



AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, INC.

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Employment on Merit Program
NOYES COLLINSON, Director

Southeastern Regional Office
1818 S. Main St.
High Point, N. C.

12 June 1967

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Atlanta Community Relations Program
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia

Att: Irving Kaler
Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen:

May we direct your attention to the attached "Cities, Jobs & Houses", with special reference to the marked passage. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) programs are concerned with the elimination of these practices which hurt or mar the individual, offend his dignity or deprive him of the opportunity to achieve his God-given potential.

In Atlanta AFSC has recently added a new dimension to its Employment on Merit program, now in its sixth year of operation--a Fair Housing or Open Occupancy program. Experience demonstrates that in increasing instances compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity mandates of Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, is blocked by discriminatory practices. Adequately qualified Negroes are offered jobs by management only to discover that they can not accept them because of inaccessibility to the job site.

This situation is exacerbated as business and industry move away from established centers into and beyond the suburbs, following peripheral and express highways where public transportation is either non-existent or wholly inadequate. White employees have the option of following their jobs to residential areas closer to the new locations. This option is denied Negro employees and applicants, however well qualified. The result is either a tedious commute from the ghetto to the job site or a search for a job for which he may be less qualified or over qualified, but to which he has reasonable access from his home.

— AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS —

GILBERT F. WHITE, Chairman • HENRY J. CADDURY, Honorary Chairman • CLARENCE E. PICKETT, Executive Secretary Emeritus • COLIN W. BELL, Executive Secretary

Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz recently observed that the rate of Negro unemployment will rise as business and industry move away from former locations to new situations inaccessible to Negroes unless and until equal opportunity of residence is available to all employees alike. Simply stated, unequal access to job sites hampers and in increasing instances defeats equal employment opportunity.

We are aware that limitations imposed upon the Atlanta Community Relations Commission by political boundaries restrict fair housing ordinances which the Commission might recommend to the corporate limits of the City of Atlanta. We are also aware that other urgencies such as sewage disposal, air pollution and rapid transit, to mention only a few conspicuous instances, must eventually be dealt with as Metropolitan Area problems.

However, a beginning must be made somewhere by an enlightened and progressive community. We question whether Atlanta can afford to sit idly by awaiting possible future federal legislation while the housing dilemma intensifies with each passing month.

Requests presented to Atlanta for fair housing legislation have been parried with the trite argument that such legislation will only accelerate "flight to suburbia". This is an easy answer and may have some element of fact. But at least such an ordinance would tend to stabilize residential areas in transition within the city limits, by encouraging city-wide dispersal of minority families seeking suitable and decent homes within their means.

An open occupancy ordinance would in addition, recognize the rights of first class citizenship for all Atlantans alike, irrespective of race or religion,

by permitting every family to live in a neighborhood of its choice and compatible with its means and finances.

We encourage further persuasion on the part of the Commission directed toward the enactment of a fair housing ordinance as a necessary concomitant of the "Forward Atlanta" movement.

Respectfully yours,

Noyes Collinson

Noyes Collinson
Program Director

Xernona Clayton
Xernona Clayton
Housing Director

jac:nc

cc: Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.
Cecil Alexander
Dr. Benjamin Mays
Dr. Sanford Atwood

Encl.