

Excerpt from Governor Stanley's Address to the General Assembly, August 27, 1956 Transcription

In May of this year I requested the Commission on Public Education to renew its studies in the light of developments since its report in November 1955. The Commission recommended this special session of the Assembly, and it has endorsed the proposals which I submit today for your consideration. When I issued the call on July 23rd for this special session, I stated the implications of the Supreme Court decision have become more apparent to the people of Virginia in the recent months and that I believe it was the conclusion of the vast majority of our citizens that there should be no mixing of the races in the public schools anywhere in Virginia.

This conclusion is supported by the many expressions which have reached me from people from all parts of Virginia, and I should like to add that these expressions have not been confined to members of the white race only. I do not know whether you in the Assembly are hearing from your constituents through your districts as I have here in Virginia. I have never experienced such a widespread and almost unanimous expression on any subject from citizens in all walks of life. Their one plea repeated to me daily by letter, by telegram, and by telephone is—do not permit mixing of the races in our schools.

These entreaties come from the fathers and mothers of children who would be immediately affected by any change in our system of schools. They come from workers in the factories, they come from farmers, they come from bankers, they come from lawyers and businessmen, and fathers and mothers in all walks of life. And there is no doubt in my mind that they constitute a true cross section of our citizenship. We have witnessed events outside of Virginia which support our views that the best interest of white and Negro races will be served by continued separation in our public schools. The experience of the District of Columbia where racial integration has been ordered into effect is but one example of the unfortunate results of such a misguided policy.

We have an excellent system of public schools in Virginia for both white and Negro pupils. We have invested many millions of dollars in it and have vastly increased appropriations, both state and local for its maintenance and operation. We have done this because we realize the importance of education to all of our citizens. We want to preserve this system and the opportunities it offers without discrimination to the members of all races. We are convinced that it can be preserved and operated as an efficient and statewide system only by segregation of the races.

Citation: Governor Thomas B. Stanley Speech Before a Special Session of the Virginia General Assembly, August 27, 1956 (WRVA-160), WRVA Radio Collection, Accession 38210, Library of Virginia.