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## A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHOICE

### Educational inequality and the continuing significance of racial segregation

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**P**oliticians and experts typically refer to schools as “failing” if they are filled with low-income children with low-test scores. Faced with enormous challenges, such schools may be doing as well as they possibly can, though. African-American children from low-income urban families frequently suffer from health problems that lead to school absences; from frequent or sustained parental unemployment that provokes family crises; from rent or mortgage defaults causing household moves that entail changes of teachers and schools, with a resulting loss of instructional continuity; and from living in communities with high levels of crime and disorder, where schools spend more time on discipline and less on instruction and where stress depresses academic success. With school segregation continuing to increase,<sup>1</sup> these children are often isolated from the positive peer influences of middle-class children who were regularly read to when young, whose homes are filled with books, whose adult environment includes many college-educated professional role models, whose parents have greater educational experience and the motivation such experience brings and who have the time, confidence, and ability to monitor schools for academic standards.<sup>2</sup>

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There is little chance we can substantially narrow the achievement gap without breaking up heavy concentrations of low-income minority children in urban schools, giving these children opportunities to attend majority middle-class schools outside their distressed neighborhoods.

## ***The Romneys***

Delegates booed Mitt Romney at this year's NAACP convention, as they had booed another Romney 43 years earlier. The speaker then was Mitt's father, newly installed as President Nixon's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Delegates were furious about an administration plan to waive deadlines for Southern school districts to desegregate. In the next year, however, George Romney launched an ambitious program to overwhelm white resistance and integrate the suburbs – not by busing schoolchildren but by forcing suburbs to accept black residents.<sup>3</sup>

The son has also made a seemingly bold proposal to address the achievement gap: low-income and special education students should be allowed to transfer to any public school in their state. But Mitt's proposal is more shadow than substance. The differing approaches of George and Mitt to the ongoing national embarrassment of racial segregation mark how far we have come in abandoning the civil rights era's modest dreams, and how far we must go to re-ignite them.

Mitt Romney's education plan, released in a speech and background paper on May 23, differs little from the policies of the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Romney would apparently reduce federally-mandated sanctions for schools that don't make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) in raising test scores, and instead provide "report cards" on schools' performance – something already required by federal law for a decade.<sup>5</sup> He would require states to lift limits on the number of charter and on-line schools, only a step beyond Obama's effort to require states to raise those limits substantially.<sup>6</sup> He would permit federal education funds to be used for private school tuition if states adopted a private school voucher system for their own funds and required students who used such vouchers to take the same tests as public schools.<sup>7</sup> With private for-profit firms now managing a growing number of charter and on-line schools, vouchers would further accelerate the *de facto* privatization of education already underway.

But Romney did advance one radical new proposal: each state must permit any low income or special education student to transfer to any public school in that state.

Public school choice, permitting students to enroll outside their neighborhoods but within their districts, has been a staple of education reform for a decade. Permitting students to choose schools in *other* districts, as Mitt has proposed, would be a dramatic departure, giving low-income black students the right to opt into affluent mostly white suburban schools. It is hard to imagine suburban voters allowing Congress to adopt this – even in the few Northern liberal states where voluntary inter-district choice plans have been authorized (Boston's Metco plan, for example), suburbs have been loathe to participate.<sup>8</sup>

Yet Romney's plan is based on an accurate insight. In our largest low-income and minority cities, intra-district choice can do little to narrow gaps because most same-district schools are demographically similar to students' home schools.

Busing poor black children out of neighborhoods with accumulating disadvantages is not only politically inconceivable but practically impossible – the distances are now simply too great. Yet without integrated education, there is little hope that the educational struggles of the "truly disadvantaged" (the term was coined by William Julius Wilson a generation ago) can be remedied. And without integrating residential neighborhoods, there is little hope of integrating education.

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Residential integration is now beyond the pale politically and perhaps inconceivable practically as well. But it was not always so; we should give the policy a second look.

Recent research confirms that integration not only benefits black students but also does no harm to white classmates, provided the concentration of disadvantaged children is not great enough to slow the instructional pace or deflect time from academics to discipline.<sup>9</sup> When children whose parents are well educated comprise a strong classroom majority, all students benefit from the academic culture established by that majority.

African-American children's lifelong outcomes improve when they attend integrated schools, at no cost to the outcomes of middle class white classmates. Some evidence comes from careful studies of court-ordered school integration that took place during the 1960s and '70s.<sup>10</sup> A recent quasi-experiment in Montgomery County, Maryland provides further confirmation.<sup>11</sup> Integration is no panacea, but without it other reforms to raise the achievement of disadvantaged children have less promise.

### ***The continuing significance of race***

Romney's plan would encounter enormous practical as well as political difficulties, unaddressed in the single throwaway line in his campaign proposal.<sup>12</sup> Would the federal government pay for low-income students' transportation to the suburbs? Would urban districts have to reimburse suburban districts for the costs of educating transfer students and if so, at what rate – the sometimes lower per-pupil urban rate, or the per-pupil rate of the affluent suburb? The Romney background paper says that suburbs would only have to accept low-income and special education students if their districts had capacity to do so, but doesn't say who would regulate "capacity". Would the federal government prohibit suburbs from lowering class size to create less space for transfers, or from closing schools if enrollments in their immediate neighborhoods declined?

School choice plans can potentially narrow the achievement gap between black and white students only if they are implemented on a metropolitan area-wide basis, so that black students from racially homogenous cities can choose to attend school in suburbs where the problems of disadvantaged youth are not overwhelming. In most cases, such suburbs are predominantly white. In our largest, heavily low-income and minority cities, intra-district choice plans can do little to narrow the gap; except for a handful of states where urban schools are situated in county-wide districts, most district schools to which students can transfer are not demographically much different from these students' home schools. But when schools consisting mostly of white middle-class students are integrated by accepting some low-income African-American students, results are more positive.

Policymakers, even liberals, mostly consider school integration no longer practical, perhaps not even desirable. Some reject the ideal (and necessity) of an integrated society by caricaturing it as based on a claim that a black child 'has to sit next to a white child to be successful'. Some middle class blacks, understandably uninterested in experiencing (or asking their children to experience) white hostility in integrated neighborhoods and painfully aware of the resistance, even violence, that characterized past attempts at integration, reasonably seek the security and comfort of all-black middle class suburbs. Both black and white policymakers, ignoring the social science research that has established the importance of peer and community influences on academic achievement, seek ways – charter schools that emphasize discipline and order, for example – to raise the achievement of low-income black youth in segregated ghetto schools. These efforts are mostly unsuccessful, but even when charter schools claim success, apparent gains are small and may be attributable

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to admissions that rely on self-selection by the most motivated parents and children, and to the attrition of failing students.<sup>13</sup>

Today, the issue of racial segregation has disappeared from national politics, along with the idea that something might be fundamentally wrong with existing conditions, something that requires strong governmental action. The conventional belief now is that everything reasonable has been done, and that civil rights policies may even have gone so far as to be unfair to whites. Policymakers across the political spectrum have largely accepted the ‘color blind’ view of the current Supreme Court majority that aside from random acts of racial discrimination, we more or less live in a world where residential segregation is a reflection of individual choice within a largely free market. In this view, low-income African Americans are unlikely to live in white suburbs only because they simply can’t afford to do so. The racial divide is now taken for granted.

In reality, living and land-use patterns are not the result of unencumbered individual choices or free markets, but the result of explicit policies by government to separate the American population by race.

The consensus characterization of segregation as “de facto” is blind, sometimes willfully so, to our well documented but now largely forgotten 20<sup>th</sup> century history, in which the massive influence of government policy explicitly assigned whites to suburbs and blacks to cities. And it is correspondingly blind to the extent to which the effects of these public policies now endure, and will continue to endure, without equally explicit government policy to reverse them. It took much time and effort to create the pattern of segregation by class and race that we see around us today. It will take much time and effort to unravel it, if we wish to do so. But first we must see it for what it is: a system of racial separation, the result of purposeful government policy with ongoing consequences.

Schools today remain segregated because neighborhoods remain segregated.<sup>14</sup>

True, in many metropolitan areas, black working- and middle-class families have escaped central cities. “Changing neighborhoods” now exist in “first ring” suburbs bordering those cities. Like urban changing neighborhoods of the past, these suburbs have become temporarily integrated en route to becoming fully (or nearly so) minority. As African-Americans in these suburbs increase, whites typically abandon them, relocating to second ring suburbs farther out. Details vary by city, but one characteristic remains: The lowest-income black families, with children most in need, remain trapped and isolated in historically black ghettos.

Busing to distant schools is a flawed remedy, both impractical and undesirable. With the previous generation’s busing battles now far in the past, we can more easily acknowledge the merits of objections voiced by parents, mostly white but black as well, to busing as a way to integrate schools. Long bus rides are not good for children. Children transported to schools far from home are excluded from neighborhood friendships, both at home and in schools to which they are bused. Busing makes it difficult, if not impossible, for children to participate in after-school activities. Busing far from home destroys the possibility of parental involvement in their neighborhood schools. In the terminology of organizational theorist Albert O. Hirschman, choice plans that bus children away from their neighborhood schools provide parents with “exit” as an excuse not to exercise “voice” that might monitor and improve those schools.<sup>15</sup> When parents send children far from home to attend school, parents lose the loyalty to and sense of ownership of their neighborhood schools that have traditionally been strengths of American public education.

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There is also the question of those students left behind. No matter how well government advertises choice options, no matter how strenuously the media and educators urge parents to avail themselves of them, parents most likely to exercise choice will be those with the greatest ambition for their children, the greatest motivation, and the greatest educational background themselves. The experience of urban charter schools confirms this pattern. Even if choice were mandatory for low-income families – if all low-income parents were required to choose schools for their children and there was no default neighborhood option (a requirement not part of Mitt Romney’s proposal) – the most ambitious, motivated and educated parents would be those most likely to choose integrated schools with higher average achievement, but farther from home. Children bused to these distant integrated schools would probably benefit despite the drawbacks of attending school outside one’s neighborhood. But children left behind in neighborhood schools (whether by default or by choice) would be harmed by having to attend schools with even more concentrated disadvantage than these schools had before choice was implemented. Romney’s plan includes no obligation for states to pour additional resources into urban schools to compensate, albeit poorly, for the loss of more motivated peers.

The obstacles facing Mitt Romney’s plan ensure that it could not accomplish significant integration and will therefore leave the achievement gap mostly undisturbed. But his father offered an alternative. As HUD Secretary, George Romney tried to force white middle-class suburbs to permit construction of low- and moderate-income housing that would bring black families into their neighborhoods and black children into their schools. He denied federal funds to suburbs that refused such action. He was so uncompromising in pursuit of this goal that he was eventually replaced by Nixon, who insisted that no suburb should be forced to integrate.

### ***Loosening the ‘white noose’***

George Romney, a former automobile company executive, was governor of Michigan from 1963 to 1969 and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development during Nixon’s first term. A Republican, George Romney was the most vociferous advocate within his party of civil rights for African Americans.<sup>16</sup> By the time he ran for president in 1968, he had become keenly aware of the connections between residential segregation, school segregation, and racial inequality. As an uncomfortable eyewitness to Detroit’s explosive 1967 riot, George Romney also understood the harmful role the federal government had played to promote segregation in the past, and the more positive role to promote integration it could play in the future. He would bring that understanding to Washington.

Before his 1962 election as Michigan governor, George Romney had been a delegate to a Michigan state constitutional convention, where he led efforts to include civil rights provisions. The new constitution created a state commission on civil rights, the only such constitutionally required agency in the nation, with the authority to enforce the right to “purchase, mortgage, lease or rent private housing” without racial discrimination.<sup>17</sup>

In his inaugural speech as governor, Romney called residential segregation “the most crucial and pressing problem” in civil rights.<sup>18</sup> His newly appointed members of the Civil Rights Commission conducted statewide hearings, concluding that a “discriminatory housing market, coupled with sub-standard housing in negro sections[,] effectively prevented negro families from upgrading their living conditions.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1962, George Romney led efforts to purge those he deemed right-wing segregationist extremists from the Michigan Republican Party,<sup>20</sup> and at the 1964 Republican National Convention, he attempted unsuccessfully to amend the party platform to include a denunciation of “extremism.”<sup>21</sup> In the presidential election, Governor Romney publicly refused

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to support Barry Goldwater, the Republican nominee; Romney's Michigan campaign organization urged voters to split their tickets by voting for Democrat Lyndon Johnson for president and Republican George Romney for governor. Romney accused Goldwater of pursuing a "southern strategy" of appealing to racist white voters in the South and "white backlash" voters in the North, who interpreted Goldwater's advocacy of "states' rights" as a commitment to diminish or eliminate a federal government role in promoting racial integration of schools, workplaces, and public accommodations. Barry Goldwater's willingness to accept support from segregationist Southerners who had traditionally voted solidly Democratic raised the question, Romney said, "of whether the campaign is a racist campaign." It was inconsistent, Romney charged, for the Goldwater platform to reject federal civil rights activity in the name of state, local, and individual action without saying anything about the need for state, local and individual action to combat racism. "States' rights" cannot take precedence over "human rights," Romney insisted.<sup>22</sup>

In 1963, uninvited, Romney showed up with his daughter Jane to march with the NAACP in a demonstration against housing discrimination in Grosse Pointe, an all-white affluent community adjoining Detroit. Asked to speak, Romney boasted of his role in creating the new state constitution that promised an end to "all forms of discrimination."<sup>23</sup>

George Romney explained his evolution on civil rights issues like this: "I come from a Rocky Mountain Mormon background. I didn't know any Negroes... I spent some time in Washington later and we had a Negro maid, but we didn't know any Negroes. It was only after I got to Detroit that I got to know Negroes and began to recognize that some Negroes are better and more capable than lots of whites... Barry Goldwater didn't have any background to understand this, to fathom them, and I couldn't get through to him. I understand Barry and Ronnie Reagan, they come from the same background I did – they just can't understand what we have to do..."<sup>24</sup> George Romney later claimed that he was initially prepared to support Goldwater, but changed his mind as he became more aware of the country's racial problems.<sup>25</sup> During Reagan's campaign for governor of California in 1966, Romney told reporters that "In my opinion Reagan's position on civil rights would not be an adequate position in Michigan, or in the nation."<sup>26</sup> By 1966, in his own re-election as Michigan Governor, Romney won 30 percent of the African American vote, unprecedented in that era (or this) for a Republican.<sup>27</sup>

In those days, a few national leaders, both Republican and Democrat, rejected today's myth that racial segregation was "de facto," the result of race-neutral economic or demographic forces. Romney was Governor of Michigan in the 1960s when civil rights activists began openly to confront the North's system of metropolitan residential segregation in the courts and in open housing marches like the Grosse Pointe one in which he himself participated. And he was Governor when black youth, trapped in urban ghettos far from job opportunities, rioted against police forces charged with keeping them trapped. As a result, he was well aware not only of the ubiquity and impact of private discrimination, but of how that discrimination was supported – even encouraged – by government at all levels. His Michigan Civil Rights Commission stated that African Americans had been "*forced* to live apart in urban ghettos throughout the State of Michigan and, in some cases, in rural ghettos."<sup>28</sup>

Romney recognized that the postwar white suburbs surrounding Detroit were created by Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration policies enacted in the 1930s and '40s, which required insured properties to have deeds prohibiting sales to African-Americans. When the two agencies ceased requiring such clauses in the 1950s, the exclusive white character of Detroit's suburbs had been firmly established. Although no longer requiring them, the FHA and VA continued to accept racially restrictive deeds on government insured mortgages, and state-licensed and super-

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vised real estate agents continued openly to refuse to sell or rent to blacks in white suburbs. Local housing authorities, with the encouragement and then consent of the federal government, segregated public housing and as whites left white projects for all-white suburbs, new public housing projects were placed only in black neighborhoods to ensure continued segregation. Suburbs themselves adopted exclusionary zoning laws requiring large lot sizes and banning multiunit developments, often with the barely disguised purpose of ensuring that no African Americans could afford to move in and become neighbors, even if they were otherwise permitted to do so.<sup>29</sup>

These federal, state and local policies all violated the constitutional rights of African Americans, irrespective of whether laws were passed to prohibit racial discrimination.

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission observed that segregation was not perpetuated only by private discrimination, but also by local, state, and federal agencies that continued to support and exacerbate the isolation of African-Americans. The Commission charged that urban renewal and highway construction projects had condemned and demolished existing black and mixed-race low-income neighborhoods and made no provision for adequate relocation.<sup>30</sup> Displaced black residents could not find housing elsewhere and were forced deeper into the ghetto, causing further overcrowding.

In these respects, Michigan only reflected nationwide patterns. The few African-Americans who served in the federal government's housing agencies complained frequently about the intent and design of urban renewal programs to further concentrate the urban black population in segregated ghettos. Robert C. Weaver, who later became the first Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (and George Romney's immediate predecessor in that position) wrote in 1948 "there is a tendency to use [urban renewal] as a guise for displacing minorities from desirable areas... and reduce even further the already inadequate supply of living space available to minorities."<sup>31</sup>

Frank Horne, head of the Racial Relations Service in the federal housing agency protested in 1949 that new public housing and urban renewal programs would permit "Federal funds and powers [to be] utilized by localities to clear entire neighborhoods, change the location of entire population groups, and crystallize patterns of racial or nationalistic separation by allowing private developers – for whose benefit the legislation is primarily drawn – to prohibit occupancy in new developments merely on the basis of race." Horne declared that no sooner had the Supreme Court finally declared, in 1948, that deeds prohibiting African-Americans from purchasing property could not legally be enforced, the new urban renewal law gave developers a weapon for segregation that was "more devastating" because it was sanctioned by the Federal government. For his continued complaining, Horne was removed from his position shortly after Dwight Eisenhower assumed the presidency four years later.<sup>32</sup>

In Michigan and elsewhere, highway officials purposely routed interstates through African-American neighborhoods close to downtown areas to force the black population to move to ghettos farther from white residential neighborhoods and businesses. Thomas MacDonald, head of the federal Bureau of Public Roads, promised that a federal interstate highway system could eliminate the "blighted districts contiguous to the very heart of the city"<sup>33</sup> and in 1947 before the interstate highway system had been funded or fully mapped out, MacDonald urged that routes be selected to pass through low income neighborhoods where buildings "should be torn down in any case to rid the city of its slums." But MacDonald added:

No matter how urgently a highway improvement may be needed, the homes of people who have nowhere to go should not be destroyed. Before dwellings are razed, new housing facilities should be provided for the dispos-

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sessed occupants. The question of housing should be accepted as one of the major planning problems when a city decides that it needs and wants an expressway.<sup>34</sup>

This plea was not taken seriously by other federal, state, or city officials. The Eisenhower Administration opposed providing for relocation; Council of Economic Advisors Chairman Arthur Burns warned against compensation that would “run up costs” of interstate highways. The program was expected to displace nearly 100,000 people a year.<sup>35</sup> The executive director of the American Association of State Highway Officials, himself deeply involved in Congressional design of the federal interstate program, later acknowledged that “some city officials expressed the view in the mid-1950’s that the urban Interstates would give them a good opportunity to get rid of the local ‘niggertown’.”<sup>36</sup> Although the 1956 House bill authorizing construction of interstate highways provided relocation assistance for those displaced, the Senate specifically voted to delete this provision.<sup>37</sup>

George Romney was aware of these patterns; they were reflected in Michigan. Typical was the city of Hamtramck, an overwhelmingly Polish enclave surrounded by Detroit. Hamtramck had a small number of black residents and the city’s 1959 master plan called for a “planned program of population loss.” In 1962, with federal urban renewal funds, the city began to condemn and demolish its relatively few predominantly black residential neighborhoods. The first project created vacant land for expansion of a Chrysler automobile manufacturing plant. Then, federal funds were used to demolish more (mostly black) homes for construction of the Chrysler Expressway (I-75) to serve the plant.<sup>38</sup> Well in advance, the United States Civil Rights Commission warned that the expressway would displace – in Hamtramck and Detroit itself – about 4,000 families, almost all of whom were black.<sup>39</sup> Other Hamtramck urban renewal projects rezoned previously white neighborhoods for industrial use once black families began to move in.<sup>40</sup> No replacement housing was provided, and because the private housing market in white neighborhoods was closed to them, the displaced black families were forced deeper into Detroit’s ghettos to find housing.

In 1966 during George Romney’s term as governor, displaced black families and civil rights groups sued, resulting in eight years of litigation. A federal appeals court eventually ruled that “there is considerable evidence of racism and prejudice against Negroes on the part of various city officials” responsible for the urban renewal plan. The court concluded that “the Negro population of Hamtramck fell from 14.4 percent to 8.5 percent between 1960 and 1966 and that this resulted largely from implementation of the ‘planned program of population loss’ adopted as part of the master plan.”<sup>41</sup>

The appeals court also found that federal HUD officials knew that the project would disproportionately affect blacks and that the city had not provided for relocation: “The record supports a finding that HUD must have known of the discriminatory practices which pervaded the private housing market [in Hamtramck] and the indications of overt prejudice among some of the persons involved in carrying out the urban renewal projects of the City.”<sup>42</sup> The court-ordered remedy was construction of replacement housing only for those specific black families who had actually been displaced, who could still be found, and who indicated to interviewers that they would be willing to move back to Hamtramck.<sup>43</sup> Because the litigation had dragged on for so long, their number was a small share of those who had been forced back into the ghetto.

Even after the FHA and VA ceased explicitly requiring racial segregation, the federal government’s public housing, urban renewal, and highway programs sent a clear message to homeowners, real estate agents, and financial institutions: the maintenance of all-white neighborhoods was public policy. Even as some municipalities and states began to pass laws



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prohibiting racial discrimination in housing beginning in the late 1940s, enforcement mechanisms were weak, and no effort was made to reverse the pattern of racial separation that was rapidly expanding across the American landscape.

In Michigan as elsewhere, a state licensing board supervised the real estate industry. Grosse Pointe – home to many of George Romney’s fellow automobile executives — was a particularly egregious example of residential racial segregation. Since 1945, the Grosse Pointe [Real Estate] Brokers Association had contracted with a private detective agency to rate prospective home buyers on a point system. Points could be earned by having skin color without “swarthy,” styles of living that were “typically American,” and similar factors. To be eligible to purchase a Grosse Pointe home, buyers of Anglo-Saxon descent had to earn 50 points, those of Polish descent had to earn 55 points, those of southern European descent had to score 65 points, and Jews had to score 85 points. Blacks were ineligible to earn any points; they simply were not permitted to purchase property in Grosse Pointe, no matter how typically American they might be.

When the system became publicly known in 1960, the Michigan real estate licensing agency adopted a rule prohibiting racial discrimination, something it should have done long before, because the pervasive discriminatory practices of state-licensed real estate brokers and salesmen were no secret. But the Michigan legislature promptly repealed the no-discrimination rule. When George Romney’s predecessor as governor, John Swainson, then vetoed the repeal, the realtors sought an injunction against the rule’s reinstatement. Barely a month after George Romney assumed office as governor, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the state licensing agency had exceeded its authority by deeming racial discrimination unfair.<sup>44</sup> Grosse Pointe, like other Detroit suburbs, continued to exclude African-Americans. Today, Grosse Pointe remains only 3 percent African-American, compared to 83 percent next door in Detroit.

Suburban exclusion affected housing and educational opportunities for black families, but it also limited their economic opportunities, as manufacturing jobs were increasingly relocated to outside the city. The Detroit suburb of Sterling Heights, for example, had a Ford plant but black workers from Detroit had to commute, because they could not live in the town itself. In 1964, when one black family did attempt to move in, its home was firebombed but the police made no arrests.<sup>45</sup>

Circumstances in the Detroit suburb of Warren were similar. It was home to five automobile manufacturing plants with a 30 percent black workforce. Warren also had a white-collar General Motors Technical Center; it, too, had many black employees.<sup>46</sup> Yet while whites who worked in Warren could live in the city, black workers had to commute because none could live there.<sup>47</sup> Realtors would not show homes to African-Americans in Warren, and landlords would not rent to them. Then, in 1967, Corado Bailey, an African-American man (with his white wife) moved into Warren.

For several nights, crowds of up to 200 gathered outside the Bailey home. With police looking on, local residents burned crosses on the Baileys’ property, threw rocks into the windows, cut the Baileys’ phone line, and ignited a gasoline fire on the front lawn. Cars cruised up and down the street as occupants shouted obscenities towards the home.<sup>48</sup> It is probable that many of the protesters worked alongside African-Americans but would not tolerate the same black co-workers as neighbors. The police made not a single arrest in this or in other similar incidents in Warren where mob violence greeted African-Americans attempting to move in. Because, as Romney later recalled, local officials “would not fulfill their responsibilities,” he had to call in the state police to disperse the mob.<sup>49</sup> In the Baileys’ case, the police investigation of the gasoline fire consisted simply of an observation that perhaps Mr. Bailey had spilled gasoline while mowing his lawn.<sup>50</sup>

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The impact of such incidents was long lasting. By 2000, Warren's population was still only 2.7 percent black. The black population began to spread over the Detroit-Warren border in the next few years, however, and was 14 percent black by 2010, still much lower than the 83 percent black population of neighboring Detroit. The southern edge of Warren, adjoining Detroit was increasingly African-American while northern parts of the city remained overwhelmingly white.

George Romney was not alone in his awareness of the connections between housing segregation, education and racial inequality. Some Johnson Administration officials concurred, and for a brief time, this bipartisan insight appeared ready to erupt into a national policy commitment to integration.

But riding the crest of a wave of 'white backlash' against civil rights measures, not only in Michigan but nationwide, Congress in 1966 rejected President Johnson's call for a fair housing act. Despite this, desegregation advocates within the executive branch stubbornly persisted.

Urban task forces President Johnson appointed in the mid-to-late-60s called for metropolitan desegregation. Soon after the 1966 defeat of fair housing, Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach convened a Justice Department Task Force on Civil Rights that recommended the use of federal funds to induce suburbs to change zoning laws to "facilitate the construction of non-ghetto open housing within economic reach of low and moderate income nonwhites." The president's own Task Force on Civil Rights, was convened at the same time, reporting that it "is probably no exaggeration to say that low-income urban families will never find adequate housing, no matter how much federal assistance is offered, unless some way can be found to break down the locally imposed barriers that prevent such families from moving out" of the ghetto. A White House Task Force on Education recommended that the federal government push a "reasonable mixture" of African American public school students across metropolitan boundaries.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the prominence of members of these task forces,<sup>52</sup> the recommendations were not implemented, and violence continued when African-Americans attempted to break out of urban ghettos and secure better housing in the suburbs.

In Michigan, as George Romney prepared his presidential campaign in 1967, a crowd of whites in Dearborn, another Detroit suburb, began stoning the newly purchased home of a white family because someone had reported seeing a black worker from the moving company and concluded he was the new owner. In this case, it took the police two hours to arrive and ask the crowd to disperse.<sup>53</sup> Again, no arrests were made. A Michigan Civil Rights Commission official summarized the commission's experience that "nearly all attempts by black families to move to Detroit's suburbs have been met with harassment."<sup>54</sup>

And then, in July 1967, African-Americans in Detroit rioted. The immediate provocation was the arrest of 82 African Americans after police raided a party at an unlicensed drinking club celebrating the return home of two Vietnam War veterans. Tensions in the community were already high because of the recent murder of another black veteran by a crowd of white youths yelling "Niggers keep out of Rouge Park," a city-owned recreation area a few blocks away from the drinking club. By the riot's end, 43 persons had been killed, most of them black and most by police or National Guardsmen.<sup>55</sup>

In the wake of the riots, George Romney not only advocated government action to challenge residential segregation; he was also prepared to endorse more militant forms of black community action to deal with the daily consequences of segregation for those trapped in urban ghettos. He praised militant black community groups organized by the con-

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frontational activist Saul Alinsky in Chicago and Rochester and arranged a meeting between Alinsky and Detroit's influential white civic leaders, accompanied by black activists and supportive clergy. "I think you ought to listen to Alinsky," Governor Romney told Detroit's elite. Alinsky himself praised Romney as having "unique political insight."<sup>56</sup>

From January to September of that year there were riots in Buffalo, Milwaukee, Newark, Tampa and 124 other cities nationwide.<sup>57</sup> President Johnson appointed former Illinois governor Otto Kerner to lead an investigation of the riots' causes. The Kerner Commission's 1968 report concluded that African-Americans had many legitimate grievances (police brutality and harassment, underfunded schools, employment discrimination), including the increasing isolation and deterioration of black communities that were restricted to urban areas while jobs relocated to suburbs where African-Americans were not permitted to reside.<sup>58</sup>

The Commission denounced attempts to address the problems and grievances of African Americans solely by programs to improve conditions in deteriorated and overcrowded urban neighborhoods, and strongly advocated metropolitan desegregation. It wrote:

To continue present policies is to make permanent the division of our country into two societies; one, largely Negro and poor, located in the central cities; the other, predominantly white and affluent, located in the suburbs and in outlying areas....

[G]hetto enrichment coupled with abandonment of integration... is also unacceptable. It is another way of choosing a permanently divided country. Moreover, equality cannot be achieved under conditions of nearly complete separation. In a country where the economy, and particularly the resources of employment, are predominantly white, a policy of separation can only relegate Negroes to a permanently inferior economic status.

We believe that the only possible choice for America is ... a policy which combines ghetto enrichment with programs designed to encourage integration of substantial numbers of Negroes into the society outside the ghetto.<sup>59</sup>

The Commission's final recommendation was this: "Areas outside of ghetto neighborhoods should be opened up to occupancy by racial minorities," with a "[re]orientation of federal housing programs to place more low and moderate-income housing outside of ghetto areas" – in the suburbs, in particular, which had thus far successfully resisted all such efforts. The commission called for elimination of all barriers to free choice in employment, education and housing across the metropolitan landscape, with federal housing programs encouraging or directly constructing millions of low and moderate-income units in the suburbs, and Congress passing a strong fair housing law that included single-family housing. Policy should affirmatively pursue the opening up of the suburbs, the commission added:

To date, housing programs serving low-income groups have been concentrated in the ghettos;... suburbs, for the most part have steadfastly opposed low-income, rent supplement, or below-market interest rate housing and have successfully restricted use of these programs outside the ghetto... The reorientation of these programs is particularly critical in light of our recommendation that 6 million low and middle income housing units be made available over the next five years. If the effort is not to be counter-productive, its main thrust must be in nonghetto areas, particularly those outside the central city.

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“Integration,” the Kerner Commission concluded, “is the only course which explicitly seeks to achieve a single nation.”<sup>60</sup>

Romney then made racial integration a centerpiece of his 1968 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. The nation must make “the most massive effort in peacetime history” to address urban African Americans’ problems, Romney argued.<sup>61</sup> “The most burning domestic problem that we face,” he asserted, “is social injustice to people on the basis of race and color.”<sup>62</sup> He said that urban African-Americans “are confronted with city governments that too often provide poorer city services in the slums than in middle-class residential areas – including trash collection, street cleaning, building code enforcement, and police protection,” and that “governmental policies ...have bulldozed [urban African-Americans] out of their homes for urban renewal and freeways, but have made no adequate provision for alternative low-income housing.”<sup>63</sup> In a politically courageous speech to a white Southern pro-segregation audience, he denounced “obstructionism masquerading as states’ rights.”<sup>64</sup>

Romney withdrew from the presidential race when it became apparent that Richard Nixon would be the nominee. Campaign missteps played a role in his defeat, and lingering resentment among Republicans about his refusal to support Goldwater in 1964 was also a factor.

### ***George’s tenure as secretary of HUD***

President-elect Nixon then named Romney as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Prior to Nixon’s election, Congress finally did pass a fair housing law (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968). But the practical impact of the new legislation was yet to be determined. Secretary Romney could interpret the law narrowly, simply as a prohibition against further discrimination. Or, he could see it as requiring HUD to take steps, in the vague words of the Act, to “affirmatively further fair housing” across the metropolitan landscape. By 1969, Romney had become fully aware of how thoroughly public policy and private action had conspired to lock blacks in central cities, and so he chose to enforce the stronger interpretation of the law.

The Kerner Commission had called for the construction of 6 million largely new low and moderate-income public or subsidized housing units, placed to a great extent in the suburbs. That goal was then codified by the 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act, but that law said nothing about the specific location of the new units. Romney and his staff were determined to use this new construction to open up the suburbs.<sup>65</sup>

At his Senate confirmation hearing, Secretary-designate Romney’s views on urban housing problems were no secret. In addition to his many 1968 campaign statements, his own gubernatorial report following the 1967 Detroit riot concluded that urban renewal programs in Detroit had displaced African-Americans from their homes with no other housing available to them, and “produced even greater overcrowding in an area already at an incendiary level.”<sup>66</sup> His 1968 campaign book, *The Concerns of a Citizen*, had urged “we must have open housing on a statewide basis; eliminate zoning that creates either large-scale economic or racial segregation; provide low-cost private housing through nonprofit organizations in all parts of the metropolitan area and throughout the state...”<sup>67</sup>

At the Senate hearing, Romney reiterated these calls for metropolitan desegregation and received a sympathetic hearing from Republicans and Democrats alike who recognized that federal policy was a major cause of residential segregation,

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and that opening middle class white suburbs to integration of overcrowded low-income black urban residents was essential to any solution. Romney testified:

[O]ur small towns and rural areas must be made more attractive to those now living there as well as to many now residing in our overcrowded urban centers. It is urgent ...to increase the opportunity for Americans of different origins and [economic and social and racial] backgrounds to know and appreciate one another... Urban renewal helped spark the riot in Detroit. The land that was cleared is still largely vacant... [with no replacement housing having been built, and] between urban renewal and freeway construction population increased [in the ghetto area to which residents were displaced] from 12,000 to 34,000 at the time the riot broke out. I have, personally, talked to many of these people who were literally bulldozed out of their homes. [The Federal Housing Administration has] built a high-income white noose basically around these inner cities, and the poor and disadvantaged, both black and white, are pretty much left in the inner city....<sup>68</sup>

Soon after his confirmation, Romney lectured a Chamber of Commerce convention saying “we’ve got to put an end to the idea of moving to suburban areas and living only among people of the same economic and social class... Otherwise, there will be no country.”<sup>69</sup> His departmental Task Force on Equal Opportunity in Housing asserted in September 1969 that “Decisions made now will in large part determine the degree to which the programs contribute to the creation of racially and economically inclusive metropolitan areas.”<sup>70</sup>

During his first 18 months in office Romney and his like-minded staff quietly developed a series of proposals that put HUD (and Nixon) on a collision course with metropolitan segregation – and with those who preferred to leave it untouched. The latter group included the increasingly suburban base of the Republican Party.

Romney and his team began to develop a program they called “Open Communities,” a plan to use HUD funding to entice or coerce white suburbs into revoking their exclusionary zoning laws and to accept federally-funded public and subsidized low-income housing. The planning was quiet, and the HUD officials attempted to keep President Nixon from becoming fully informed as they proceeded; Romney prohibited official discussion of the plan, instructing his staff that they would have to wait until after the November 1970 elections.<sup>71</sup> Although Romney sought legislation to authorize the program, he was prepared to move forward without it, claiming statutory authority from the 1968 Fair Housing Act clause that required jurisdictions that accepted federal housing funds to act “affirmatively to further fair housing.”<sup>72</sup>

Romney and his staff were deeply critical of the failures of their liberal Democratic predecessors to challenge metropolitan area segregation. The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, despite all of their rhetoric, “lacked the political fortitude to deal with urban problems on a metropolitan-wide basis,” wrote Under Secretary Richard Van Dusen in an internal policy memo in the fall of 1969. Instead, “they poured large amounts of money into the ghettos.” Assistant Secretary John Chapin wrote to Romney in August 1969 that “[t]he white suburban noose around the black in the city core is morally wrong, economically inefficient, socially destructive, and politically explosive.” What was needed, Romney’s staff advised him, was a “frontal assault on suburbia.”<sup>73</sup>

The Open Communities plan was to deny all federal grants administered by HUD, including funding for sewer and water projects, open space acquisition, and urban renewal to white suburbs that did not agree to accept a public housing project or subsidized low-income housing. Romney’s staff targeted particular suburbs with which to begin – those where

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African-Americans were not accepted, where there were substantial new employment opportunities that black workers could take except for the long commutes that would be necessary, and those located in a metropolitan area where segregation and overcrowding was most severe in the central city.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, Under Secretary Richard Van Dusen convened a HUD task force to develop legislation that would include incentives “that were big enough and juicy enough to induce significant action” by suburbs to accept minority housing.<sup>75</sup> Romney’s proposed legislation also conditioned the placement of new facilities (for example, a federal court house or office building) in a suburb on that community’s willingness to accept public or subsidized housing. The proposed legislation also prohibited the use of zoning, building permits, or other land use ordinances to prevent construction of federally subsidized low-income housing.<sup>76</sup>

Congress did not enact these proposals, but Romney moved forward anyway, delaying or terminating federal aid to white suburbs in the Baltimore, Boston, and Toledo metropolitan areas because they rejected low-income housing. These efforts were initially successful. Stoughton, a Boston suburb, agreed to accept a housing project despite community opposition in order to get HUD to release its water project funds.<sup>77</sup> In Toledo, HUD’s action was not challenged partly because Thomas Ashley, the Toledo area congressman and chairman of a House subcommittee on urban growth, agreed that something needed to be done to desegregate his city. Ashley denounced the “increasing concentration [of] poor and minority groups in the center city and sprawling speculative development in the suburbs.” What the country has been doing, Ashley said, is “loading up ... the center city with all the public burdens.” Trying to steer a path between what he knew was necessary and the resistance of his suburban constituents, Ashley said, “I’m really between the rock and the hard place.”<sup>78</sup>

Romney also got away with denying funds to the Baltimore area, perhaps because Vice-President Spiro Agnew, a former Baltimore County Executive and Maryland governor, was aware of unreasonable suburban resistance there to integration and mixed income developments; Agnew was one of the strongest advocates of suburban integration in the administration.<sup>79</sup> In a 1970 speech to the National Alliance of Businessmen, Agnew attacked attempts to solve the country’s racial problems by pouring money into the inner city as had been done in the Johnson administration. Agnew said that he flatly rejected the assumption that “because the primary problems of race and poverty are found in the ghettos of urban America, the solutions to these problems must also be found there... Resources needed to solve the urban poverty problem – land, money, and jobs – exist in substantial supply in suburban areas, but are not being sufficiently utilized in solving inner-city problems.”<sup>80</sup>

George Romney also had a key ally in Nixon’s White House domestic policy coordinator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who had advised the president early in his term that “the poverty and isolation of minority groups in central cities is the single most serious problem of the American city today.” Like Agnew, he attacked the Johnson Administration’s approach of trying to ameliorate the problems of African-Americans solely by programs designed to improve life in low-income areas, a policy that Moynihan characterized as “gilding the ghetto.”<sup>81</sup> While Moynihan did not oppose additional resources for urban neighborhoods (indeed, he thought them temporarily necessary), he insisted that “efforts to improve the conditions of life in the present caste-created slums must never take precedence over efforts to enable the slum population to disperse throughout the metropolitan areas involved.” Focusing specifically on the educational challenge of the black-white achievement gap, Moynihan argued that compensatory education is ineffective – the real answer is to put disadvantaged children into a better environment.<sup>82</sup>

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And Romney had a few allies outside the administration as well. The civil rights community was divided, with some activists supporting a priority emphasis on inner-city programs, and others favoring suburban integration. A powerful lobby, the National Association of Home Builders, supported the Open Communities initiative because its members saw profit potential in the construction of subsidized suburban housing.<sup>83</sup>

Believing that he had these inside and outside forces at his back, George Romney decided to confront his gubernatorial nemesis, Warren, Michigan. HUD officials told Warren that it would not continue to receive urban renewal funds for rehabilitation of downtown buildings, parks, street repairs, sidewalks and schools, unless it also accepted low-income housing, passed a local anti-housing discrimination ordinance, and provided greater police protection to African American residents.<sup>84</sup>

The mayor of Warren, accompanied by the schools superintendent and other local officials, came to Washington to argue for release of the federal funds.<sup>85</sup> Romney told them “You can try to hermetically seal Warren off from the surrounding areas if you want to, but you won’t do it with federal money... Black people have as much right to equal opportunities as we do. God knows, they have suffered so much they may have more right... This problem is the most important one America has ever faced.”<sup>86</sup>

Back in Warren, the mayor charged that Warren was being used as a “guinea pig for integration experiments.” HUD officials had asked Warren to conduct a survey of the housing needs of nonresidents who were employed in the city. The Warren city council refused, and the mayor charged that such a survey would be an invitation to “busloads of blacks to move to Warren.”<sup>87</sup> George Romney then went to Warren to attempt to explain his position – that “all Americans have the opportunity to live within a reasonable distance of their jobs” – in a public forum that also included mayors of 40 Detroit suburbs, but he was greeted by an angry crowd and needed a police escort out of the building.<sup>88</sup>

Open Communities was now no longer a quiet initiative, and President Nixon and his staff took notice. The President instructed John Ehrlichman, the White House counsel and assistant responsible for domestic affairs, to make sure that no federal funds were withheld from suburbs that refused to accept public or subsidized housing. Romney released Warren’s funds, but it did not quiet things down. The town put a referendum on the November 1970 ballot and voted to reject the federal funds and withdraw from the urban renewal program entirely.<sup>89</sup>

Romney also faced resistance to his Open Communities plans from several members of his own staff. HUD’s General Counsel said that the Fair Housing Act’s requirement that municipalities must act to “affirmatively further” fair housing only referred to preventing discrimination in things like public housing tenant selection, and did not authorize positive steps to ensure integration.<sup>90</sup> And there was resistance from Congressional Republicans, led by Atlanta’s S. Fletcher Thompson who sent several letters of protest to President Nixon and then wrote, in a letter to constituents, that “to force people of diverse backgrounds together by law or regulation is outright totalitarianism which I shall unrelentingly oppose.”<sup>91</sup>

Nixon’s staff pressed the president to stop Secretary Romney’s integration efforts. They were probably the source of rumors that HUD’s water and sewer grants program – that Romney was attempting to withhold from suburbs that refused integration – would soon be transferred out of HUD and into the Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>92</sup> Ehrlichman wrote a memo to Nixon: “Suburban Integration: This is a serious Romney problem which we will probably have as long as he is there... [H]e keeps loudly talking about it in spite of our efforts to shut him up.” Nixon responded,

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“Stop this one.”<sup>93</sup> H.R. Haldeman, Nixon’s chief of staff, made a notation in his diary that “George won’t leave quickly, will have to be fired. So we have to set him up on the integrated housing issue and fire him on that basis to be sure we get the credit.”<sup>94</sup>

Shortly after the Warren referendum, Romney met with Nixon and agreed to abandon his efforts to integrate the suburbs as a condition of staying on as HUD Secretary.<sup>95</sup> He testified before Congress and abandoned his previous positions, giving assurances that the federal government would not challenge exclusionary zoning ordinances that barred subsidized housing.<sup>96</sup> He stated that he would not henceforth attempt to cut off federal funds to communities that did not accept low-income housing, but would instead only give priority for new funds to communities that made efforts to integrate.<sup>97</sup>

Then, at a news conference the next month, President Nixon publicly repudiated his HUD Secretary. Nixon was asked: “Mr. President, concerning Governor Romney’s plan, to what extent should the Federal Government use its leverage to promote racial integration in suburban housing?” After saying that the federal government would not provide housing or urban renewal funds to a community that had “a policy of discrimination,” Nixon added: “On the other hand, I can assure you that it is not the policy of this Government to use the power of the Federal Government or Federal funds in any other way, in ways not required by the law for forced integration of the suburbs. I believe that forced integration of the suburbs is not in the national interest.”<sup>98</sup>

Nixon remained publicly firm in vowing to enforce non-discrimination law (although the enforcement provisions of the 1968 Fair Housing law were very weak), but insisted that racial segregation in the suburbs was a byproduct of economic considerations, not discrimination.<sup>99</sup> He sent a memo to John Ehrlichman proposing a constitutional amendment banning federal efforts to force school and residential integration, and urging fast action before the Supreme Court had an opportunity to rule on such efforts.<sup>100</sup> As it turned out, Nixon’s own Court appointments made such an amendment superfluous.

The Romney plan for residential integration was certainly unpopular with white voters, who needed no campaign for an amendment to arouse their opposition. But some of Nixon’s political advisors liked Romney’s integration plans, because dispersal of black voters out of cities and into Republican suburbs would dilute the political influence of African Americans who tended to vote Democratic. But this political calculation was more than cancelled by the anger of white suburbanites who did not want low-income African Americans in their neighborhoods. Kevin Phillips, an architect of Nixon’s political strategy, warned that Romney’s efforts to integrate the suburbs would destroy the Republican Party’s new suburban-Southern coalition. In 1970, George Romney’s wife (and Mitt’s mother) Lenore ran for Senate in Michigan. Her defeat was due, in part, to her husband’s courageous but ill-fated advocacy of racial integration.<sup>101</sup>

Romney hung on for two more years as Secretary of HUD, no longer pressing the Open Communities program. Immediately after the 1972 election, Nixon accepted Romney’s resignation, and shortly thereafter, the president announced he would refuse to spend any further Congressionally appropriated funds for subsidized housing. Nixon had also by then transformed the federal judiciary, halting brief progress in the courts toward challenging both racial segregation and exclusionary zoning. By the mid-1970s, the brief window of opportunity for integrating the nation’s metropolitan areas had closed. As a consequence, racial inequality in schooling has stubbornly persisted as well.<sup>102</sup>



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## ***Race and the limits of choice***

George Romney understood the connections between racial segregation, housing and educational inequality over four decades ago; when Vice President Spiro Agnew did not include Secretary Romney in a White House Domestic Council Committee on School Desegregation that Agnew headed, the Secretary protested that he should participate because of the clear link between student achievement, school desegregation and housing desegregation.<sup>103</sup>

Yet the lesson that George Romney understood so well seems to be lost to us in the present. A solution to the educational problems of black youth is as dependent upon their residential integration as it was then, if not more so. Racial segregation has sprawled outward from our cities since the early 1970s, making virtually any metropolitan school choice program unworkable without some effort to address housing segregation as well.

Let's do a thought experiment to help us judge whether Mitt Romney's or George Romney's approach to narrowing the black-white achievement gap makes more sense. We can locate that experiment in the Detroit metropolitan area, including suburbs like Warren, Sterling Heights, and Grosse Pointe whose racial segregation presented such challenges to George Romney when he served as governor and as HUD secretary.<sup>104</sup>

In 2010, 88 percent of students in Detroit public schools were African-American, and 85 percent of students were what the district terms "economically disadvantaged" – eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program.<sup>105</sup> Of these, virtually all were eligible for the free program, meaning their family income was less than about \$22,000 a year for a family of four.

In the Detroit metropolitan area as a whole, including Detroit and its suburbs, 30 percent of students were African-American, and 39 percent were eligible for the free lunch program.<sup>106</sup>

If either by the Mitt Romney method (school choice) or the George Romney method (residential integration), students presently living in Detroit were to attend schools where their concentrated disadvantage did not overwhelm the capacity of teachers and administrators to overcome, we would expect every school in the Detroit metropolitan area, including those in the city of Detroit, to have enrollment that was approximately 30 percent African American and 39 percent eligible for the free lunch program. There is no suggestion here that any policy should aim for such a mechanically even distribution, but only that these numbers are a touchstone for judging how far we have to go to desegregate Detroit schools.

Imagine that the Mitt Romney plan were enacted, giving every economically disadvantaged student in Detroit the option to attend any school in the metropolitan area.<sup>107</sup> Let's begin by considering the best case scenario, Detroit schools that are closest geographically to suburban schools.

On the north, Detroit is bordered by Warren, and Warren is bordered on its north by Sterling Heights. Consider Detroit's Pulaski Elementary-Middle School, located just 5 blocks south of the Detroit-Warren border, and whose attendance zone boundary runs along that line.<sup>108</sup> Pulaski is now 98 percent African-American, and 79 percent economically disadvantaged. It has not made "adequate yearly progress" (AYP), the federal definition of school success, in math and reading test scores.<sup>109</sup> It is a school that policymakers term "failing."

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If Mitt Romney's plan were enacted, and students at Pulaski could choose to attend schools outside Detroit, the closest suburban school they might choose would be McKinley Elementary School in Warren, only one mile away. But as the Detroit ghetto has expanded, the southern edge of Warren is now also heavily African-American. McKinley Elementary School is now 53 percent African-American, with 91 percent of its students eligible for the lunch program.<sup>110</sup> The test scores at McKinley are not much better than those at Pulaski, although the school has made AYP as defined by federal law. But transferring more low income African-American students from Pulaski to McKinley will not give those students an integrated education; rather, it will likely overwhelm the faculty at McKinley, already burdened with too many disadvantaged students, with more of a need to compensate for poor home literacy levels, with more of a need to slow instruction even for well-prepared students, and with more time and resources devoted to organizing social services, not instruction.

To get an integrated education, Pulaski students would have to transfer to schools in the north of Warren – to Wilkerson Elementary School, for example. There, only 6 percent of students are African-American and only 35 percent are economically disadvantaged. Wilkerson made AYP; overall, its test scores are at or above the Michigan state average in math, reading, writing, and science, and the state has designated Wilkerson as a “Blue Ribbon School.”<sup>111</sup> Wilkerson's enrollment could reach the metropolitan area average rate of 30 percent African American if approximately 130 of Pulaski's 450 elementary level students were to transfer there.<sup>112</sup> But Wilkerson is nearly 8 miles away from Pulaski, involving one way travel time of about 45 minutes.<sup>113</sup>

What if Pulaski students wanted to transfer to the next suburb north of Warren, Sterling Heights? The closest Sterling Heights elementary school to Pulaski is the Margaret Black Elementary School. It is more middle class than Pulaski, McKinley, or Wilkerson, with 13 percent of Margaret Black's students African American and only 22 percent eligible for the lunch program.<sup>114</sup> Margaret Black's test scores are above the state average. To increase the African-American share to 30 percent at Margaret Black would require transfers of approximately 65 of Pulaski's 450 students.<sup>115</sup> Like Wilkerson, Margaret Black is about 8 miles from Pulaski, and would involve about 45 minutes' travel time.

Even if students and their parents were willing to endure these travel times, these transfers would still leave half of Pulaski's students in a segregated environment with even greater challenges than before.

Similar challenges would face Mitt Romney's plan in other areas of Detroit. The attendance zone of Detroit's Carstens School sits on the border of the affluent suburb of Grosse Pointe. Carstens failed the AYP standard; its students are 98 percent African-American and 78 percent economically disadvantaged.<sup>116</sup> Nearby is Hutchinson school, about the same size as Carstens, 99 percent African-American and 75 percent economically disadvantaged.<sup>117</sup> Next to that is Nichols School, 99 percent African American and 72 percent economically disadvantaged.<sup>118</sup>

In 2010, about 19 percent of Grosse Pointe's students were African-American; the district is not as poor as neighboring Detroit – only 10 percent of its students were eligible for the lunch program.<sup>119</sup> Without threatening the balance needed for integrated education, Grosse Pointe could perhaps absorb additional economically disadvantaged African-American students equal to 10 to 15 percent of its total enrollment, although many of these Detroit students would have to enroll in schools far from Carstens, Hutchinson, and Nichols. For example, Grosse Pointe's Dexter Ferry Elementary School has only 5 percent African-American students, and 5 percent eligible for subsidized lunch.<sup>120</sup> Ferry could accept

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many economically disadvantaged African-American students from Detroit and still provide an integrated education. But Grosse Pointe's Ferry School is 11 miles from Detroit's Nichols school, another unacceptably long bus trip.

When there was no longer room for them at integrated schools in Grosse Pointe, students from Carstens, Hutchinson, and Nichols would have to travel long distances to suburbs on other sides of Detroit to find integrated education, but there they would compete for space with Detroit students who lived closer to those other borders.

### ***Choice and segregation***

In 1996, the State of Michigan enacted an inter-district choice plan that seems superficially similar to Mitt Romney's, but there are two critical differences. First, Michigan's Schools of Choice plan permits any student, not only low-income students, to choose a public school outside his or her district. Second, districts in Michigan can choose not to participate by not accepting any out-of-district transfer students, or they can accept only transfer students from other districts in the same county.<sup>121</sup> Districts that do participate can specify how many places they will make available, with no independent evaluation of whether they actually have more or less capacity.<sup>122</sup>

The result has been an increase, not a decrease in school segregation. Districts like Grosse Pointe have simply declined to participate, and so do not take any low-income black students from neighboring Detroit. In other suburbs ("first ring" communities like those in the southern edge of Warren where the community has become increasingly black as the boundaries of Detroit's ghetto have expanded), white families in newly integrated and changing neighborhoods have utilized the choice program to drive (or carpool) their children to schools in districts even farther from Detroit. That's why, in the southern edge of Warren, McKinley Elementary School is now predominantly majority African American and overwhelmingly poor. The community is in transition, but not (yet) so African American and poor as its neighborhood school. As middle-class white families have fled integrated education and transferred their children to whiter suburbs farther away, the school district has filled its empty seats with more transfers from Detroit, while its remaining white students also tend to be from low-income families who cannot afford to leave. Soon, we can expect McKinley Elementary to be another "failing" school, further exacerbating white flight of the middle-class families who remain, thanks to Michigan's Schools of Choice program.

To see how white flight operates in Michigan's choice program, consider the nearby mostly middle class white community of St. Clair Shores. Its elementary school closest to Warren's McKinley Elementary is Harmon Elementary School in the Lakeview School District of St. Clair Shores, just 5½ miles east of McKinley. Only 8 percent of Harmon's students are African American.<sup>123</sup> In 2010, St. Clair Shores as a whole had 3,300 students, of whom 192 (6 percent) were African American.<sup>124</sup> Yet the 3,300 students included 1,150 Schools of Choice transfer students, almost all of whom were white.<sup>125</sup> It is a reasonable assumption that these white students had transferred from their home schools (like McKinley) where black populations were increasing.

Michigan's Schools of Choice program makes no provision for the transportation of students from their neighborhoods to their schools of choice outside their districts. Only non-working parents with automobiles and gas money (or members of carpools with such parents) can avail themselves of the program. The highways of metropolitan Detroit are now filled in the morning and afternoon hours with the cars of parents taking their children to distant schools. There are low-income African American parents from Detroit taking their children to first ring suburbs where neighborhoods are changing. And middle class white parents from first ring suburbs are taking their children to the second ring.

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While Mitt Romney's plan is superior to Michigan's Schools of Choice program, because it offers statewide public school choice only to low-income and special education students, this superior feature nonetheless generates an absurd result. Without requirements, or even incentives, for middle class children from the suburbs to choose schools in Detroit and create integrated environments there, those Detroit schools will empty out if low-income children choose to leave. In the best of circumstances, under Mitt Romney's plan, the Detroit metropolitan area will be left with empty schools in Detroit and the need for a massive school construction program in the suburbs to absorb low-income African American children choosing to attend integrated schools.

The economic, political and social costs of seeking to address the achievement gap without grappling with metropolitan residential segregation are and would be enormous, and a choice plan like Romney's would do nothing to ameliorate these costs.

There must be a better way.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the growing ideological divisions of our age, there has been a surprising political convergence on some issues related to urban policy, social services, and housing. From the spread of charter schools and school choice to the expansion of home ownership through financial deregulation, it is apparent that liberals and conservatives agree. Yet these points of agreement hide or exacerbate racial and economic segregation, and geographically concentrate its deleterious consequences. The Obama Administration's embrace of urban charter schools and school choice is emblematic of this convergence, yet in fact, charter schools are even more segregated than regular public schools.<sup>126</sup> Despite lack of evidence of their efficacy, and strong empirical support for benefits of school integration, Administration officials fail to describe the achievement gap as a reflection of metropolitan segregation. Establishing racially homogenous charter schools in urban neighborhoods, even where charter schools are successful, is but the latest example of what George Romney's allies dismissed as "gilding the ghetto."

Quite aside from the destruction of neighborhood schools and the loss of parent connection to school entailed in large-scale busing, there is no practical way to achieve racial school desegregation in Detroit, or in many other large metropolitan areas by employing Mitt Romney's plan. Even where first ring suburbs are in a process of transition and seem, perhaps only temporarily, to be integrated, these metropolises are simply too segregated, not only by race but by social class. If Mitt Romney's plan does not attack residential segregation, it will be unable to address the root causes of the achievement gap.

George Romney had a better approach. He understood that the suburbs themselves must be desegregated so that disadvantaged children could attend predominantly middle class schools in their own neighborhoods. Perhaps he understood that unless all suburbs in a metropolitan area were desegregated with some moderate and low-income housing, none would be integrated – white homeowners would flee the integrated communities for the segregated ones. Applying his insights to Detroit, George Romney wanted to force cities and towns like Warren, Sterling Heights, St. Clair Shores and Grosse Pointe to repeal their exclusionary zoning ordinances, to sponsor low- and moderate-income housing, and to accept scatter-site public housing in neighborhoods that serve schools like Wilkerson, Margaret Black, and Dexter Ferry.

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George Romney was defeated in his efforts, and partly because of this defeat, the achievement gap between black and white children has not narrowed nearly as much as it might have done in the last half century. It is unlikely to narrow much further without revisiting the imperative of residential integration in our metropolitan areas.

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## Endnotes

**1.** In 2004, 38 percent of all black students nationwide attended schools where 90 percent or more of students were minority (black or Latino), up from 34 percent in 1992. Racial isolation was even higher in the Northeast (51 percent, up slightly from 50 percent) and in the Midwest (46 percent, up from 40 percent). In New York State, the average black student attended a school where only 18 percent of students were white in 2004. In Michigan, the average black student attended a school where only 22 percent of students were white in 2004. Gary Orfield and Chungmei Lee. 2006. *Racial Transformation and the Changing Nature of Segregation*. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, January.

<http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/racial-transformation-and-the-changing-nature-of-segregation/orfield-racial-transformation-2006.pdf>, Tables 3 and 11.

**2.** Schools with the most seriously disadvantaged students are not responsive to even the most well designed reform programs. “Our findings about schooling in truly disadvantaged communities offer a sobering antidote to a heady political rhetoric arguing that all schools can be improved.” Anthony S. Bryk, Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, and John O. Easton. 2010. *Organizing Schools for Improvement. Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 210. See also Richard Rothstein. 2004. *Class and Schools*. Washington, D.C.: The Economic Policy Institute.

**3.** Thomas A. Johnson. 1969. “Wilkins Assails U.S. School Move.” *The New York Times*, July 4; Buresh, Bernice. 1969. “NAACP Raps Decision on Schools.” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 4: 18. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1368&dat=19690704&id=FnRQAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=NREEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=7294,595037>.

**4.** Mitt Romney, 2012. “Remarks on Education: ‘A Chance for Every Child.’” Speech to U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C. May 23. <http://mittromneycentral.com/speeches/2012-speeches/052312-remarks-on-education-%E2%80%9Ca-chance-for-every-child%E2%80%9D/>; Romney for President, Inc. 2012. *A Chance for Every Child. Mitt Romney’s Plan for Restoring the Promise of American Education*. May 23. <http://www.mittromney.com/sites/default/files/shared/120523-Education%20White%20Paper%20FINAL%20for%20PDF.pdf>

**5.** We call this a small difference, but not everyone agrees. The proposed diminution of federal accountability sanctions was apparently serious enough to provoke Margaret Spellings, advisor and then Secretary of Education for President Bush, to resign from Romney’s education advisory group. Trip Gabriel, 2012. “Vouchers Unspoken, Romney Hails

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School Choice.” *The New York Times*, June 12. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/us/politics/in-romneys-voucher-education-policy-a-return-to-gop-roots.html>

**6.** Raising state caps on charter schools was one way states could gain points in the Obama Administration’s “Race to the Top” competition.

**7.** The Romney plan says only students who use vouchers would be required to take the tests, not the full private school accepting the vouchers. But the plan also says that such testing will “ensure accountability.” It is unclear how accountability could be ensured if all students in a school don’t take the tests. In the past, many private schools have been unwilling to support a voucher plan if they would be required to participate in state accountability testing systems.

**8.** See for example, Susan E. Eaton. 2001. *The Other Boston Busing Story. What’s Won and Lost Across the Boundary Line*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

**9.** Elizabeth Anderson. 2010. *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Bryk et al. 2010; Robert Sampson, Patrick Sharkey and Steven Raudenbush. 2008. “Durable Effects of Concentrated Disadvantage on Verbal Ability among African-American Children.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105 (3): 845-852; Heather Schwartz. 2010. *Housing Policy is School Policy. Economically Integrative Housing Promotes Academic Success in Montgomery County, Maryland*. The Century Foundation. <http://tcf.org/publications/pdfs/housing-policy-is-school-policy-pdf/Schwartz.pdf>; Jonathan Guryan. 2004. “Desegregation and Black Dropout Rates.” *American Economic Review* 94, September: 919-43; Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain, and Steven G. Rivkin. 2009. “New Evidence about *Brown v. Board of Education*: The Complex Effects of School Racial Composition on Achievement.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 27, July: 349-83; David A. Weiner, Byron F. Lutz, and Jens Ludwig. 2010. “The Effects of School Desegregation on Crime.” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper NBER 15380, August 16 revision of September 2009; Amy Stuart Wells, Jennifer Jellison Holme, Anita Tijerina Revilla, and Awo Korantemaa Atanda. 2009. *Both Sides Now. The Story of School Desegregation’s Graduates*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**10.** See, for example, Jonathan Guryan. 2004. “Desegregation and Black Dropout Rates.” *American Economic Review* 94 (4), September: 919-943; Rucker C. Johnson. 2011. “Long-Run Impacts of School Desegregation and School Quality on Adult Attainments.” *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper* W16664. January. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16664>; David A. Weiner, Byron F. Lutz, and Jens Ludwig. 2010. “The Effects of School Desegregation on Crime.” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper NBER 15380, August 16 revision of September 2009.

**11.** Schwartz. 2010.

**12.** James E. Ryan. 2012. “Romney’s School Surprise.” *The New York Times*, May 30. <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/romneys-school-surprise/>

**13.** Gary Miron, Jessica L. Urschel, and Nicholas Saxton. 2011. *What Makes KIPP Work? A Study of Student Characteristics, Attrition, and School Finance*. National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. March; NEPC (National Education Policy Center). 2010. *New KIPP Study Underestimates Attrition Effects*. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/newsletter/2010/06/new-kipp-study-underestimates-attrition-effects-0>; Michael Winerip. 2011. “Message from a Charter School: Thrive or Transfer.” *The New York Times*, July 11.

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/11/nyregion/charter-school-sends-message-thrive-or-transfer.html>; Martin Carnoy, Rebecca Jacobsen, Lawrence Mishel, and Richard Rothstein. 2005. *The Charter School Dust-Up. Examining the Evidence on Enrollment and Achievement*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**14.** Despite reports that residential segregation of African Americans has been declining, the exposure of the average black resident to whites is today less than it was in 1940, and has remained mostly unchanged since 1950. Richard Rothstein, 2012. *Racial Segregation Continues, and Even Intensifies*. The Economic Policy Institute, February 3. <http://www.epi.org/publication/racial-segregation-continues-intensifies/>, citing John R. Logan and Brian J. Stults. 2011. *The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census*. US2010 Project, March 24. <http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010/Data/Report/report2.pdf>

**15.** Albert O. Hirschman. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

**16.** Other prominent Republican advocates for integration were New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, New York Senator Jacob Javits and Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke. Together they were known as “Rockefeller Republicans.”

**17.** Sidney Fine. 1997. “Michigan and Housing Discrimination, 1949-1968.” *Michigan Historical Review* 23 (2), Fall: 81-114. [http://www.law.msu.edu/clinics/rhc/MI\\_Housing\\_Disc.pdf](http://www.law.msu.edu/clinics/rhc/MI_Housing_Disc.pdf), p. 96-97. The quotation is that of the Michigan Attorney General, interpreting the powers of the new commission.

**18.** Ibid, p. 97

**19.** Ibid, p. 99.

**20.** Clark R. Mollenhoff. 1968. *George Romney. Mormon in Politics*. New York: Meredith Press, p. 206.

**21.** Ibid, p. 216.

**22.** Ibid, pp. 218, 223, 232, 233, 235.

**23.** Ibid, p. 203.

**24.** Theodore H. White. 1969. *The Making of the President 1968*. New York: Atheneum Publishers, p. 37.

**25.** Mollenhoff 1968, p. 201.

**26.** Antoni E. Gollan. 1967. *Romney – Behind the Image*. Arlington, VA: Crestwood Books, 43.

**27.** White. 1969, p. 37.

**28.** Mollenhoff 1968, p. 83. Emphasis added.

**29.** The classic accounts of how FHA and VA policies exacerbated and extended racial segregation after World War II are Kenneth Jackson. 1985. *Crabgrass Frontier: the Suburbanization of the United States*, Oxford University Press, par-

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ticularly chapters 11 and 12; and Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid. Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. On the effect of these policies in the Detroit area, see Thomas Sugrue. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, Princeton University Press.

**30.** Fine 1997, p. 99.

**31.** Robert C. Weaver. 1948, 1967. *The Negro Ghetto*. New York: Russell & Russell, p. 324

**32.** Hirsch, Arnold R. 2000. “Choosing Segregation. Federal Housing Policy Between Shelley and Brown.” In John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian. *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes. In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 206-225, 215-216, 219-221.

**33.** Raymond A. Mohl. 2002. *The Interstates and the Cities: Highways, Housing, and the Freeway Revolt. Urban Expressways and the Central Cities in Postwar America*. Research Report. Poverty and Race Research and Action Council (PRRAC). <http://www.prrac.org/pdf/mohl.pdf>, 6-7.

**34.** Thomas H. MacDonald. 1947. “The Case for Urban Expressways.” *American City* 62, June: 92-93, 92; also cited by Mohl. 2002, pp. 6-7.

**35.** Mohl 2002, pp. 17-18.

**36.** Gary T. Schwartz. 1976. “Urban Freeways and the Interstate System,” *Southern California Law Review* 49 (3), March: 406-513, 485 n. 481. The official was Alfred E. Johnson, interviewed by Schwartz in 1972. In 1955 when the federal interstate system was funded, Johnson’s title was “executive secretary.” The position was renamed several years later.

**37.** Schwartz 1976, pp. 406-513, 483

**38.** *Garrett v. Hamtramck*. 1974. U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, 503 F.2d 1236, September 26, 1239.

**39.** United States Commission on Civil Rights. 1961. *Book 4. Housing. 1961 Commission on Civil Rights Report*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, p. 100.

**40.** Yale Rabin. 1989. “Expulsive Zoning: The Inequitable Legacy of *Euclid*.” In Charles Haar and Jerold Kayden, eds. *Zoning and the American Dream: Promises Still to Keep*. Chicago: Planners Press, 110.

**41.** *Garrett v. Hamtramck* 1974 at 1246.

**42.** Ibid.

**43.** Ibid at 1156-1157.



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44. Fine 1997, pp. 87-93; United States Commission on Civil Rights 1961, pp. 125-126; *McKibbin v. Corporation and Securities Commission*. 1963. Michigan Supreme Court 369 Mich. 69, February 6.
45. Tony Zineski and Michael Kenyon. 1968. "Where the Racism Really Is – In the Suburbs." *Detroit Scope Magazine*, August 31: 6-10, p. 6.
46. Hugh McDonald. 1970a. "How Warren Became Integration Test City." *Detroit News*, July 22: 1A.
47. To be precise, with its 30 percent black workforce and a total population of 179,000, Warren had 28 non-white resident families, 22 of whom lived on the grounds of a federal installation where they worked. William Lilley III. 1970b. "Housing Report. Romney Faces Political Perils with Plan to Integrate Suburbs." *The National Journal* 2, October 17: 2251-2263, 2258.
48. Riddle, David. 1998. "HUD and the Open Housing Controversy of 1970 in Warren, Michigan." *Michigan Historical Review* 24 (2), Fall: 1-36, 1 n. 2; McDonald 1970a. The couple eventually announced that they would move, but were dissuaded by a petition asking them to stay, circulated by community churches in support of integration.
49. Riddle 1998, p. 1 n. 2; David Riddle. 2000. "Race and Reaction in Warren, Michigan, 1971 to 1974: 'Bradley v. Milliken' and the Cross-District Busing Controversy." *Michigan Historical Review* 26 (2), Fall: 1-49; Hugh McDonald. 1970b. "Integrate or Lose Funds.' Warren was Given Romney Ultimatum." *The Detroit News*, July 24: 1A, 6A; Chris Bonastia. 2004. "Hedging His Bets. Why Nixon Killed HUD's Desegregation Efforts." *Social Science History* 28 (1), Spring: 19-52, 30.
50. Riddle 1998, p. 1 n. 2.
51. For some examples of these various studies and reports, see "Memorandum: Priority Proposals of the Civil Rights Task Force," December 5<sup>th</sup> 1966, Department of Justice, Offices Files of the White House Aides, James Gaither, Box 372, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (LBJPL); Paul N. Ylvisaker to the President, July 7<sup>th</sup> 1967, 1966 Task Force on Cities Folder, Box 4, Task Force Reports, LBJPL; Joseph Califano to Robert Weaver, August 25<sup>th</sup> 1967, "Task Force on Housing and Urban Development, 1968" folder, Office files of the White House Aides, Joseph Califano, Box 78, LBJPL.
52. Prominent members of the task forces included the President's personal assistant for domestic affairs (and later Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare) Joseph Califano, United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther, National Urban League executive director Whitney Young, Senator Abraham Ribicoff, and Attorney General Katzenbach.
53. Dearborn had a population of 104,000, including only two black families and some live-in black domestics. Lilley 1970b, p. 2258.
54. Zineski and Kenyon 1968, p. 6.
55. Otto Kerner, et al. 1968. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. New York: Bantam Books, pp. 84-86, 107.

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56. William Chapman. 1967. "Romney Looks at Harlem." *The Washington Post*, September 17: A2; Sanford D. Horwitt. 1989. *Let Them Call Me Rebel. Saul Alinsky – His Life and Legacy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 486; Chicago Daily Defender. 1967. "TWO's Rev. Brazier is Host to Romney: Michigan's Governor Tours Woodlawn Neighborhood." *The Chicago Daily Defender*, September 21; T George Harris. 1967. *Romney's Way. A Man and an Idea*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., pp. ix, 205.
57. Kerner et al. 1968, pp. 112-113, 158-160.
58. Ibid, p. 406.
59. Ibid, p. 22.
60. Ibid, pp. 480 – 482.
61. Chapman 1967.
62. George Romney. 1968. *The Concerns of a Citizen*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, p. 69.
63. Ibid, p. 53.
64. Mollenhoff 1968, p. 256.
65. Nomination of George W. Romney. Hearing before the Committee on Banking and Currency, United States Senate, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, on the Nomination of George W. Romney to be Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, January 16, 1969. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 13-14; William Lilley III. 1970a. "CPR Report. Romney Lines Up HUD Money Programs to Back Operation Breakthrough Housing Push." *The National Journal*, January 31: 232-241, pp. 232-233.
66. Romney 1968, p. 75.
67. Romney 1968, p. 77.
68. Nomination of George W. Romney, pp. 10-11, 15, 19,
69. John Herbers. 1969. "Romney Making His Greatest Impact Outside Government by Challenging U.S. Institutions." *The New York Times*, May 15: 32.
70. Report of Task Force on Equal Opportunity in Housing, 9/26/69, HUD Office of Equal Opportunity. National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing Papers, Tulane University, Box 170, Folder 29, p. 4.
71. Lilley 1970b, p. 2252; See also Christopher Bonastia, *Knocking on the Door: the Federal Government's Attempt to Desegregate the Suburbs*, Princeton University Press, 2006.
72. Michael N. Danielson. 1976. *The Politics of Exclusion*. New York: Columbia University Press, 219-220; McDonald 1970b, p. 6A.

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**73.** For a further sense of Romney's ideas, see his speech before the Town Hall of California, April 17<sup>th</sup> 1970, RG 207, General Records of the Dept. of HUD, Office of the Under Secretary, Staff Correspondence, 1969-1972, Box 35, National Archives II. On Open Communities, see Charles M. Lamb. 2005. *Housing Segregation in Suburban America Since 1960: Presidential and Judicial Politics*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, pp. 60-84; Memo by Chapin, no date, attached to Memo from Van Dusen to Romney, August 15<sup>th</sup> 1969, Romney Papers, Box 10, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor MI; and more generally, RG 207, General Records of HUD, Office of the Under Secretary, Subject Files of Richard C. Van Dusen, 1969-1972, Box 10.

**74.** Lamb 2005, 71-75.

**75.** Ibid, p. 80.

**76.** Ibid, p. 83; Danielson 1976, p. 222.

**77.** Danielson 1976, p. 222; Bonastia 2006, p.105

**78.** Lamb 2005, p. 239; Lilley 1970b, pp. 2252, 2256.

**79.** Lamb 2005, p. 229.

**80.** Lilley 1970b, p. 2262.

**81.** Lilley 1970b, p. 2251, 2253; the phrase was used by other integrationists as well, for example John F. Kain and Joseph Persky. 1969. "Alternatives to the Gilded Ghetto." *The Public Interest* 14, Winter: 74-87

**82.** Lilley 1970b, p. 2253.

**83.** Ibid, p. 2252; National Association of Home Builders. 1970. "Barba Urges Retention of Tested FHA Housing Programs in HUD's Proposed Revision of Nation's Housing Laws," *NAHB Washington Scope*, June 12:1-2.

**84.** Lamb 2005, p. 86; *Yarborough v. Warren*. 1974. United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division, 383 F. Supp. 679.

**85.** McDonald 1970b, p. 1A.

**86.** McDonald 1970b, p. 6A

**87.** Ibid.

**88.** Danielson 1976, pp. 223-224; Lamb 2005, pp. 90-91; Bonastia 2006, pp.105-108.

**89.** Lamb 2005, pp. 124, 93; *Yarborough v. Warren* 1974.

**90.** Lilley 1970b, p. 2256.

**91.** Ibid, p. 2254.

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- 92.** Ibid, p. 2256.
- 93.** Nicholas Lemann. 1991. *The Promised Land*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 209.
- 94.** Lamb 2005, pp. 96-97.
- 95.** Lamb 2005, p. 127; Bonastia 2006, pp.135-136.
- 96.** Danielson 1976, p. 225.
- 97.** Lilley 1970b, p. 2259.
- 98.** Richard M. Nixon. 1970. “The President’s News Conference,” December 10. *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2840#axzz1y8oEdhy5>
- 99.** Nixon 1970; Lamb 2005, pp. 84, 97, 144, 160-163
- 100.** Lamb 2005, pp. 117-118.
- 101.** Lilley 1970b, pp. 2262, 2251, 2258-59.
- 102.** Lamb 2005, p. 137; Yale Law Journal. 1971. “The Equal Protection Clause and Exclusionary Zoning After *Valtierra* and *Dandridge*.” *Yale Law Journal* 81 (1), November: 61-86.
- 103.** Lamb 2005, p. 96 n 195.
- 104.** The Census Bureau defines the “Detroit–Warren–Livonia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as including the six counties of Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, and Wayne. The city of Detroit is located in Wayne County, and Detroit’s population is about 40 percent of the total population of Wayne County.
- 105.** Race and economic disadvantage data are from the Detroit Public Schools, [http://detroitk12.org/schools/reports/profiles/district\\_profile.pdf](http://detroitk12.org/schools/reports/profiles/district_profile.pdf). The estimate of 85 percent eligible for lunch subsidies is based on grades 1-5 only, because students in higher grades are less likely to claim subsidies even though they are eligible. In Wayne County, 91 percent of all students in the lunch subsidy program are eligible for free, rather than reduced price lunches. We assume that the percentage is higher in Detroit itself, and lower in Wayne County suburbs, thus the conclusion that “virtually all” of those in Detroit who are eligible for subsidies are in the free lunch category.
- 106.** National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (NCES, CCD). “CCD Build a Table,” <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/bat/>
- 107.** Mitt Romney’s proposal extends to any school in the state of Michigan, but travel by Detroit students to schools beyond the metropolitan area is mostly out of the question. Boston’s METCO program (see note 8, above), sometimes included opportunities for African-American children from Boston to stay overnight with host families in distant suburbs, especially in cases where they would miss the regular bus transportation home if they remained for after school clubs and other activities. Such an option would not, however, be available for elementary school students.

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- 108.** For a school attendance zone map, see the Pulaski Elementary-Middle School site at <http://detroitk12.org/schools/boundaries/297.pdf>
- 109.** Pulaski Elementary-Middle School profile report, <http://detroitk12.org/schools/reports/profiles/297.pdf>. The economically disadvantaged percentage estimate for Pulaski and other Detroit elementary-middle schools discussed subsequently includes first through fifth grades only for the best comparison with suburban elementary schools. As students get beyond these elementary grades, enrollment in the lunch program is no longer a good indicator of economic disadvantage.
- 110.** <http://www.education.com/schoolfinder/us/michigan/warren/mckinley-elementary-school/#students-and-teachers>
- 111.** [http://www.wcskids.net/curriculum/annual\\_report/reports/0910/annual/Wilkerson\\_ppt.pdf](http://www.wcskids.net/curriculum/annual_report/reports/0910/annual/Wilkerson_ppt.pdf), slides 18, 20, 23.
- 112.** This assumes that 130 of Wilkerson's white students were displaced by the transfers. Mitt Romney's plan, however, proposes only voluntary transfers and only of disadvantaged (and special education) students. It is unlikely that 130 of Wilkerson's white students would disappear to make room for Pulaski transfer students. In the equally unlikely event that Wilkerson could expand to include Pulaski students without any displacement, then approximately 200 Pulaski students could transfer.
- 113.** Google Maps estimates the school-to-school travel time, depending on traffic conditions to be from 20 to 30 minutes. We increased this, perhaps not sufficiently, to include time children would require to get to Pulaski to board the bus, or the stops a bus would make to pick children up at various points in the Pulaski attendance zone.
- 114.** <http://www.greatschools.org/cgi-bin/mi/other/3589#toc>
- 115.** Again, assuming an equivalent number of white students would be displaced. If Margaret Black were simply to expand to accommodate Pulaski students until the African American percentage reached 30, approximately 90 students would have to transfer.
- 116.** <http://detroitk12.org/schools/reports/profiles/056.pdf>
- 117.** <http://detroitk12.org/schools/reports/profiles/174.pdf>
- 118.** <http://detroitk12.org/schools/reports/profiles/273.pdf>
- 119.** NCES, CCD.
- 120.** <http://www.schooldigger.com/go/MI/schools/2574006218/school.aspx>
- 121.** This provision was inserted in the law to ensure that suburban counties in the metropolitan Detroit area could participate in the program without having to accept black students from Detroit itself. E-mail message to authors from Professor David Arsen, Michigan State University.

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- 122.** Michigan Department of Education, on-line. *Schools of Choice*. [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530\\_30334-106922-,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334-106922-,00.html)
- 123.** <http://www.schooldigger.com/go/MI/schools/2088005758/school.aspx>. In 2008, 13 percent of Harmon students were eligible for the lunch subsidy program, but that shot up to 34 percent in 2009.
- 124.** NCES, CCD.
- 125.** Ron French and Mike Wilkinson. 2011. "Black Influx Impacts School Choice in Detroit Suburbs." *The Detroit News*, March 24. [http://datadrivendetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/DetNews\\_3\\_24\\_11.pdf](http://datadrivendetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/DetNews_3_24_11.pdf).
- 126.** Erica Frankenberg, Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, and Jia Wang. 2010. *Choice Without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA, January. <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/choice-without-equity-2009-report/frankenberg-choices-without-equity-2010.pdf>