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2-11-1971

## Telegram from Senator Edmund S Muskie to UMaine President Winthrop C. Libby

Edmund S. Muskie

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(2/11/71 - 9:10 a.m.)

T E L E G R A M

From Washington, D. C.

To Winthrop C. Libby, President

MESSAGE:

I am transmitting herewith the text of a telegram I have received today from the AFRO American Society of Bowdoin College. I would appreciate any information and comments you may have on the contents of this telegram. In view of the public release of this telegram by its senders I would appreciate your letting me know by telegram of your initial comments and reactions so I may formulate a prompt response. Thank you for your assistance.

Senator Edmund S. Muskie

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Contents of Telegram:

It was in the context of a series of exhaustive sessions designed to help Bowdoin College officials overcome the inability to recruit black faculty, that the executive council of the college's AFRO American Society was shocked and discouraged by its cumulative realization of a generalized state-wide patent of program cutback and deteriorating commitments to the "astoriation" (?) (SIC) of minority and economically disadvantaged students. For example, in 1968 the University of Maine announced that it would annually admit a minimum of 10 minority students to its Martin Luther King Scholarship. King Scholarship Program last year defaulted on this commitment and this year it abandoned the program altogether. As if this were not grave enough, the University had similarly defaulted on this commitment to Maine's Indian community. The school has only 8 such

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students enrolled. Again turning to an equally undemocratic situation, who can forget the Cavalier and its sensitive manner in which Colby College officials chose to react to the modest program request of its minority students last year. Further Maine's other colleges and universities are engaged in so little programming of relevance or benefit to minority and economically deprived students as deserved. No individual mentioned but rather only collective condemnation. All the foregoing trouble with Bowdoin Colleges continuing failure to create a viable counseling and social support structure for black students via the hiring of sufficient black teaching and counseling staff causes this Council and this Society it represents to be extremely disillusioned with and suspicious of its prospects for growth and development in Maine colleges and indeed in the State of Maine. Consequence of the above the AFRO American Society has reluctantly decided that these problems and trends will not be solved or reserved unless and until the State's most respected leader intervenes (SIC). To insure justice. To this end, we do herewith petition the good office of Senator Muskie to exercise his statesmanship in this crisis. Specifically, we request that the Senator call for a state-wide conference to address itself to securing resources and support for programs designed to provide equal educational opportunities for minority and economically disadvantaged college students. Such a conference by focusing on the mechanism <sup>to reserve</sup> the downward spiral of such programs would have the effect of assuring  beleaguered

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(continued)

minority students if they do count as a priority and their legitimate needs will be met. Should a senator, for whatever reasons choose not to take a clear and substantively supportive stand in the above problem, minority students can only systematically conclude that he does not share their aspirations (and does not represent their best interests). We trust and firmly believe that this will certainly not be the case and should such an event eventually present itself we resolve to seriously entertain the prospect of leaving the college and the State.

s/AFRO American Society of  
Bowdoin College

To: Senator Muskie

(Direct)

2/11/71

Telegram to Senator Edmund S. Muskie

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*OK. ✓  
Send copy to  
McNeil*

A public university financed by taxpayers must be willing to address itself to the educational needs of underprivileged people of the State. This the University of Maine at Orono has tried seriously and conscientiously to do. The extent of our effort is controlled by our fiscal resources and is hence inadequate.

Your involvement in the total problem of educational opportunity for underprivileged or minority people would be most appropriate and helpful providing such an involvement leads to Federal legislation based on the factual need and designed to provide more significant educational programs for such people.

s/President Winthrop C. Libby  
University of Maine, Orono