STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) CONCERNING CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 13247, ON SENATE FLOOR, AUGUST 22, 1958.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I rise to speak in opposition to the adoption of the Conference Report on H.R. 13247, a bill to provide Federal financial aid to education. Though I was and am opposed to Federal aid to education, since the States have never delegated the field of education to the Federal Government, I find an additional serious objection to the education bill agreed to by the Senate Conferees.

The Senate Conferees have agreed to accept certain provisions of the House bill which can have no other effect than to cause further deterioration of race relations, which have already been severely damaged. Mr. President, I refer to the provision in the House bill which has been agreed to by the Senate Conferees and which provides that student loan funds shall be administered by institutions of higher education, instead of by State Commissions as was provided in the Senate bill. Under the House provision Federal moneys would be allocated to public and private institutions of higher education, for the purpose of making educational loans to students in attendance at the institutions.

The House method of administration causes me grave concern, Mr. President, because the Administration now in power -- or any future administration -- could deny loan funds to any educational institution which follows a policy of segregation. The denial could be very simply accomplished by an Executive Order requiring the U. S. Commissioner of Education to withhold loan funds from any segregated institution. The same objective could be accomplished by the Commissioner of Education, himself, by means of an administrative regulation issued by him.
In the face of such an order, or administrative regulation, southern colleges would have to forego the benefits of the loan funds and likewise students in attendance at such colleges would have to forego the benefits of educational assistance loans. As a consequence, southern citizens would be taxed to establish loan funds which their children could not even use.

To say that such an Executive Order or administrative regulation would never be issued does not allay my fears concerning this matter. I recall that statements of similar purport were made shortly prior to the dispatch of troops to Little Rock.

The fact is that there is nothing in the conference version of the bill, or in any Federal law, to prevent this Administration, or any future administration, from denying loan funds to institutions which practice segregation. In view of the fact that political considerations outweigh good judgment in the councils of national administrations, it would be most unwise to adopt the proposed procedure regarding loan funds.

Mr. President, I do not charge that the loan fund administrative procedure has been purposely selected to bring about the consequences which I have described. Nonetheless, I would consider it a breach of faith with the people whom I represent, as well as a failure to meet my obligations to my Senate colleagues, if I did not point out the dangers which lie ahead if the administrative procedure agreed to by the Senate and House Conferees is permitted to become law.

For these reasons, I feel that the Senate Conferees should make a further effort to have the loan funds administered by State Commissions, and, failing in that, should endeavor to have the loan fund title stricken from the bill altogether. Finally, Mr. President, I would express my strongest and most sincere hope that the Conference Report will not be adopted.