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Forum

In Pursuit of a Dream Deferred: Linking Housing and Education

Foreword

Deval Patrick*

The Forum that follows is a product of the Institute on Race and Poverty's inaugural, semi-annual forum entitled, *In Pursuit of a Dream Deferred: Linking Housing and Education*. The Forum, held on April 22, 1995, at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, was cosponsored by the Minnesota State Board of Education and the University of St. Thomas.

The Institute on Race and Poverty is a strategic research center based at the University of Minnesota Law School. Established in 1993 to promote scholarship and dialogue regarding race and poverty, the Institute seeks to improve public understanding of the issues confronting communities that are both racially segregated and poor—communities at the intersections of race and poverty. This Forum represents the Institute's first effort at organizing a serious, national discussion about policies affecting poor, minority communities.

The articles in this Forum focus on housing and education. Using this theme, the contributors turn a critical eye toward the racial and economic segregation that persists in America's schools and neighborhoods forty-one years after the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.¹ The core premise underlying these articles is that racial and economic segregation in housing causes and maintains segregation in our educational institutions, and that this segregation harms our children and our society. The authors connect racial and economic segregation in housing and education in terms of

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1. 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

policy, social science, and the law to demonstrate the causal link between housing and education problems. The authors then highlight the policy and legal ramifications of this link.

The contributors to this Forum are nationally recognized leaders in their respective fields. Dr. Kenneth Clark, an eminent psychologist, provided the evidence of segregation's harms to children that the Supreme Court studied and cited in *Brown*. Professor John A. Powell, founder of the Institute on Race and Poverty, formerly served as the National Legal Director of the ACLU, and has worked on civil rights issues for over twenty years. Professor Nancy Denton, a sociologist at SUNY Albany and a renowned expert on issues of racial segregation, co-authored the best-selling book, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*.² Professor Gary Orfield, professor of sociology at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, is an expert in the field of schools and racial segregation and has testified in a number of important civil rights cases. Michael Sussman, a civil rights attorney in New York and former U.S. Justice Department litigator, represented the plaintiff class in the important housing and education case, *United States v. Yonkers Board of Education*.³ Finally, Theodore Shaw, a Deputy Director Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund, has argued a number of school and housing cases before the Supreme Court.

The problems of housing and educational segregation are not new to this country. Solving them remains—as it always has been—a tall order. Attempts to create new and innovative solutions to these issues are critical if we ever hope to come to a clear, rational consensus on how to handle them. This Forum, containing articles by a set of experienced and thoughtful lawyers and social scientists, is an important step in the right direction. It should encourage future endeavors to help address the needs of poor, minority communities throughout America.

2. DOUGLAS S. MASSEY & NANCY A. DENTON, *AMERICAN APARTHEID: SEGREGATION AND THE MAKING OF THE UNDERCLASS* (1993).

3. 624 F. Supp. 1276 (S.D.N.Y. 1985).