

MJC  
STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL RECORD KEEPING  
February 20, 1967

The Milwaukee Jewish Council and its constituent agencies have historically opposed all pre-employment inquiry regarding race or religion. We have also been opposed to the keeping of records which would identify any employee after employment in terms of his race or religion.

However, we do recognize that it is important for business organizations, industrial and financial, to be able to measure what progress they are making toward increasing employment opportunities for minority groups. We recognize also that the federal government requires regular reporting by its contractors and sub-contractors with respect to the number of minority group workers employed by these firms. It is no longer satisfactory for employers private or public, to plead ignorance of the number of non-white employees in their organizations on the ground that they are "color blind". It is therefore appropriate that the State Industrial Commission provide in its regulations for the keeping of statistics about race in a manner that will not lend itself to the practice of discrimination but to its elimination. Special care must be taken then to guarantee against the abuse of any regulations dealing with keeping statistics on minority groups.

We are aware of the intent of regulations to encourage the employment of minority group persons and the referral of such persons by employment agencies. We are in emphatic agreement with these goals. The keeping of statistics may be important but we urge that they be gathered with due care for the rights of the individual to be protected against discrimination and invasion of privacy.

Nevertheless, we feel the best way of insuring greater utilization of minority group people is through recruitment practices of the companies involved. They must aggressively make known that opportunities exist by going to the areas of our community where minority groups live and to those institutions of education where minority groups are being educated. They must clearly inform their personnel departments that great pools of potential skills exist among minority group people who are waiting to be brought into the employment mainstream of our industrial and financial communities.

As Jewish organizations, we have been keenly aware of the classic patterns of exclusion of skilled individuals of the Jewish faith from many areas of heavy business and finance, from the so called "executive suite". We have known about the under-utilization of the vast pool of young people of the Jewish faith presently training themselves in universities across the United States. The development of specific information about the presence of Jews in the executive suite has been very difficult to come by.

We believe it is possible to develop statistics on minority group employment in a manner consistent with the principle of equal opportunity of the laws of Wisconsin and the right or privacy of individual conscience.