing plan is mandatory.

Parents who are dissatisfied with the plan adopted by the Board of Education should actively seek amendment of that plan.

If the school board is unresponsive, then the citizens can move to get a new school board, be it appointed or elected.

And, of course, we can all continue to work to eliminate the racial barriers which exist in this City. If this City were residentially-integrated racially, there would have been no conceivable excuse for the school busing order . . .

When Monday arrives, this City can, I am confident, accept the rule of law and pursue a course of constructive dissent.

San Franciscans must demonstrate to the rest of the nation that the rule of law will prevail, even when its consequences are distasteful to large numbers of people.

San Francisco has to assume that position of leadership because we are a City with a long tradition for tolerance, boldness and the ability to turn adversity to our advantage.

GEORGE MOSCONE

State Senator
San Francisco