

# Nixon vs. Busing: Its Meaning

By G. C. Thelen, Jr.

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The big losers in President Nixon's delicate balancing act on Southern school desegregation appear to be the larger cities and towns below the Mason-Dixon line.

Almost inevitably this Fall they will have to meet stiffened Supreme Court requirements for approximate racial balancing in elementary and secondary schools.

But, unless Congress intervenes, the government won't help them buy and operate the additional buses necessary to meet the high court's April guidelines.

## Multiple Effects

Another casualty in the White House decision yesterday in the Austin, Tex., school case was Elliott L. Richardson, secretary of health, education and welfare.

Nixon specifically rejected the Austin desegregation plan drawn up by HEW and approved by Richardson and by implication cast aside Richardson's Administration—adopted strategy of firmly but quietly enforcing the Supreme Court's toughened desegregation requirements without criticizing the ruling itself.

Nixon gained these multiple effects from two actions:

• He said the Justice Department will appeal as "inconsistent with recent rulings of the U. S. Supreme Court" a decision by U. S. District Judge Jack B. Roberts. Roberts allowed part-time integration of Austin pupils rather than the HEW plan requiring extensive busing for full-time desegregation.

• The President also amended the Administration's pending \$1.5-billion emergency school assistance bill to forbid any expenditures for busing.

The net effect was to tell the South that the Administration opposes cross-town busing of students for desegregation but is required to enforce the letter of Supreme Court decisions. Past critics have called this tactic "hiding behind the court."

## Minimum Busing

"I am against busing as that term is commonly used in school desegregation cases," Nixon said.

The President underscored this message by instructing the Justice Department and HEW to "work with individual school districts to hold busing to the minimum required by law."

The White House statements marked a sharp change

in recent political tactics on the desegregation issue.

The Administration, on Richardson's advice, has for the past four months muted any displeasure with the high court's pro-busing decision and emphasized its intention to enforce the edict — hoping for minimum controversy and disruption in the South.

With rising opposition in Southern cities to cross-town busing, the President has seemed to reject this course because politically it ties the Administration too closely to busing advocates.

## Rebuke to Richardson

In a sharp rebuke to Richardson, Nixon said the government will disavow the HEW desegregation plan in its appeal of the Austin ruling, apparently because the department called for too much busing.

Richardson, also was forced in a statement to indicate that his department's position has been to "avoid the use of federal funds for the transportation aspects" of desegregation plans.

Just last week, by contrast, Richardson said about 3 percent, or \$2 million, of an initial \$75 million HEW desegregation—aid fund was spent last year for busing.