

Statement to SHRC special meeting re SB 155
March or April, 1967

I have been a staunch supporter of the Skokie Plan. I still believe that it ~~is~~ ^{might have worked} ~~is opposed to~~ ~~the~~ if given the full support of the real estate industry and community leadership groups. However, I recognize that such support has not been received and does not appear to be forthcoming in Skokie.

I have always opposed attempts to legislate fair housing in the belief that the individual should have the right to dispose of his property as he saw fit within the confines of public health, safety and welfare. But I realize now that the real abridgement of this freedom is not in the law itself but in the absence of law. I do not believe that it is the seller who fears fair housing legislation. It is the one who is staying that fears it. ~~because~~ In the absence of law he joins with others, including ^{many} members of the real estate industry, to coerce the ~~one~~ seller to do their bidding. A viable, workable law will eliminate this abuse of freedom and permit both buyer and seller the God-given right to acquire, hold or sell real property in a fully free manner.

On the assumption that we are on legally sound ground I believe this commission should seek the permission of the Board of Trustees to appear

in Springfield to support the concept of a state fair housing law. This recommendation should not be construed as ~~app~~ my approving of the concept of such legislation on a local basis.

We are meeting tonight to specifically discuss Senate Bill 155 and the hearings scheduled for April 11th. Although this hearing is for one specific bill, I believe this commission, should it be decided to go down there, should comment on House Bills 675 and 676 as Senate Bill 155 will be judged partially in comparison to other fair housing bills in the legislative hopper. It has been alledged that H. B. 675 is patterned after the Spokie Plan and has the support of the real estate industry. Whether patterned after our plan or not is a little importance but it is my understanding that some extravagant claims are being made about the great success of our plan. I therefore feel that we should go on record on the following points in any testimony given in Springfield.

(1) The Spokie Plan in extending the feature of a homeowner to instruct his realtor to dischriminate in the sale of his home, simply recognized a legal right that existed or at least was not specifically prohibited by any state or national law or court decision.

However, the Skokie ^{H.R.} ~~Plan~~ Commission would oppose this option as a part of state law as it legitimatizes an act of discrimination which we believe to be morally wrong and contrary the best interests of all citizens of this state.

House Bill 676

2. We take serious exception to the extravagant claims of success we understand are being circulated here in Springfield. Such claims did not originate from the Skokie H.R.C. or anyone in an official capacity from our village. A statement could then be made similar to my closing remarks to the North Central Property Owners Assn. (attached)

3. House Bill 676, either as a companion bill to 675 or by itself should not become law. The Illinois Supreme Court has already decreed that a municipality can enact fair housing legislation. We believe that the state should take a permissive stance on this. ~~In the absence of~~ Even with a state law, a municipality should have the right to pass more comprehensive legislation for its own citizens if it so chooses.

I have specific observations about S. B. 155 and what position I feel we should take. I will reserve comment until we reach that point in our discussion.

I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO STAND HERE AND STATE THAT THE SKOKIE PLAN HAS BEEN AN UNEQUIVOCALLY SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT, BUT I CANNOT, I BELIEVE THAT IT HAS HAD GREAT VALUE IN MAKING FAIR HOUSING OFFICIAL VILLAGE POLICY AND IN SERVING AS THE BASIS FOR EDUCATION THROUGH FORUMS SUCH AS THIS MEETING TONIGHT. ~~BECAUSE~~ THE "WHY" OF THE SKOKIE PLAN IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE "WHAT." BUT TO SAY THAT THE SKOKIE PLAN HAS OPENED UP OUR VILLAGE OR THAT WE HAVE FAIR HOUSING HERE WOULD BE A CRUEL HOAX AND A DISTORTION OF FACT. I COULD STAND HERE AND RELATE ALL SORTS OF EXCUSES AS TO WHY THE PLAN WAS NOT MORE EFFECTIVE, BUT TO DO SO IS TO AVOID THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION. THE PLAN IS AN EXPERIMENT AS OUR REQUEST FOR A ONE YEAR TRIAL PERIOD CLEARLY IMPLIED. WE RECOGNIZED THE IMPERFECTIONS IN THE PLAN AND THAT FOR IT TO BE SUCCESSFUL, IT REQUIRED THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY. WE DID NOT GET IT. BUT SUCCESS OR FAILURE OR SOMEWHERE INBETWEEN, SKOKIE, ALONE ALONG ~~WITH~~ THE NORTH SHORE, IS SEEKING TO DEAL WITH A SITUATION BEFORE IT BECOMES THE PROBLEM OF CITIES LIKE EVANSTON AND JOLIET OR THE CRISIS OF CHICAGO AND WAUKEGAN. PERHAPS THOSE WHO ARE SO CRITICAL OR AT BEST DISINTERESTED WILL, IN THEIR CHARITY, DISMISS US AS MEN OF LA MANCHA WHO DREAMED THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM!