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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The Congressional Black Caucus has discovered through research done by its staff that school desegregation across the country has resulted in the displacement of many thousands of Black teachers and administrators.

It is ironic, although predictable, that while Blacks have availed themselves of an often slow and unresponsive legal system in order to take one step forward, many lily-white public school boards have spent even more energy to see to it that no actual gain is made. It should be emphasized that existing laws are being violated. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandates school desegregation. It is clear that faculty as well as students are included in this mandate.

In North Carolina alone, the number of Black high school principals has been reduced by 95 percent since 1963. This is but one example of the degree to which some school officials have gone in order to hinder full desegregation of public schools. In 1965 there were 77 Black secondary schools in 73 counties and 30 Black secondary schools in 27 cities of Virginia. Each of these 107 Black schools had a Black principal. Today there are only four counties in which the Black secondary school plants are even used to accommodate secondary students and the number of Black principals has dwindled to 17. In the 108 school districts surveyed by the Atlanta Office for last fall, 4,907 teachers of both races had left their school systems. Of this number, 23 percent were Black. Those same school systems hired 5,196 new teachers; Blacks number 743 or 14 percent of those. In the previous year, 4,375 whites and 876 Blacks were newly hired to the systems surveyed. In Arkansas almost all the Black teachers in 62 of the state's 382 districts were displaced during the year they desegregated; 212 teachers and principals were fired or persuaded to leave. During the period between 1963 and 1971 the number of Black secondary school principals was reduced from 134 to 14. And, in Florida, more than 1,000 dismissals, wide-spread demotions, and a decline in the overall number of Black teachers have been documented during the last three years -- 49 school districts eliminated; 26 percent of their Black principals displaced (a total of 57) -- while hiring 56 new white principals.

It should be pointed out that these practices have not been limited to the South; many northern school districts have been guilty of similar acts. It appears that the underlying cause for many Black teachers and administrators being displaced is that while whites are in some instances willing to have their children educated alongside Blacks, they are violently opposed to having Black professionals contribute to that education. It is clear that the question of professional competency or quality is not present. Often, those displaced have many years of meritorious service to their credit. Rather, these displacements have occurred as a direct result of desegregation.

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The Black Caucus does not believe that court decisions ordering desegregation of public schools can be read so narrowly as to mean that only students must be integrated. If the integration of school systems is, in fact, one means of guaranteeing quality education, then certainly it follows that teachers and administrators must be integrated also.

It is time for America to address itself to this glaring contradiction and be about the business of putting to work the resources that are being wasted by misusing the talents of these Black educators. In order to reverse this trend the CBC intends to:

- (1) Seek enforcement of recent court decisions prohibiting displacements of Black educators;
- (2) Demand that the Justice Department investigate reported cases of discrimination and prosecute those found to be participating in illegal acts; and
- (3) Demand that the Executive Branch apply the necessary pressure on school districts to stem the flood of displacements.

If quality education for all children in America is to become a reality then steps must be taken now to see that all members of the educational community are included in the educational process.

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