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Legislation Committee Charge

Legislation Committee Summit for Civil Rights

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Legislation Committee Charge

Legislation Committee, Summit for Civil Rights

The assembled Representatives, drawn from advocates for civil rights, the American labor movement, faith communities, and elected political representatives, agree to jointly form a committee to collectively develop viable legislation that promotes an economically fair and racially integrated nation.

The Committee is charged with the authority and responsibility to develop guiding principles, designate policy goals, and ultimately produce draft legislation to eliminate racial segregation and create and cultivate communities of equal opportunity.

We find that:

1. Segregation causes inequality of opportunity—impairing the “right to pursue happiness.” It is inconsistent with state and federal constitutional guarantees and corrosive to the formation of just, well-governed, and economically prosperous cities, communities, and institutions.
2. The growth of segregation has been guided and encouraged by legislative and other governmental action at the federal, state, and local levels, and its elimination will also require proactive efforts by government to produce integration.

We charge this committee with developing legislation with the following aims:

1. The production of more accountable regional governing bodies, to plan and manage regional infrastructure and ameliorate destructive conflicts between communities over land use, taxation, development, and affordable housing, which produce segregated living patterns;
2. The creation and expansion of labor protections so that diverse communities can grow and remain prosperous, including a strengthened right to organize collectively, increased minimum wages, and expanded use of community benefit agreements;

3. The codification of fair housing principles into federal, state, and local law, including integrative fair share rules and resident protections, such as restraints on income discrimination;

4. The development of policies and requirements to prevent resegregation of the educational system, including metropolitan integration strategies and the provision of sufficient educational resources to all schools, regardless of location or composition; and

5. The reduction of barriers to integration or economic prosperity caused by the inability of local units of government to expand, annex or be annexed, or dissolve themselves, as best befits the economic or practical circumstances of their residents and the surrounding region.

Underlying this legislation must be the principle that no local entity, acting alone, can solve collective and systemic issues such as racial segregation. The committee's challenge is to design laws that preserve the true virtues of local government, while at the same time realizing the real benefits of Madison's diverse, interdependent republic. The Committee recognizes the necessity of producing practical legislation capable of receiving support from a substantial and diverse collection of voters, legislators, and elected officials, as, without such support, the accomplishment of any legislative policy program is impossible.