

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN V. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY**

OF MASSACHUSETTS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2004*

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago today, in the landmark *Brown v. the Board of Education*, Chief Justice Warren declared, unanimously, that “in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place.” Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. The *Brown* decision promised that every child, regardless of the color of his or her skin, would have unequivocal access to quality education and an equal opportunity to pursue his/her dreams. Since that moment, our society has evolved to the point where the idea of intentionally separating students on the basis of on the color of their skin in the United States of America is appalling. However, while we should certainly celebrate the demise of overt official racism, we must also critically examine where we are at this historical moment, recognize the many challenges ahead and reaffirm our commitment to making *Brown v. Board* a reality.

In Massachusetts we tend to think about segregation and racial disparity as a southern phenomenon, alien to our abolitionist New England roots. But a recent study released by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University found that the Metro-Boston area still remains a widely segregated society. In fact, 70 percent of white students attend suburban schools that are over 90 percent white, while more than 75 percent of black and Latino students attend schools in the inner city or in one of the urbanized satellite cities. The segregated schools of today are arguably no more equal than the segregated schools of the past. Students who attend high minority and high poverty schools are far less likely to graduate on time, be taught by a “highly qualified teacher” and apply to college, and are far more likely to drop out of school, score poorly on the SATs, and fail the MCAS.

I am proud of what has happened in my hometown, where Mayor Howard seized an opportunity to modernize the entire school system so that everybody in this diverse working-class community feels that people care about the education of Malden’s children, regardless of race or income. Unfortunately, this is the exception, not the rule. Efforts at the national level to support such initiatives have been very uneven. The No Child Left Behind NCLB Act set lofty goals but is failing to provide the funding and the assistance needed to achieve those goals. President Bush’s budget for next year failed to provide \$9.4 billion of promised money to K–12 education, \$7.2 billion of which was intended to help schools educate our country’s most impoverished children. In order for our schools to make “adequate yearly progress,” the President needs to provide “adequate yearly funding.” Almost every day, I get calls from constituents, and communicate with teachers about the many problems with implementing standards without financial support.

Our work is clearly not done and there is too much at stake to leave the work unfinished. Education is not only a ladder of opportunity, but it is also an investment in our fu-

ture. Our nation’s security, economy, and place on the world stage depends on the success our educational system. Although children are only 24 percent of the population, they’re 100 percent of our future and we cannot afford to provide any child with a substandard education.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2004*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today we mark the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s historic ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. This monumental decision effectively overturned the egregious standard of “separate but equal” and truly opened the schoolhouse doors for all children in America.

The decision was a watershed event in U.S. history. It represents the moment in time when the U.S. government no longer sanctioned discrimination against a person solely based on the color of their skin. Most importantly, the decision established the fundamental right of access, granting everyone the ability to gain an education and excel in America.

Mr. Speaker, even though this nation officially banished slavery and attempted to fully integrate the former slaves into society with the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution, equality did not come immediately. States enacted laws to circumvent the intention of these post-Civil War amendments. Then in 1896 the Supreme Court codified the usurpation of rights in the decision that allowed for “separate but equal” facilities for African Americans, in essence endorsing an official government policy of segregating black and white citizens.

Shortly after that shameful decision, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded and soon began its legacy of fighting legal battles that address social injustice. One of the most prominent lawyers from the NAACP legal team was a young man named Thurgood Marshall, who graduated first in his class from Howard University School of Law in 1933, and joined Julian Dugas, Charles Houston and Oliver White Hill to advocate for the NAACP in the nation’s courtrooms. After a series of legal successes, Thurgood Marshall scored one of the greatest legal victories when he and Charles Houston successfully argued *Brown v. Board of Education* before the Supreme Court in 1954.

The success of this case was enhanced by the Court’s unanimous decision. This was largely thanks to Chief Justice Earl Warren, who recognized that proponents of segregation might see a divided decision as vulnerable to being revisited in later years. Furthermore the Chief Justice wisely recognized that failing to get the support of all the Justices would carry less weight with the Eisenhower Administration and the general public.

Mr. Speaker, despite the lofty promises of desegregating schools with all deliberate speed that the Supreme Court offered when it decided *Brown v. Board of Education*, some communities still suffer from de facto segregation.

Even more troubling are the disputes that still exist. Part of the problem stems from schools being largely based on housing patterns and funded by local property taxes. A school with a majority African American or Latino population, especially in large cities, is less likely to have proper textbooks, experienced and prepared teachers, and adequate classrooms of manageable size as a result of these funding imbalances. Unfortunately, this means these schools are often rated the worst and produce unprepared students, along with having high drop-out rates.

Students at these schools have limits placed on their access to a quality education. Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that students who go to impoverished schools are less likely to take college preparatory or advanced placement classes, and in the hyper-competitive world of college admissions the classes are mandatory to gain entrance. A quality education has the power to break the cycle of poverty that has plagued minority communities. We are the richest country in the history of the world, and it is unconscionable that schools are failing their students.

Mr. Speaker, as we stand in the shadow of this extraordinary decision half a century after it was made, we in Congress should recommit ourselves to the doctrine of *Brown v. Board*, which Chief Justice Warren stated so eloquently 50 years ago when he said, “We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place.”

IN HONOR OF MARK TOGNAZZINI

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2004*

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a public servant, Mark Tognazzini, of the highest caliber on his retirement from the posts of Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures for San Benito County, California. I wish to express my gratitude for his good work, and wish him well for the future.

Mark is a native of San Benito County, born and raised in Hollister. After attending local schools, he started working with the Agricultural Commissioner’s office in 1963, and over time worked his way up through the ranks to become Commissioner in 1984. While in that position, Mark has worked on a local and regional level to promote good dialogue and relationships with the agricultural industry. His work continued State-wide as well and he was active in the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association, serving as both the Vice President and President of that group. His local work includes eight years as the Chairperson of the Agriculture/Horticulture Division of the San Benito County Fair and work with other county fairs in the area.

Mr. Speaker, Mark Tognazzini’s career has spanned four decades and huge changes in the way California farmers operate and the government regulates. Throughout this time he has maintained good relationships with growers and residents, and has served the people of San Benito County and the State of California well. I am sure I join many others in wishing him all of the best for the future in his retirement.