

STATEMENT BY SEN. STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON OPPOSITION TO THE
HOUSING BILL, June 8, 1955.

My opposition to the extension and expansion of the public housing program is based on the belief that private enterprise can do and is doing the housing job necessary.

We are not faced with any emergency requirement for quick construction. Therefore, I see no logical reason to put up an outlay of billions of dollars of the taxpayers' money for additional public housing. One of the principal sponsors of this legislation has pointed out that it would involve the government to the extent of \$10 billion a year. Another prominent legislator has estimated it would run even higher than that.

Since the close of World War II, 9,225,200 units of housing have been constructed by private enterprise, compared with 193,000 units of public housing through 1954, excluding military housing. This provides evidence that private enterprise is able and willing to do the job. If the Federal Government will stay out of the public housing field, I believe sufficient housing will be provided on a continuing basis by private enterprise, unless some special reason might arise which should be met by the Government. Such a reason might be the sudden influx of people into an area requiring a large number of units of temporary housing.

Recent decisions of the Supreme Court on housing and in the school segregation case indicate that the "separate but equal" doctrine will no longer apply. This denial of the right of a state or a city to determine its own regulations with regard to housing cannot be taken lightly when we are considering the ultimate result.

As a result of the Supreme Court ruling on the school case last year and on a housing case from California, my distinguished predecessor, the late Senator Burnet R. Maybank, who had long supported public housing, reversed his position and moved to strike all public housing from the bill in 1954. In the California case the Supreme Court had refused to consider an appeal from the California Court in which that court had ruled segregation in public housing unconstitutional.

I am also opposed to a principle involved in the operations of public housing projects which I consider to be socialistic. That is the regulation under which the same unit of housing is rented to different tenants at different rates of rent, or where identical units, side by side, are rented at different rates, based on the fact that the tenants have different incomes. Rentals should be based on the value of the property and not on the income of the tenants.

I do not believe it fair or in keeping with democratic principles for us to adopt such a socialistic program.

Statement - Orig.