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DOLE INTRODUCES SENATE RESOLUTION TO COMMEMORATE  
30th ANNIVERSARY OF "BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION"

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole today introduced a Senate Concurrent Resolution designating May 17, 1984 as a national day of commemoration for the 30th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision. The landmark Supreme Court decision against the Topeka Board of Education cleared the way for public school desegregation.

Following is the text of Senator Dole's statement introducing the legislation:

Thirty-four years ago, a little girl named Linda Brown from Topeka, Kansas, asked her parents why she had to be bused two miles to attend an all-black school, when her white playmates attended another school only a few blocks away. Linda's parents petitioned the federal courts for an answer. After four years of litigation, Linda's question was finally posed to the members of the nation's highest tribunal. And on May 17, 1954, they gave an answer which shook the nation.

Linda's question forced the Supreme Court and the country to come to grips with the warped hypocrisy of the doctrine of separate but equal. The "separate" had proved to be nothing more than a way to tell black Americans they were second class citizens. The "equal" had proved to be nothing more than lip service to the dictates of the Fourteenth Amendment. Linda Brown gave the court an opportunity to expose the cruel hoax of Plessy v. Ferguson. "Separate," the Court wrote, was "inherently unequal." The nation's schools were to be desegregated with all deliberate speed.

Kansas was able to avoid the trauma and violence which plagued some other jurisdictions in the wake of the Brown decision. Perhaps this was because Kansans remembered their violent past: "Bleeding Kansas" our state was called -- a state forged in the white-hot tragedy of the Civil War. In a state born in a war fought in the name of slavery's extinction, Kansans could recognize the irony of a dual educational system. It was with complete and immediate acceptance that Kansas responded to the Supreme Court's historic directive.

In 1955, Kansas ended its system of segregated elementary schools, and by 1961, not one black child in Topeka continued to attend an all-black school. As with so many other jurisdictions which share our tragic

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history, we still have a way to go. But our record of progress is one of which we can be very proud. For instance, more than 70% of all black students in Kansas now attend fully integrated schools, as compared to 40.8% for all border states, and 37.1% for the nation.

To mark the 30th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, Washburn University in Topeka will be holding a two-day program commemorating that landmark decision. It is my hope that by passing this Resolution, Congress can encourage others to follow Washburn's lead, either through formal activities or simply private reflection. Perhaps we have all become too distracted by disagreements over how best to remedy lingering vestiges of de jure segregation, and too consumed by debate about the degree to which our current obligations arise from Constitutional mandate or moral imperative. May 17 would be an appropriate time for all to come together in reaffirming our dedication and commitment to the basic tenets of the 1954 Brown decision; to take heart in the progress that has been made; and to look forward to the day when there are no longer "black schools," or "white schools," but just schools.