

*file multi racial
placement*



Consumer Federation of America

Howard M. Metzenbaum

U.S. Senator (Ret.)

Chairman

September 28, 1999

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I apologize for taking this means of bringing a matter of much concern to me to your attention. That matter has to do with the question of placement of black children with adoptive white parents, an issue that was covered by legislation enacted close to the end of my term in 1994. When it was brought to my attention that there was a glitch in the language of the law, I returned to the Congress to support repeal of my own legislation and the enactment of a corrective law. That was in 1996. The intent of the legislation was to ban discrimination in the placement of adoptive children. The Black Social Workers of America have, and had then, an announced policy of opposition to the enactment of the law. Many of America's black leaders have been very supportive. You spoke out on the issue before Congress acted.

Although HHS pays lip service to the laws enforcement, the fact is that there have been numerous cases litigated in the courts (at considerable expense to the adoptive parent) and HHS has not been supportive in any of them. Most of the Court cases have had favorable results, but the cost to the adoptive parents has been prohibitive. In none of them has HHS seen fit to support the adoptive parents, nor has it penalized the states that have refused to enforce the law. In a recent reply from HHS I have been told that there have been "15 complaint investigations, 11 compliance reviews and 25 other reviews and investigations, plus 50 other outreach projects," but the reality is that not one state has been penalized nor even threatened with a penalty for its failure to enforce the law.

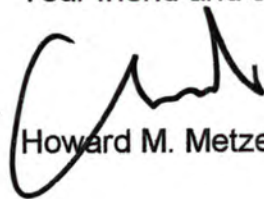
Mr. President you spoke out on this subject even before I proposed my legislation. Hillary has been very supportive as well. I need your help -- not for myself -- nor for any of my children or family. But the children who might otherwise be living with adoptive loving families are suffering because HHS is sitting on their hands. I believe part of the problem to be the beaucracy and some of the social workers who are part of

The President
September 28, 1999
Page Two

the team at HHS. I do not question the sincerity and purpose of Donna Shalala. HHS needs a "push" from you. You were there early -- and forcefully. We have the law. We now need effective enforcement.

Very sincerely, -- and apologetically for taking this means of bringing this matter to your attention. Please convey our warmest and best to Hillary.

Your friend and supporter,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Metzenbaum', written over the printed name.

Howard M. Metzenbaum

HMM:j