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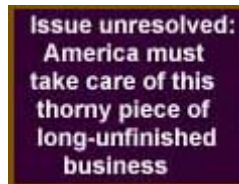
## **Racial Equity Continues To Elude Nation**

How fare race relations 30 years after the Kerner Commission fretted over the issue?

Well, the black middle class has swelled. Black elected officials have multiplied. And the number of black entrepreneurs has risen.

But all is by no means well. In fact, in many ways the black plight is worse. The black poor have gotten poorer, their numbers have grown more, black men are helping to make the prison industry boom -- as inmates.

As the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation notes, this state of affairs need not be. The nation knows from experience what works to enhance racial equality. So why hasn't it gotten there from here? Lack of will, that's why.



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Racial equality no longer ranks high on the nation's agenda. That's wrong. America must take care of this thorny piece of long-unfinished business.

Unaddressed, it leads to crime and dangerous social friction and wastes the talents of human beings. Racial inequality means more spending for police, prisons and welfare than world otherwise be the case. Finally, inequality betrays the nation's ideals.

The Eisenhower Foundation has issued a report to mark the 30th anniversary of the Kerner Commission report, which sought to explain the racial explosions in American cities.

A mantra from recent years has been that no social programs work. That's a bald-face lie. The Eisenhower report notes that a wealth of research literature pinpoints approaches that work to reduce racial inequality and approaches that don't. America must exploit this knowledge, the report sensibly argues.

For instance, Head Start works. Studies show that it gives poor kids an early academic boost, as it was designed to do. What's more, dramatic new brain research underscores the importance of early learning for later academic success. The report wisely recommends expanding Head Start.

The report advocates, among other steps, specific strategies for investing in youth, the replication of successful public school reforms, the creation of public jobs to repair houses, roads and bridges -- provocative ideas all. But first the nation must realize it is ignoring the issue of racial inequality at its own peril.