

July 31, 1963

Hon. Ivan Allen  
Mayor, City of Atlanta  
City Hall  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mr. Allen:

Your testimony in behalf of the pending civil rights legislation deserves a note of audible support from all those who share your viewpoint. It is with distinct pleasure that I applaud your statement. Your courage and willingness to face the outcry of many is to be commended.

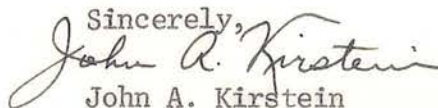
It has been said that all that is needed for evil to take over is that good men do nothing. I think your stand for what you believe is right is one of the most encouraging signs in our nation.

May I share my view in brief? I fear many are losing sight of the forest because of the trees. Debate is being turned away from the basic question of whether Negroes will be given full rights as citizens to a side issue on property. It is good to have a public discussion on property because there are some genuine reasons for it, but unfortunately in the present context it is mostly a red herring.

It is being said that a man's business property is like his home. Only in a sense is that true. Business property depends on the community for survival. Conversely the community depends upon the business property for its survival. Business property and the community are interdependent.

Recognizing this fact the government already regulates businesses and their clientele. For examples: A liquor store owner cannot sell to minors; zoning laws will not allow unrestricted business properties, nor will it permit hodge-podge expansion. Along the same line the government even seizes properties by expropriation through the power of eminent domain when the public's interest dictates it. Therefore I see nothing of the government overstepping its bounds if it chooses to pass the public accommodations law.

My best wishes to you. My fellow worker, Miss Frances Furlow said she wants to add an "amen" to what you said in Washington!

Sincerely,  
  
John A. Kirstein