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# REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

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## REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE URGES BASIC REFORM IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

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In 1965 and again in 1966, the Republican Members of the House of Representatives expressed grave concern regarding the broad sweep of the proposed elementary and secondary education legislation. We were concerned that under the loosely drawn provisions of this legislation, the education effort in this country would be divided, overlapping and wasteful. We were concerned that the State agencies and local school authorities would be deprived of authority to shape educational programs to meet local needs. Centralization of power in the Federal government was a theme that ran through the key sections of the legislation.

It has now become apparent that all too often the Federal support intended to improve elementary and secondary education has been used to undermine State and local initiative and responsibility. The administrative burdens and the Federal controls under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have increased each year. Today, the United States Office of Education administers approximately 30 different programs in the field of elementary and secondary education. The total authorizations for these programs are well above \$3 billion. This proliferation of programs has thrust upon school administrators a baffling maze of applications, justifications, questionnaires and accountings. The heavy hand of the Federal government in the process of educational decision-making grows ever heavier.

It is absolutely essential that the unwarranted intrusion of the Federal government into the local educational systems be eliminated. The administrative complexities and overload which accompany this intrusion must be removed. Educator after educator has testified that the present system of categorical grant-in-aid programs is at the root of the problem. Under this system, Federal control has been maximized and an educational program determined by local priorities could not be established.

We believe that in the education field, as well as in many other fields, a system of Federal tax-sharing would provide the essential funds without the many controls and administrative complexities that presently accompany Federal programs. This type of reform cannot be accomplished in this bill. However, as an initial step in this direction, the Republican members of the Education and Labor Committee have recommended that H.R. 7819 be amended to provide block grants to the States for

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education purposes. These grants would replace the multiplicity of categorical grant-in-aid programs. If this is done, States and local communities would receive the financial assistance that they need without the Federal controls and dictation that has proven to be the greatest weakness of the present elementary and secondary education program.

Virtually all major groups in elementary and secondary education are opposed to placing in the hands of the U. S. Commissioner, the sole power in Title III to determine which applicant school districts are to receive funds and which educational purposes are to be favored in their use. The \$500 million authorization in Title III is a gigantic carrot by which the United States Commissioner of Education can "coax" local school systems and even entire States to adopt educational practices currently favored by a few individuals in the United States Education Office. It is not enough that the Commissioner of Education has professed a desire to turn over this program to State administration at some unspecified date in the future. State administration of the program should begin now. Title III projects must be consistent and coordinated with overall State educational plans and programs. This cannot be done as long as the control remains in the United States Office of Education.

Once again, this bill does nothing to correct the inequitable formula for distributing Title I funds to local school districts. Funds continue to be scattered indiscriminately among both wealthy and needy school districts. Under the present system, State education agencies are unable to channel the money to the areas of greatest need. The proposed study of the formula's obvious defects is an acknowledgment of this serious problem. The jerry-built distribution formula in Title I must be abandoned and the formula advanced by the Republican Members of the Committee must be adopted.

We are opposed to a National Teachers Corps recruited and controlled by the Federal government. Without question, there is a need to increase efforts for the recruitment and training of teachers for problem schools. However, these efforts should be made at the State and local level and not be controlled by a Federal Bureau. The Federal government should not be the agent for the recruitment, selection, assignment and compensation of teachers.

We believe that teacher training for problem schools, the prime objective of the Teachers Corps, should be handled as a part of other on-going programs. For example, Title XI of the National Defense Education Act authorizes institutes for teachers who are engaged or preparing to engage in teaching in such schools. In fiscal 1966 and 1967, 1,046 such institutes were arranged with 43,591 teachers participating. This highly successful program should be further expanded to meet the pressing need for additional training in this most difficult area. Moreover, Title V of the Higher Education Act authorizes the Commissioner of Education to initiate fellowship programs which he could specifically design to prepare teachers for problem schools.