

Remarks by the Honorable Farris Bryant  
Chairman, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations  
before the  
National Conference of State Legislative Leaders  
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I welcome the opportunity to meet once again with the legislative leaders of the states. I saw a number of you in late September at the meeting of the National Legislative Conference in San Antonio, and as Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations it was my privilege to welcome many of you to the Conference on Legislative Leadership that was held in Washington, D. C. in mid October under the Commission's sponsorship.

The sponsorship of such a conference was a new experience for the Advisory Commission. It was undertaken in response to suggestions by the Government Operations Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives following their review of the Advisory Commission's first five years. The Advisory Commission, as most of you know, was set up in 1959 by Congress as a permanent, independent agency charged with the dual task of analyzing intergovernmental problems and formulating recommendations for their solution.

The Commission is a 26 member bipartisan body with representation from all levels of government. A majority of the members are elected State and local officials--four governors, three State legislators, four mayors and three county officials. The Federal Government is represented by three senators, three congressmen and three officials of

the executive branch. Three public members complete the Commission roster. Because of its composition the Commission brings to bear on intergovernmental problems the judgment of law makers and executives from all levels of government and from widely diverse backgrounds.

The three State legislative members of the Commission are outstanding colleagues of yours; one of them is your distinguished president, Senator C. George DeStefano of Rhode Island, a second is the past president of this organization--and a gracious host at this meeting--Speaker Jesse Unruh of California, the third is the young and very talented Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, the Honorable Ben Barnes. It is a great honor to serve with these gentlemen. They are able, constructive members of the Commission; and in the Commission's deliberations they are vigorous and effective representatives of the legislative branch of State government.

I was invited to discuss with you some of the problems facing us in the field of education and some of the resources available to the States.

Public education in this Nation dates from the early 1800's. Under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Horace Mann of Massachusetts, Henry Barnard of Connecticut and many others, our unique pattern of tax supported free education was fashioned.

The pattern as we now know it did not emerge full blown. Our schools are the product of nearly two centuries of argument and debate, of trial and error, of crisis and compromise.

Our system of publicly supported education and our use of the system gives us reason to be proud. We provide schooling for more

than 30 million pupils at the elementary level, more than 12 million at the secondary level and more than 4 million at the college level. All of this is in addition to the 6.5 million pupils in private elementary and secondary schools and 2 million students in private colleges and universities.

With enrollments of this magnitude it is a small wonder that education is the most costly of the catalog of services that States and localities are called upon to provide. More than a third of all State and local general expenditures go for education--the amount exceeds 35 billion dollars a year now and it is still growing. Let me emphasize that the lion's share of the cost of public education continues to be paid by the States and localities. The State-local share of expenditures for elementary and secondary education exceeds 92%; less than 8% comes from the Federal Government. And State and local government pay two-thirds of the cost of public higher education. Here again the Federal contribution is less than 8%; tuition, endowment earnings and gifts provide the remainder.

Indeed we do have reason to be proud of the progress that we have made. Teachers today are better prepared and better paid. Schools are better equipped and better managed.

But there is another side to the coin. All the problems have not been solved, and some of them are very stubborn indeed. The fourth Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica was published in 1800. Under the blunt descriptive heading "School Teachers Underpaid" was the following comment: "At present the salary of a country schoolmaster...is not greater than a ploughman can earn...the consequence of which is that

this, which is in fact an honorable, because useful, profession, is now sinking into contempt." How many times have you as legislators heard a similar complaint? In a world of change, some things apparently are constant.

Despite all that we've done, much remains undone. And it is to you, the States' policy makers, that the people look for leadership.

Let me note a few of the items of "unfinished business" that will claim your attention.

It is a sad fact, but true, that many of our youth who are most in need of education are not getting it. Low income, lack of motivation and not enough schooling make up the vicious "cycle of poverty." School dropouts feel negative toward education and pass this attitude on to their children who in turn are likely to become dropouts. A Department of Labor survey indicates that about 45 percent of the youngsters from families with incomes under \$3,000 do not finish school, and about one-fourth of the youngsters from families in the \$3,000 to \$5,000 income bracket will be dropouts. Coupled with this is the fact that earnings of high school graduates are substantially higher than the earnings of dropouts. There is no magic formula--no panacea--but, clearly, education must play a key role if we are to succeed in our efforts to break the "cycle of poverty."

The Advisory Commission recently has completed an extensive study of "Fiscal Balance in the American Federal System." The study uncovered alarming fiscal disparities in our great metropolitan areas between the central cities, where many of the problems are, and the suburbs, where much of the fiscal capacity is located.

We found, for example, that educational expenditures in the central cities are lower than in the suburbs, not only on a per capita basis but on a per pupil basis as well. We found, moreover, that local taxes measured against income are more than one-third higher in the central city than in the suburbs. And we also found that State aid to local schools is distributed in such a way that the grants to central cities are lower both on per capita and on a per pupil basis than grants to suburbs. Yet the central city is where most of the serious pockets of poverty are located. It's where the number of school dropouts is critical. It's where the need is greatest for the effective utilization of our educational resources.

With these findings in mind, the Advisory Commission developed three specific recommendations for State action, steps that an individual State may take on its own without reference to other States or to the National government.

First, the Commission recommended that the States change their school aid formulas to include factors that reflect the higher cost of educating "disadvantaged" children, especially in areas of high population density.

The thrust of the recommendation is obvious. It costs more per pupil to provide "adequate" education to children from slum areas than it does to "adequately" educate children from higher income areas. The reasons are many: One is the need for more personalized attention. Another is the need for more remedial classes. Still another is the desirability of keeping the schools open in the evenings, on the

weekends and in the summer to offer both "catch-up" and "enrichment" instruction.

Many State aid formulas recognize differences in the fiscal capacities and the tax efforts of school districts but few formulas take into account the "third part of the equation"--the higher cost of educating the poorer child. If we want to break the "cycle of poverty," here is a good place to start.

The Commission also recommends that the States provide county-wide or region-wide school property taxing districts. This step, of course, is suggested for those States where school financing has not already been placed on a county-wide or regional basis.

An abundance of evidence points up the accelerated erosion of school finances and school facilities in major parts of many of our metropolitan areas. The gap between per pupil expenditures in the suburbs and in the central cities is widening rapidly in many places. Ways must be found for giving the schools of these problem areas a tax base broad enough to provide adequate support. The Commission's proposal is one way to harness the resources of the entire metropolitan area to meet the area's educational needs.

In Florida we have attempted to solve the problem of educational disparities in metropolitan areas by providing county wide school districts. The Commission's recommendation does not go that far. The areawide taxing district proposed by the Commission would be for financing only; the operation of the schools would remain in the hands of the present school district authorities.

The third Commission recommendation calls for the sharing of high cost educational facilities or programs on a multidistrict basis.

The quality of education often is directly related to the ready availability of specialized facilities and specially trained personnel. Specialization in turn relates to the economies of scale. A school system or district serving a small population may not have a sufficient number of pupils enrolled in any one vocational training or college preparatory program to justify the cost of providing specialized teachers or separate classes. When the unit costs of specialized education are prohibitive the small district can offer only a general, common-denominator program of education that does not adequately prepare its graduates either for employment or for college. Similarly, small districts cannot provide special programs for the physically or mentally handicapped.

By sharing specialized facilities, the participating districts may improve the quality and increase the variety of their educational offerings.

Problems in education, as in other fields, frequently have interstate implications. In the South, the West and the Northeast, groups of States have entered into interstate compacts to deal with special problems in higher education. And the new Education Commission of the States is an imaginative effort by the 45 member States to pool their knowledge and information and to join forces in exploring ways to tackle emerging problems.

One "intrastate" problem with "interstate" implications is teacher certification.

Our population is mobile. Every year about one-fifth of our people move. Of the movers about one-half stay in the same county and another one-fourth stay in the same State. The remaining one-fourth, about 10 million people, move to a new State. Teachers, too, are mobile. One-fourth of them are teaching in a State other than the one in which they received their professional training.

Every State has established by law certification machinery. Its purpose is to make sure that only professionally competent teachers are authorized to teach. The professional requirements are quite similar from State to State, but not identical. Whether a teacher will encounter difficulty in moving from State to State is uncertain at best; too often it becomes a time consuming and frustrating ritual of unnecessary "i" dotting and "t" crossings. Most States must look beyond their own boundaries to find enough teachers. It's time we took steps to eliminate unneeded interstate barriers.

New York and nine other States now are working on the problem. An interstate compact that would authorize flexible teacher certification agreements is being developed. If these efforts are successful, it will be easier for States to share outstanding educational talent, and all of us, I think, will benefit.

In 1961, I was privileged to hear President Kennedy, speaking to a group in Miami, announce his hope that man would reach the moon during this decade. As I listened to him outline his bold dream, there came to me a realization that what we were doing in education was so inadequate, so short of the mark, that a revolution would be needed for us to realize President Kennedy's dramatic objective.



We are now in the midst of that revolution--it's evolutionary, of course, because this is a free country--but its results are revolutionary. Merely keeping up with the demands of an exploding population is a vast challenge. But in the perspective of history we stand on the threshold of a new civilization; not new in terms of the exotic products that will one day be commonplace, but new in the rate of change that has become the common-denominator of life and new in that the key to productive living will be the ability to comprehend, to anticipate and to make use of the rapid rate of change.

I suggest to you that with such a rate of change, self-sustaining and reproductive in the world today, there has been added a new dimension of living. By our mastery of the physical world we have started a chain reaction more pregnant with consequences for good and evil than all nuclear reaction, and this is the great challenge to education today.

If we are to be ready for tomorrow, we must prepare the students of today to live in a world, the outlines of which cannot yet be discerned; a world that sustains the impact of a continuing revolution. Our students not only must understand and master what is, but also what may be in this world of geometric change.

Man lives today on an escalator. He goes to sleep in one world, he wakes up in another. He graduates from college in one world, but he must deal with and live in and succeed in another, and always it is changing. Today is yesterday's tomorrow and tomorrow has already dawned.

In such a world our leadership cannot sleep, nor our institutions remain static. We grow or die.