

Citation: CORE to Mayor Clinton, December 28, 1962. Folder "Minority Housing 1962," Box 14. Seattle Office of the Mayor Records, 5210-01. Seattle Municipal Archives.

A national organization with affiliated local groups working

**CONGRESS OF  
CORE  
RACIAL EQUALITY**

SEATTLE CORE  
P.O. BOX 299  
SEATTLE 11, WASHINGTON

*Tow R12 J.C.*

December 28, 1962 **MAYOR'S OFFICE**

**DEC 31 1962**

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assistant to the director  
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Hon. Gordon S. Clinton  
Seattle Municipal Building  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mayor Clinton:

I am writing to express my disappointment and, I am sure, that of our members, with your recent recommendations to the City Council regarding minority housing in Seattle. Contrary to the inaccurate statements appearing in the press, your recommendations to the Council were hardly consistent with the recommendations of your Citizens' Advisory Committee On Minority Housing.

You have rejected the recommendation of your advisory committee that the City Council enact at this time an ordinance prohibiting housing discrimination based on race, creed, color, religion and national origin, with criminal penalties for violation.

I should like to review briefly the events leading up to your rejection of the advisory committee's principal recommendation, in order to point out with precision the inconsistency between your recommendations to the City Council and the advisory committee's recommendations to you.

On June 18, 1962, in your annual message to the City Council, you said:

"I believe that this is the appropriate time for the City of Seattle to commission a representative group of citizens as an advisory committee on minority housing to study the entire local situation and to determine whether there is a need for governmental action. This committee should be instructed further that, if it finds action is necessary, it recommend programs, adequate financing and necessary legislation."

In July, 1962, pursuant to that message, the advisory committee was appointed by you. In outlining the committee's responsibilities, you said that the

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committee should

"Develop a recommended plan of action  
if it finds that the city of Seattle  
should take steps to solve the problem."

On October 19, 1962, your advisory committee held an all day public hearing, at which representatives of numerous civic organizations presented oral and written statements to the effect that housing discrimination is widespread in Seattle. The committee drew, among other things, on the resources of the University of Washington's Sociology Department and School of Social Work. Corrective legislation was almost ~~un~~animously urged by the civic groups. The sole dissenters were the Seattle Real Estate Board and the Seattle Apartment Operators Association.

On December 17, 1962, after two months study and deliberation, your advisory committee reported to you with a scholarly, well documented and comprehensive report. The committee unanimously recognized the presence of and the harmful effects of housing discrimination. Eleven out of fifteen committee members drafted and recommended immediate enactment of an anti-discrimination housing ordinance with penalties for non-compliance. In so doing, this decisive majority of your advisory committee was following the terms of your instruction that "a plan of action be developed if needed."

On December 24, 1962, in a message to the City Council, you rejected the principal feature of that "plan of action", by recommending that no housing ordinance be enacted at this time.

You did recommend that a Human Rights Commission be established, and that the City Council create a municipal listing agency which would receive housing listings available without discrimination.

I respectfully suggest that in terms of solving the serious housing problems confronting minority families, the net effect of your proposals--if adopted--will be zero. A Human Rights Commission with no enforcement powers will be in a position to do little more than study a problem which has too long been the subject of too much study and too little action. Your recommendation is essentially a request for more study and continued inaction. This, despite the fact that previous studies have consistently arrived at the same clear conclusions, namely: increased fire hazards, crime, delinquency, disease, broken homes and housing discrimination are substantially related.

Your recommendation that a municipal listing service operate alone, without an prohibitive ordinance, might well be deemed an affront to your advisory committee. In their report to you, they made it clear that the listing service would merely

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be an interim device, pending enactment of an effective open housing ordinance. It was not purported to be a solution or even a partial solution to the total problem. Yet you offer the listing service as a corrective device. You would treat cancer with an aspirin tablet.

I respectfully suggest that by operating a city housing listing service without at the same time protecting minority persons from the harmful effects of active discriminators, the city will have placed the stamp of governmental approval on their immorality. The city will be saying, in effect: "All who would not discriminate, use our clearing house service; all who wish to discriminate, to contribute to fire hazard conditions, disease, crime, delinquency and de facto school segregation, continue doing just that; you have the official blessings of your city--which will not tolerate gambling after March 1963, but will continue studying and tolerating housing discrimination and its evil ramifications." Will the Mayor please reconsider his position?

I should like to take this opportunity to commend the advisory committee Chairman, Mr. Alfred J. Westberg, those comprising the eleven member majority of his committee, and the committee staff for submitting an excellent report. I have sent copies of this letter to members of the City Council in the hope that they will see the wisdom of that report, and concurrently, their Mayor's error in not following it.

Yours sincerely,

*Reginald H. Alleyne, Jr.*  
Reginald H. Alleyne, Jr.  
Chairman, Seattle CORE

cc: Seattle City Council  
Mr. Alfred J. Westberg  
Seattle Urban League  
Seattle NAACP  
Seattle Times  
Seattle Post Intelligencer  
KZAM KZETTE  
CORE West Coast Field Secretary