S. 110, a bill filed by Senator Kevin Harrington of Salem on behalf of the Massachusetts Federation for Fair Housing and Equal Rights, will be heard before the Education Committee on Monday, March 7. A significant amount of support in both educational and political circles is expected to be expressed in support of the bill which will "provide for the attendance of children in public schools of cities and towns other than the cities or towns in which they reside."

There has been a steady growth of interest in plans to involve suburban school systems in relieving racial imbalance in the core cities, most notably in Boston. S. 110 would link together in a common effort, those school systems willing to find places for negro students, state funds to defray the expenses, and the facilities of the State Board of Education, in working out plans for the transfer of pupils from racially imbalanced systems to the largely all-white suburban schools.

Among those expected to testify or send statements in support of the bill are Edward J. McCormack, Jr., Lt. Gov. Elliot Richardson, Prof. Leon Trilling of M.I.T., Thomas Curtin of the State Board of Education, Father Robert Drinan, Boston College Law School Dean, Theodore Sizer, Harvard School of Education Dean, Kermit Morriss of the Regional College Board, Attorneys Lester Hyman and Robert DeGiacomo, both candidates for Attorney General, Rep. Michael Dukakis, also a candidate for Attorney General who has filed similar legislation, Rev. Tex Sample, Mrs. Lucy Benson, psychiatrists Dr. Robert Coles and Dr. Charles Finderhughes, Rev. Thomas Carroll of the Catholic Guild for the Blind, and Dean Fred Glimp of Harvard.

Impetus for the development of the school transfer system has come from a number of sources, most notably the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, a group of public and private school administrators, civil rights representatives, and interested citizens who began meeting formally last November. Led by Professor Leon Trilling, who is also a Brookline School Committee member, the group has been meeting with officials from the State Board of Education and from suburban schools to interest them in participating in the pupil transfer plan.

Endorsement of the program has come from the Brookline, Newton, Lexington, Wellesley, and Braintree School Committees. A number of other school committees have expressed interest. Several have the proposal under advisement, and are awaiting further developments before deciding their position. Brookline has agreed to take approximately 100 pupils starting in September, Lexington, 25, Newton, 60, Wellesley, 25, and Braintree, an unspecified number.

A good deal will clearly depend on the financial arrangements made for defraying the costs of the pupil transfer. The Council, known as METCO, has submitted proposals to the Carnegie Corporation and to the Federal Government, under Title III of the Education Act of 1965, to finance a pilot project which would include methods of evaluating the success of the program.

Overtures have been made to the Boston School Committee, seeking its cooperation. An exploratory meeting was held on February 18. The question of approval of the plan is expected to be on the agenda of the Boston School Committee during March.
S. 110, which METCO also supports, does not depend on the approval of the sending community for its implementation. It provides that any city or town, adopting a plan to accept students from communities where racial imbalance exists, as defined by the Racial Imbalance Act passed in 1965, shall file its plan with the State Board of Education, along with an estimate of the costs involved. The State Board of Education will then work out a plan of financial assistance with the accepting community. Expenses which can be covered would include transportation, additional teachers, tuition, and technical assistance.

Among the factors leading to the filing of this legislation were the 1965 Kiernan Commission report which found racial imbalance to be educationally harmful, to both white and negro students. As an outgrowth of the Kiernan Commission findings was the Racial Imbalance bill, passed last summer, requiring communities to do something to solve racial imbalance, or face the loss of state aid to education. Boston is now in danger of losing two million dollars in state aid for failing to come up with an acceptable plan.

The idea of including suburban communities in plans to alleviate racial imbalance began to enter public discussion some months ago. Boston Redevelopment Director Edward Logue was an early advocate. Initial responses indicating concern that Boston might fail to do its share if the suburbs entered the picture have faded, as more and more people have come to accept the idea that while Boston must still come to grips with the problem, the suburbs have their own role to play, a role which would not only help Boston, but would bring much needed integration to the suburbs themselves. A Harvard educational association seminar in December pointed to the value for students in white suburbia to share a learning experience with students with differing social, economic and racial backgrounds.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy has filed a bill in the U.S. Senate (S.2928) which is similar to the Massachusetts proposal.

Perhaps ironically, Monday, March 7, will also be the hearing date for proposals filed by Boston School Committee member William E. O'Connor to repeal the Racial Imbalance Law.