February 1, 1969

Dear:

The Senate is now debating the Civil Rights Bill and there is every indication that discussion will continue for a few days in an effort to arrive at a satisfactory measure to protect the civil rights of everyone. There are two measures under consideration and they are somewhat different in coverage. I am hopeful that a satisfactory measure can be agreed on soon.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
March 13, 1968

Dear:

In 10 years only 21 states took any action in the field of fair housing and 5 of those enacted deficient statutes and had to do it all over again. At that rate of progress, it would take at least 15 years or more before the other states took action. I am afraid the mood of America today, and the acceleration of events, will not stand still that long and I felt that something had to be done.

I could not accept the original bill by Senator Hart or the housing amendment by Senator Mondale, and there was no choice except to completely rework these measures after a score of conferences in which many members of the Senate, their staffs, and the Attorney General and his staff, sat in.

The fact that the vote was 71 to 20 on final passage should testify to the fact that we developed an acceptable measure and if there are imperfections -- and nobody knows better than I the imperfections that can creep into a very complicated measure -- they can be cured.

I believe we held the fort so far as individual homeowners are concerned, and those who own up to four flats, where one is owner-occupied, and in addition, provided an 18 months period in order to iron out any difficulties which may arise in practice so far as brokers are concerned.

As you no doubt know, this matter has now been referred to the House of Representatives and it remains to be seen what action will be taken in that body.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
April 22, 1968

Dear:

I can certainly understand and share your concern over the widespread demonstrations, civil disorders, and rioting we see across our country. Civil order must be maintained and the rights, privileges, and safety of the public assured at all times. There is no right to act against the public safety by anyone, anywhere, any time -- for any reason.

During the weekend of April 5 - 7, we experienced a wanton wave of looting and rioting in many of our major metropolitan areas -- including our capital city, Washington, D. C. These acts of violence and destruction must not be permitted. Good, strict law enforcement with appropriate punishment for the guilty is needed. There is a definite distinction between dissent and destruction.

In view of the Memphis tragedy and recent riots, the march planned on Washington will have a changed complexion. However, Congress is alert to the awesome implications and possible dangers. Both the Senate and the House have now completed action on a Civil Rights Bill which covers a variety of subjects ranging from the protection of the rights of all the people insofar as their federal rights are concerned, to strong anti-riot provisions and it has been signed into law.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen