

Fair Housing Month Symposium: Building the Framework for a More Equitable Massachusetts

Opportunity as a condition, not a location...

April 29, 2021

David Harris

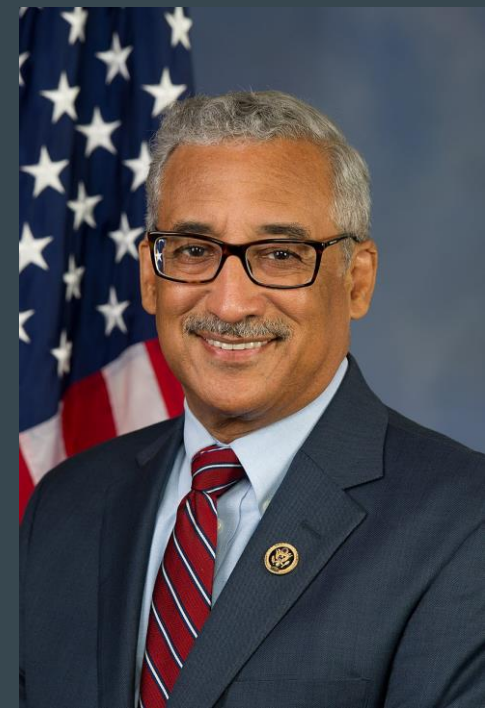
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice

Segregation does not just isolate people, it isolates opportunity. A recent report found that there is currently a \$23 billion racial funding gap between school districts serving students of color and school districts serving predominantly white students. . .

. . .Integration does not work because children of color are incapable of achieving without white peers. *Integration works because it impacts school spending and school practices.*

– Rep. Bobby

Scott



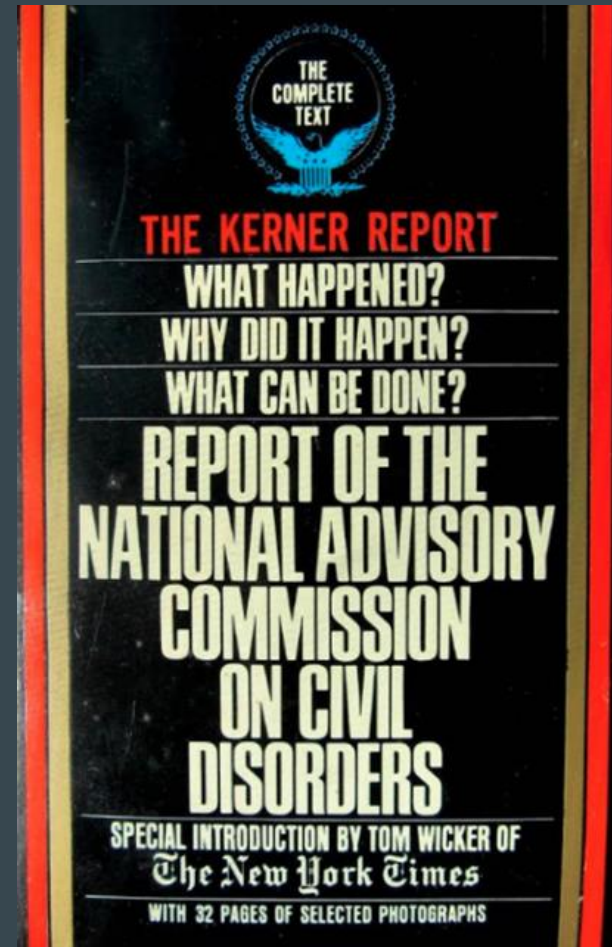
I read that report . . . of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '35, the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '43, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot. I must again in candor say to you members of this Commission—it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland—with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, **the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction.**

– Dr. Kenneth Clark in the Kerner Commission Report, 1968



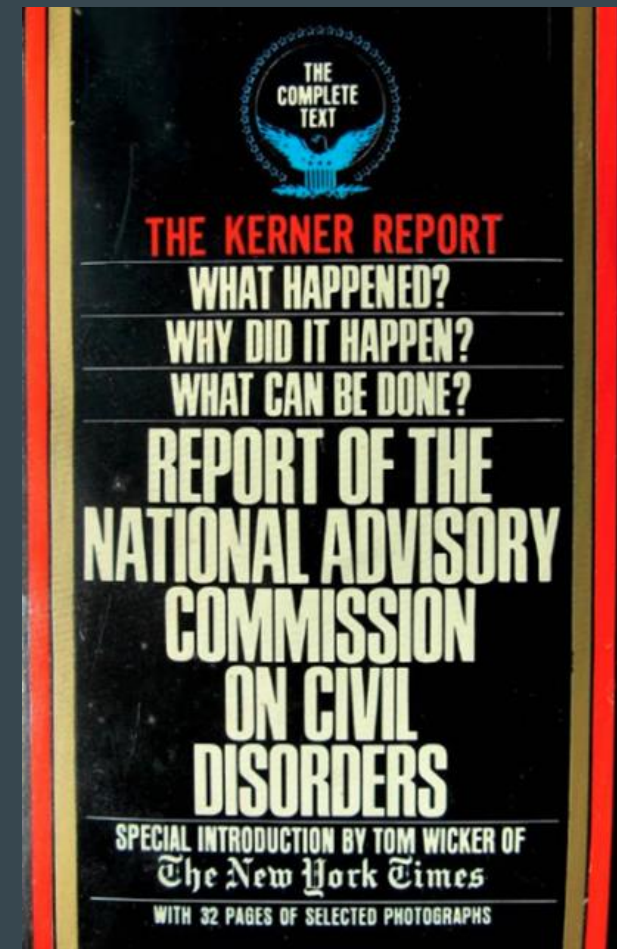
What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that **white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto**. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.

– Kerner Commission Report, 1968



Enrichment must be an important adjunct to integration, for no matter how ambitious or energetic the program, few Negroes now living in central cities can be quickly integrated. In the meantime, *large-scale improvement in the quality of ghetto life is essential.*

– Kerner Commission Report, 1968



Rather than putting forward uncompromising plans to enforce residential integration, *governments have instead chosen to put resources toward revitalizing urban centers where low-income African Americans are concentrated.* The result has been to reinforce segregation and its many social consequences, such as the disparities in academic achievement, health, income, wealth, incarceration, life expectancy, encounters with police patrols, and exposure to violence.

– “The Road Not Taken: Housing and Criminal Justice 50 Years after the Kerner Commission Report” by the Othering & Belonging Institute

At a time when the Black Lives Matter movement has record levels of support, large, even majority-white crowds have gathered in cities across America to call for the end of systemic racism and police brutality. To achieve real equity, though, white allies will have to *move beyond symbolic displays of solidarity* and actually help Black Americans get into their neighborhoods.

– Noah Y. Kim, “Housing will test white support for Black lives,”
The Boston Globe, Aug. 2020