



□ PETITION □

OF

African American Residents of Charleston, South Carolina, to the General Assembly of South Carolina, January 1919, for Black Teachers in the Black Schools

We the citizens of the negro race and parents of pupils of the aforesaid race in attendance as pupils of the public schools of Charleston, do through our committee, to wit: Thomas E. Miller, John M. Thompson, William H. Johnson, Edwin A. Harleston and Charles C. Jacobs, most respectfully petition for assistance and relief from the uncalled for, unnecessary, unusual, abnormal conditions that surround and control the management, instruction and teaching of the children of the aforesaid race in the public schools of the city of Charleston.

Fifty-six years after freedom, the negroes of the city of Charleston are denied the right to teach negro children by negroes in the free schools of Charleston, and whereas, we need relief from this unnecessary, unusual, abnormal condition, and whereas we have thousands of educated men and women who are prepared and worthy to teach the children of the aforesaid race in the city of Charleston, and whereas under the existing law of the free public schools of the State of South Carolina, it is impossible for teachers of the negro race to teach children of the negro race in the free public schools in the city of Charleston;

and whereas negro teachers do teach negro children in every other city of this State and in every city in every one of the 13 old slave-holding States in the Union.

We, therefore, most humbly petition and pray to each and every one of you in authority to have Section 1780 of the civil code of 1912 amended so as to read: "That it shall be unlawful for a person of the white race to teach in the free public schools of South Carolina, provided and set aside for the children of the negro race."

We, the undersigned committee, most respectfully and humbly beg to state that we are not a self constituted committee of a few educated negroes of the city of Charleston, but we are the chosen representatives of the petitioners, namely: Of more than 10,000 adult men and women of the negro race in the city of Charleston, who are petitioning and begging you in authority to use the golden rule toward, for and over them, in the teaching of their children in the free public schools of the State of South Carolina.

— "Negroes petition General Assembly," *The State* (Columbia, South Carolina) 23 January 1919, p. 11—

The Charleston school board had denied an earlier petition from the Charleston chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). After this second petition was submitted with over 10,000 signatures, the legislature changed the law and, in 1920, African American teachers began to teach in the segregated schools for black children.