15 July 1964
Washtenaw County Conservatives
George F. Lemble, CLU, President

Remarks by Washtenaw County Conservatives at

This is a formally approved statement by Washtenaw County Conservatives, a non-partisan group of citizens of this community.

I would first like to clarify an erroneous impression which may have been created by members of this Board from a headlined newspaper report of the June 24 Public Hearing on this same subject:

1) There was no organized "attack" on the Report by Washtenaw County Conservatives, or by our membership.

2) The newspaper article strongly indicated that the only persons questioning the Report were Conservatives. There is no basis in fact for this assumption. In fact, questions were raised by others, including parents of Jones School children--a fact pointedly not reported in the newspaper article.

I wish tonight to bring to the attention of this Board several aspects of the proposed Jones School action which may not have been cited previously:

1) The proposition is a most radical departure from normal procedure, and is nothing more than an unproved and unsubstantiated hypothesis. In fact, where it has been tried elsewhere, it has failed to produce the hoped-for results.

2) The proposed action is clearly contrary to the spirit of established law and judicial decision. There are two significant citations:

(a) In the case of Bell vs. School City of Gary, the court said: "...requiring certain students to leave their neighborhood..."
and friends and be transferred to another school — simply for
the purpose of balancing the races of the various schools would
be indeed a violation of the equal protection clause of the
Fourteenth Amendment”. (We will be glad to loan our copy of this
decision to the Board).

Paragraph (b) of Title IV of Public Law 88-352 — this is the
1964 Federal Civil Rights Act — says, "‘— ‘desegregate’
shall not mean the assignment to public schools in order to over-
come racial imbalance”. (We also have a copy of this Act for the
Board).

This proposed action may very well introduce other problems which
will be even more difficult to solve in the future. The effect on
the children involved may be more damaging psychologically than
the value of any questionably possible educational advantage.

For example:

(a) The very remoteness from the home may tend to reduce the
responsiveness of the child to the family, and of the family
to the child. Creation of intra-family trauma would surely be
a most unhappy by-product of any public action.

(b) Bus-riding time is an absolute waste, a negative value which
adds nothing to cultural or other development. In fact, it
introduces additional traumatic factors.

(c) The Jones School students now associate daily with other chil-
dren who are their economic and social peers. The proposed
change would tend to place them in a different relationship
in this sense — which could work to significant psychologi-
cal disadvantage.

Would refer the Board to the 1963 Progress Report of the Perry
School project, which contains such information as (and we quote):

"It has been found that there is no significant difference in either intelligence or achievement between the Negroes attending the integrated school and the all-Negro one." (Interestingly, this premise is supported by data contained in the Report to this Board).

"It is evident that merely integrating the schools is not the solution to the problem of the education of the lower-class youth."

(5) A few years ago the boundaries for Jones School were changed, taking a large number of white children out of the Jones district. Were this change simply reversed, the ratio of Negro-white might adjust dramatically.

(6) The Report praises the value of programs of "enrichment," and "compensatory" programs to make up for environmental deficiencies in the area. Then it adds that "special personnel are not immediately available" -- precisely what is demanded by the conclusions of the report.

Further, if bussing occurs, such personnel (unavailable as they seem to be) will be needed in every single school to which Jones School students are bussed. Thus, the proposed project will complicate the very problem which it purports to solve.

(7) The wishes of the parents of the Jones School children ought to be of prime concern to the Board. Apparently there has been no survey of their attitudes and wishes; presumably such project is still in the planning stage.

The function of the School Board is education. The Board has no
proper authority to use its power to rebuild the social structure of the community, nor is there any charge to the Board to develop optimum racial mixtures."

If the Board were to assume such authority, a most dangerous precedent would be established. It would be tantamount to assumption of unlimited power to destroy the neighborhood school concept, and to erect ideas of social reform through the school system.

I do not believe that this School Board will establish such precedent or exceed their proper authority.

George P. Lemble, C.L.U.
President