

# THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

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### **U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS REPORTS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS OBTAINING UNITARY STATUS DO NOT EXHIBIT LESS INTEGRATION**

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued a major report on school desegregation entitled, *Becoming Less Separate? School Desegregation, Justice Department Enforcement, and the Pursuit of Unitary Status*. The purpose of this ambitious report is to examine whether levels of integration tend to erode as court desegregation orders are lifted. The Commission finds that the increase in the number of jurisdictions obtaining unitary status has *not* worsened integration levels. In other words, the lifting of these orders has *not* led to increased “resegregation” in the seven states that the Commission examined: Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Moreover, the evidence indicates that the substantial number of districts that have obtained unitary status since 2000, at least partly through the actions of the Educational Opportunities Section of the Department of Justice, exhibit higher levels of integration than those districts that obtained such status in prior decades.

“This report indicates that school districts released from court supervision do not exhibit greater racial isolation than districts which remain under these old orders,” stated Gerald A. Reynolds, the Chairman of the Commission. “Other factors, such as district size and changing demographics, play a bigger role in determining the racial composition of the nation’s schools.”

The Commission unanimously approved the body of the report, including chapters one through five and the appendices, in a vote joined by Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds, Vice Chair Abigail Thernstrom, and Commissioners Jennifer C. Braceras, Gail Heriot, Peter N. Kirsanow, Ashley L. Taylor, Jr., and Michael Yaki. Commissioner Arlan D. Melendez was not present for this vote. The Commission approved the findings and recommendations by a vote of 6-to-2. Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chair Thernstrom, and Commissioners Braceras, Heriot, Kirsanow, and Taylor voted in favor, while Commissioners Melendez and Yaki voted against.

Copies of this and other Commission reports are available through the agency’s Robert S. Rankin Memorial Library—(202) 376-8110; TTY: (202) 376-8116—and Web site—[www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov).

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds, Vice Chairman Abigail Thernstrom, and Commissioners Jennifer C. Braceras, Gail Heriot, Peter N. Kirsanow, Arlan D. Melendez, Ashley L. Taylor, Jr., and Michael Yaki. Kenneth L. Marcus is Staff Director. Commission meetings are open to the media and general public.

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