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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO: Jim Baker
FROM: FAITH R. WHITTLESEY

- Information
- Action

I thought you should see
the attached suggestion.

*= per Tex, DOT already
considering = basis
would be concern for
potential violence -*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
December 20, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: FAITH WHITTLESEY
THROUGH: Jack Courtemanche *JH*
FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MCB*
SUBJECT: Alternate Proposal for Nebraska School Action

Finally we have a new option we should consider in the Nebraska Christian school crisis.

It seems that the Justice Department has a Community Relations Service which is designed to ease tensions in localities where mediation might be helpful. This is a mandate broad enough to cover the current problems.

The Community Relations Service could offer the good offices of the Administration in a way not previously provided. Since the discussion process involved is not one which includes court actions, we could avoid the problem of a new theory of intrusion in states' rights.

The potential for violence has helped deter us from other actions. Now, if there is violence, we could be blamed for failing to respond to cries for help.

The attached story in the "Washington Times" gives the right impression of the ferment among our supporters in the religious community. In my view, we must do something. The Community Relations Service of DOJ is the best idea I've seen.

MCB:jet

1 Attachment a/s

White House rebuffs plea to help jailed Nebraskans

By Bill Kling
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

The White House yesterday denied a request by eight nationally prominent evangelical ministers to meet with President Reagan to personally plead for his intervention in the long, bitter church-state battle over unaccredited Faith Christian School in Louisville, Neb.

Also rebuffed were three senators and a congressman, all Republicans, through whom the ministers relayed their meeting request to White House counselor Edwin Meese III and James Baker III, White House chief of staff.

Consistent with a policy adopted at the White House on Friday, Mr. Meese and Mr. Baker decided not to agree to the meeting, continuing the Reagan administration on a collision course with politically active religious conservatives who have supported the president and his policies in the past.

"There was never any plan for the president to meet with any representatives in the Nebraska school case," C. Anson Franklin, an assistant White House press secretary, told The Washington Times. "He thought it was more appropriate that they meet with (Education Secretary Terrel H. Bell) and they did so."

Meanwhile, writs of habeas corpus were filed yesterday with the Nebraska Supreme Court seeking the release from jail of seven men, dubbed the "Nebraska 7," who have been incarcerated in Plattsmouth since Thanksgiving Eve for refusing to testify in a Cass County court about the school operated by Faith Baptist Church and attended by their children.

Nebraska education authorities have been attempting for seven years to close the school on grounds it has no state license and its teachers lack state certification.

The "Nebraska 7" fathers were jailed for contempt of court by a judge named Ronald E. Reagan, who also issued warrants for the arrest of their wives; the Rev. Everett Sileven, pastor of the church; and Mrs. Theresa Schmidt, school principal and the Rev. Mr. Sileven's daughter. They fled Nebraska with 23 children to avoid incarceration.

Secretary Bell, at a luncheon Thursday with a delegation of evangelical leaders following a Lafayette Park rally and White House demonstration, indicated his willingness to examine Nebraska's eligibility for continued federal education funds if "Ne-

braska 7" supporters could show state education officials were practicing religious discrimination against Faith Christian School.

Among the evangelical preachers who sought an audience with Mr. Reagan were four with nationwide television ministries reaching millions of viewers each week. They are the Rev. Jerry Falwell of Lynchburg, Va., who also is president of the Moral Majority; the Rev. Jimmy Swaggart of Baton Rouge, La.; the Rev. Dr. D. James Kennedy of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and the Rev. Dr. Charles Stanley of Atlanta.

Another, the Rev. Dr. Tim LaHaye of San Diego, Calif., has been assigned by the Reagan-Bush '84 Committee the task of keeping "the Christian Right" in the president's re-election corner for next year. His wife, Beverly, is head of Christian Women of America.

Others were the Rev. Dr. James T. Draper of Fort Worth, Texas, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; the Rev. Dr. William R. Bright of San Bernardino, Calif., president of the Christian Campus Crusade; and the Rev. Dr. Ed Rowe of Wheaton, Ill., president of the Church League of America.

Seeking the meeting with Mr. Reagan for the evangelicals were Sen. Roger H. Jepsen, R-Iowa; Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah; Sen. Bill Armstrong, R-Colo.; and Rep. George Hansen, R-Idaho.

The eight preachers signed a letter to Mr. Reagan urging him "to initiate a full investigation of the abuse of the constitutional rights" of the "Nebraska 7" "or to take whatever appropriate action you might deem necessary to provide immediate relief so that these families can be reunited in their homes during this Christmas season.

"These men are in jail only because of their religious beliefs and we are convinced that you and millions of Americans are deeply grieved at the plight of these God-fearing people," the letter says.

Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly, head of the Eagle Forum, sent a telegram to Mr. Reagan yesterday urging him to meet with the ministers to discuss the jailing of the seven "for the alleged crime of sending their children to a Christian school." She called the case "a First Amendment civil rights issue."

Gary Jarmin of Christian Voice warned that the president "could lose the support of evangelicals" over the case and should act in some way.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 14, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: JACK COURTEMANCHE

FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MB*

SUBJECT: 1982 Materials Relating to Faith Baptist
School in Louisville, Nebraska

To the best of my knowledge, there were no drafts of potential statements circulated last year around October 22nd, when we issued our only news release on this subject.

Attached are the items from my files which appear to be relevant for your 11:00 a.m. meeting:

1. My memorandum to Mrs. Dole of September 22, 1982 in which I discuss the depth of feeling in the protestant fundamental community over the issue.
2. My memorandum to Mrs. Dole of October 19, 1982 in which I discussed the increasing tensions. In this memorandum, I discussed the possibility of a Presidential call to Pastor Sileven and give a sequence of events to that date.
3. My October 22, 1982 update to Mrs. Dole on the current situation.
4. A memorandum from Charles O'Malley at the Education Department and an attached statement issued by Secretary Bell.
5. The White House press statement of October 22, 1982 in which the President is described as "happy that the Reverend Sileven of Louisville, Nebraska can rejoin his family."
6. My memorandum of December 14, 1982 to Mrs. Dole which includes a copy of the standard response to the many letters written us by supporters of the embattled school.
7. The draft statement from Michael Uhlmann's office received December 12, 1983.

You have my memoranda to Mrs. Whittlesey of December 9th and 13th on this subject.

I think the most compelling argument for action along the lines of the draft statement from Mike Uhlmann's office is that these people and their millions of allies are part of the President's winning coalition. If the tables were turned, it would be easier to understand. If, for instance, a local union were under attack by the State government of Mississippi and if the major union leadership in the country were moving rapidly to support the threatened union local, it would be almost inconceivable that a Democratic White House would fail to at least issue a statement sympathetic with the plight of the threatened local. More likely, they would think of some excuse to take action.

MCB:jet

Attachments a/s

Office of Private Education
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Issued
10/19/82

Dr. Robert Bellings

Attached for your information is a copy of a statement to be made by the Secretary regarding the Nebraska situation, and a copy of a Memo we are mailing to "Koffee Klatch" participants.

C. J. O'Malley
Charles J. O'Malley
Executive Assistant for
Private Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY BELL

Because of its national import and precedent-setting potential, I have made an appeal to all parties in the church-state Nebraska controversy to step back, to pause, then to proceed with caution in a situation that hopefully can be solved in a reasonable manner by people of good will at this point in time.

It is important that both points of view continue to meet, to discuss their differences, and to "bargain-out" a solution before this situation evolves to the point wherein tragedy and violence occur.

My office has been - and will continue to be - in close touch with all parties and will be available upon request to assist where feasible, in finding a peaceful and prompt solution.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
December 14 1982

MEMORANDUM TO ELIZABETH H. DOLE

FROM: MORTON C. BLACKWELL

SUBJECT: Nebraska Christian School Controversy

Per your request for our standardized letters, here is a sample of the text I have used to respond to about 50 letters supporting Pastor Everett Sileven. Unfortunately, Pastor Sileven has gone back to jail to serve out the remainder of his contempt of Court sentence.

The situation is not settled. The School may or may not be reopened.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 14, 1982

Dear Mrs. Currier:

Thank you for your letter regarding the problems in Nebraska for Christian schools.

As the President's liaison to the Christian school movement, I have kept in touch with these developments. I have had two very cordial, personal meetings here in my office with Pastor Everett Sileven of Louisville, Nebraska and numerous telephone conversations with him and with other leaders concerned with the application of the principles of religious liberty and educational freedom to this case.

On October 22, when a temporary compromise was reached, the President publicly expressed pleasure that Pastor Sileven was able to rejoin his family. A copy of the White House news release is enclosed.

The legal actions against Christian schools in Nebraska have been taken by state, not federal authorities.

Officials of our U.S. Department of Education have kept in close contact with Nebraska Christian school leaders and the state school authorities. Charles J. O'Malley, Education Secretary Bell's Executive Assistant for Private Education, has repeatedly been to Nebraska, working to help both sides in an attempt to reach a satisfactory conclusion to this tragic difficulty.

Please be assured that the President strongly supports our American tradition of diversity in Education, including religious, private and public schools.

We appreciate your concern, and we hope that either the courts, the state legislature or the respective sides in the dispute will quickly solve this problem in such a way as to strengthen both religious freedom and quality education.

Sincerely,



Morton C. Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison

Mrs. E. M. Currier
Box 3
Kristin Forest
Hardy, VA 24101

Enclosure

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 19, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR ELIZABETH H. DOLE

FROM: MORTON C. BLACKWELL 

SUBJECT: Church-State Confrontation in Nebraska

The President is headed into a hornet's nest Wednesday when he is scheduled to speak in Lincoln, Nebraska on behalf of Governor Thone.

Independent Baptist minister Rev. Everett Sileven has now been at the Cass County Jail in Plattsmouth, Nebraska for a month and a half. By the time the President arrives in Nebraska, there will probably be more than a thousand pastors from all around the country in the area demonstrating support for Sileven.

Attached is an abbreviated sequence of events.

The thousand ministers and their supporters are determined to demonstrate at the President's arrival.

Rev. Sileven's church-school is in Louisville, Nebraska between Lincoln and Omaha. The church has about 80 members in a town of 2,000. The church school attendance is about 30.

Dr. Bob Billings, who was the 1980 Reagan Campaign liaison to the religious community, describes the situation as a "powder keg". He says the preachers involved "don't cuss but wish they could". He also has reported, from Chuck O'Malley, that some outraged locals are talking about fire arms and saying they won't be pushed around any more.

I have worked with H. P. Goldfield of the White House Counsel's office on this subject. He reports that the White House Counsel's office and the Justice Department are opposed to any Administration action on the matter. Our office sees a growing wave of outrage in the fundamentalist community on this issue. These religious leaders are a natural part of the President's winning coalition. If we are perceived as uncaring about this problem, undoubtedly many previously politically active fundamentalists will sit on their hands during the closing days of the elections.

It is in the political interest of those hostile to the conservative religious leaders who support the President for him to be perceived as aloof or hostile to the concerns of the fundamentalist community.

I see the following options for us:

1. Do and say nothing on this subject. Maintain it is a local matter.
2. In the absence of any rationale for Justice Department intervention on behalf of Rev. Sileven, someone in the Administration could make a widely publicized telephone call to Rev. Sileven in the Cass County Jail, (402) 296-3337, in Plattsmouth, Nebraska. The thrust of the call should be to express concern about the situation and the hope that some accommodation could be reached whereby the affected fundamentalists would be working to change the law rather than to break it.

The first choice to make such a call would be the President himself. The President could capture the imagination of the millions of people now increasingly concerned over this issue. He more than anyone else could defuse the situation and move people away from confrontation.

Next choice would be Mr. Meese. This would insulate the President somewhat from the matter but show high level concern.

Others, less visible but appropriate to be authorized to make such a call would be you, Dr. Bob Billings, or me. A call from any of us would have a favorable impact on the situation if for no other reason than as an expression of concern from the Reagan Administration.

I have a compiled video tape of TV news coverage of the situation up through the jailing of Rev. Sileven. He behaved with dignity throughout.

As the week progresses, events are sure to escalate in intensity in Nebraska. I believe that the visit of the President is an action-forcing event for the White House.

See the attached sequence of events.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN NEBRASKA CHURCH - STATE CONTROVERSY

1. Over the years a growing number of fundamentalist protestant churches have formed church-operated schools in Nebraska and resisted demands of the State school authorities that the schools employ only State certified teachers. The law is draconian compared to most other states.
2. Legal action has been commenced by the State authorities against at least eight schools of various protestant denominations in Nebraska.
3. Rev. Everett Sileven who, with two of his children, happened to be a student at Hiles Anderson College in Indiana when Dr. Bob Billings was the President of the college, became the focus of resistance to the agencies of State authority over church-operated schools.
4. Church school leaders from other states, most of which have much less restrictive regulations of church operated schools, began to show an interest in the Nebraska situation.
5. A Nebraska judge jailed Sileven when he refused to shut the school or achieve certification. Sileven made bail.
6. Rev. Siliven, despite the court order, continued to operate the church and the church-school. The judge held Sileven in contempt and ordered the Cass County Sheriff to lock the church. The sheriff re-arrested him on September 3, pursuant to the court order. He entered the school and took Sileven to jail from an assembly of students, parents, visiting pastors, and a battery of television cameras.
7. The Judge's order allows the church to be opened for morning and evening Sunday services as well as Wednesday night prayer meetings. At all other times it is locked by the sheriff.
8. On Sunday evening, October 17, 120 supporting pastors from Nebraska and around the country began a prayer meeting in Sileven's church which was broken up before dawn on Monday by the sheriff. The sheriff arrived with 18 law enforcement vehicles, went up to each of the 120 kneeling pastors and gave them the choice of leaving or being dragged out. More than one-third chose to be dragged out. Those removed accumulated at the front door to the church-school building. There was a break in the discipline and a scuffle as the law officers had to push the crowd back in order to close and lock the front doors of the church.

9. The church is now locked but will, per the court order, be opened for prayer service on Wednesday night. At that time there will almost certainly be over 1,000 pastors from around the country overflowing Rev. Siliven's church-school building in Louisville, Nebraska. Dr. Ron Godwin, of Moral Majority, who supervised video taping of the clearing of the church last Monday morning, has received calls from all three major networks who indicate they intend to have camera crews on hand as the thousand pastors and their supporters will almost certainly be dragged out of the church at some point in the early hours of Thursday, October 21.

10. On Wednesday, October 20, the Moral Majority's 264 TV spots and 1,190 radio spots will begin to run on Nebraska media. The spots will not make specific reference to the confrontation in Louisville but the linkage will be apparent because the broadcast spots will focus in on the church-state relationship as it affects church schools. The Moral Majority also has funded newspaper ads to run this week in Nebraska. A copy of the text is attached.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 22, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR ELIZABETH H. DOLE

FROM: MORTON C. BLACKWELL *MB*

SUBJECT: Christian School Crisis in Nebraska

The Protestant fundamentalist community is electrified with concern over events in Nebraska.

Many schools are under attack by state officials. A preacher is in jail because of his refusal to cease operating his church-affiliated school. Religious media are filled with reports of police harassment.

We have received many telephone calls and other communications urging that the President take action. Numerous pastors from across the country have gone to Nebraska to show their support for the church schools and their opposition to the State government's actions. Attached are letters on this topic.

I urge you to take the matter up with Fred Fielding to determine what appropriate steps the President can take.

I know that this is fundamentally a state matter. Nebraska requires religious schools to have state-accredited teachers. Many other states have much less restrictive regulations.

There may be some way in which the Justice Department could become involved. I don't know. Perhaps in some way the civil rights of the church school leaders have been violated.

I do know this, however. There is a big contrast between the conservative political enthusiasm of 1980 in the religious community and that we see today. In 1980 there were massive rallies of fundamentalists and evangelicals all across the country. Governor Reagan spoke to a stadium full at the National Affairs Briefing of the Religious Roundtable in Dallas. There is nothing parallel to that this year.

Among the steps we ought to take is some expression of support for the Christian schools in Nebraska. More than any other thing the President could do, this would restore the fire in our natural allies in the religious community. Just investigating the matter would have major benefits for us.

The situation in Nebraska has not received much attention in the network news broadcasts or national news magazines, but the matter has been thoroughly and repeatedly discussed on virtually all the national "religious right" broadcasts. Some strong demonstration of the President's concern in behalf of the jailed school official would be promptly and enthusiastically communicated through the religious broadcasts and publications.

There is little downside if we show concern here. The real opponents of these fundamentalist Christian schools are already in the pocket of the National Education Association, which actively opposes virtually every policy of this Administration.

DRAFT

Statement for the Principal Deputy Press Secretary

Statement Concerning Nebraska Situtation

The President has been apprised of numerous situations arising in the State of Nebraska involving conflicts between religious schools and the State education and law enforcement authorities.

The controversies have involved jailings of ministers, criminal prosecutions of parents who have their children in religious schools, impositions of heavy fines on church schools, refusals to let some graduates of religious colleges teach in those schools, and the padlocking of at least one church -- all of these apparently because the pastors, teachers, parents and principals object on religious grounds to certain Nebraska statutes. Most recently, parents of school children have been jailed.

Because, therefore, religious civil rights protected by the Constitution of the United States may be involved in this situation, and because the situation has bred such extraordinarily high feelings in Nebraska, the President has expressed his concern that the matter be resolved peaceably.

It would appear that early reconsideration of the basic legal problem by the courts might be a means of resolving the difficulty. Certainly a new judicial resolution, if possible, would be far preferable to the continuation of the present situation.

NOTE: 12/12/83 - Hand-delivered from Mike Uhlmann's Office

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 22, 1982

UPDATE OF EVENTS IN NEBRASKA CHURCH-STATE CONTROVERSY

AS OF 4 P.M., OCTOBER 22, 1982

1. At 3:30 p.m., October 21, Charles O'Malley, Executive Assistant for Private Education to Secretary of Education Terrell Bell convened a meeting in Lincoln with representatives of Protestant and Catholic school groups, the state superintendent of Education and a representative of the Governor's office. A tentative agreement was reached regarding the issue of state certification of church operated schools. This agreement would depend on certain proposed changes to Nebraska law.
2. On the afternoon of October 22, the state court which had jailed Rev. Everett Sileven released Rev. Sileven from jail on the conditions that the Faith Bible School would close for 30 days and that Rev. Sileven would voluntarily return to jail if a related case were lost by Rev. Carl Godwin, head of Nebraskans for Educational Freedom. The case regarding Rev. Carl Godwin's church operated school will be heard in state court October 25, in Lincoln.
3. In the past three days the White House has received in excess of 6,000 calls in support of the Christian school leaders in Nebraska.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 22, 1982

STATEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY

The President was pleased to learn that a step toward accomodation has been reached in Nebraska over the subject of teacher certification for church-operated schools. He is grateful his Department of Education could be helpful in mediating the matter and happy that the Reverend Everett Sileven of Louisville, Nebraska, can rejoin his family.

In accord with America's historic commitment to diversity in education, the President expressed hope this spirit of cooperation will lead to a solution consistent with both the state's responsibility to ensure high-quality education and the right of parents to organize and support church-related schools for their children. He applauds the renewed effort to work within the framework of the law.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 13, 1983

TO: JAB III

Please note the attached memo from Faith to EM. It has not yet been sent, but is on her desk awaiting signature.

The purpose of the memo is quite obvious. I have discussed it with Fred Fielding, and his recommendation is that we maintain our hands-off policy regarding this case. However, if we feel we have to do something, Fred says the most we should do is meet with a group (as petitioners to their government) to hear their concerns, though explaining our position of non-interference. Fred's recommendation is consistent with Justice's views of this case.

I'll talk to Faith and suggest she not send the memo if that is your decision.

Thanks.


JAMES W. CICONI
Office of James A. Baker, III
456-2174

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 13, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR EDWIN MEESE, III

FROM: FAITH WHITTLESEY

SUBJECT: Nebraska School Crisis

The religious leaders who support this Administration are rapidly falling in line behind the embattled Christian schools in Nebraska. Our continued failure to take some sympathetic action will result in grassroots problems we should avoid if possible.

Counsel's office not invited

Members of your staff and mine met last Tuesday in Mike Uhlmann's office with Brad Reynolds and William Bentley Ball, the distinguished attorney who specializes in church/state law, and who is now litigating another of the numerous church school cases in Nebraska. Mr. Ball suggested that the Administration issue a statement of concern, which could encourage the appropriate courts to give serious attention to the constitutional issues involved. There will be hearings on two school cases -- not the publicized Louisville case -- on Thursday and Friday of this week. A statement by Thursday would thus be timely.

But whether or not the controversy can be solved by the courts, we have to consider what position the Administration should take. To stand aloof would only fan the unrest among supportive Christians who are already upset at the lack of progress on "social justice issues" such as the School Prayer Amendment, tuition tax credits, abortion, and pornography.

Late last week, a rally in support of Faith Christian School was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Thursday, December 15, at Lafayette Park.

At first, it appeared that participants would number 400 and would be from the D.C. area. It now appears that the Nebraskans will be the stars of a rally of over 1,000. Current plans include having here eight mothers and the affected 23 students enrolled at the school. Also present will be Ed Rowe of the Church League of America, who has been staying in Louisville,

Nebraska coordinating many activities there. Their hope, in part, is to break into the general, national media, by assembling here. Of course, the fundamentalist and evangelical media, newsletters, magazines and broadcasts, daily give this controversy heavy coverage.

The solution I suggest is that we invite in a delegation of clergy representing the demonstrators at the conclusion of the rally. They could meet with Morton Blackwell and Mike Uhlmann, who would give them a copy of the statement which was developed by your staff after last week's meeting with attorney Ball. That statement, expressing concern and hope for a judicial solution, would be simultaneously issued by our Press Office.

The proposed statement should not be issued before the meeting for three reasons:

1. To do so would cause some activists to escalate their demands for action from us.
2. We want those who are coming here to go home confident they have achieved sympathy and cooperation from us.
3. There is always the slight chance that events in Nebraska, good or bad, will alter the picture before Thursday morning.

This plan would tend to tone down the rhetoric at the rally, because the leaders would know they were to have a subsequent meeting with White House staff.

Of course, we must not indicate we plan to take any step unless we have carefully planned the whole course of action which would flow from such a step. For instance, if we decide to send an investigator to Nebraska, that would raise hopes we might take some legal action. We should decide in advance if there may be an issue to justify, say, a Justice Department amicus brief if the case winds up on appeal from the Nebraska Supreme Court to the U.S. Supreme Court, or if the case comes into federal district court in a habeas corpus proceeding.

For now, it is sufficient, and necessary in my view, that we plan to issue on Thursday a statement of concern and hope that the matter can still be resolved amicably in the Nebraska judicial system.

THE WHITE HOUSE

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TO: JAB III

Please note the attached memo from Faith to EM. It has not yet been sent, but is on her desk awaiting signature.

The purpose of the memo is quite obvious. I have discussed it with Fred Fielding, and his recommendation is that we maintain our hands-off policy regarding this case. However, if we feel we have to do something, Fred says the most we should do is meet with a group (as petitioners to their government) to hear their concerns, though explaining our position of non-interference. Fred's recommendation is consistent with Justice's views of this case.

I'll talk to Faith and suggest she not send the memo if that is your decision.

Thanks.


JAMES W. CICCONI
Office of James A. Baker, III
456-2174

DRAFT

Statement for the Principal Deputy Press Secretary

Statement Concerning Nebraska Situation

The President has been apprised of numerous situations arising in the State of Nebraska involving conflicts between religious schools and the State education and law enforcement authorities.

The controversies have involved jailings of ministers, criminal prosecutions of parents who have their children in religious schools, impositions of heavy fines on church schools, refusals to let some graduates of religious colleges teach in those schools, and the padlocking of at least one church -- all of these apparently because the pastors, teachers, parents and principals object on religious grounds to certain Nebraska statutes. Most recently, parents of school children have been jailed.

Because, therefore, religious civil rights protected by the Constitution of the United States may be involved in this situation, and because the situation has bred such extraordinarily high feelings in Nebraska, the President has expressed his concern that the matter be resolved peaceably.

It would appear that early reconsideration of the basic legal problem by the courts might be a means of resolving the difficulty. Certainly a new judicial resolution, if possible, would be far preferable to the continuation of the present situation.

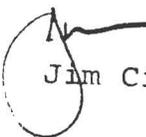
NOTE: 12/12/83 - Hand-delivered from Mike Uhlmann's Office

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

25 October 1982

TO: ED HARPER

The attached statement was issued late Friday to the wire services only. It is being flaked with New Right groups by OPL.


Jim Cicconi

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 22, 1982

STATEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY

The President was pleased to learn that a step toward accomodation has been reached in Nebraska over the subject of teacher certification for church-operated schools. He is grateful his Department of Education could be helpful in mediating the matter and happy that the Reverend Everett Sileven of Louisville, Nebraska, can rejoin his family.

In accord with America's historic commitment to diversity in education, the President expressed hope this spirit of cooperation will lead to a solution consistent with both the state's responsibility to ensure high-quality education and the right of parents to organize and support church-related schools for their children. He applauds the renewed effort to work within the framework of the law.

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