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Contribution of private schools to education in America

Strom Thurmond

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Political and educational leaders, since the early days of American democracy, have worked toward the ideal of establishing a program of public education that would provide for all youth basic training for life in a democracy. Moreover, during the past several decades, we have made tremendous strides in making available specialized training and higher education, financed wholly or in part by public funds.

It is generally recognized that we have not achieved the ideal with regard to providing for every person the specific training for which he is best suited. There is a question as to whether or not it is a responsibility of government to provide, without cost to the student, all the specialized training he needs or desires, even if it could be done. Many persons believe that there are types of training that are valuable but which should be provided by agencies other than government and that these offerings should be available to those who desire them and are willing to pay for them. Hence, there is a place for private and parochial schools in our society. Such institutions have contributed greatly to the advancement of literacy and culture in the United States. They occupy an important place in present-day society to which they are contributing worthily.

That our people may continue to choose special conditions and offerings beyond those that may be provided by government is consistent with our philosophy of government.