

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

6 Raymond Street, N. W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30314



THE NEGRO VOTE : AN ANALYSIS

ATLANTA, GA. -- Of the six states carried by the Democratic Party Nov. 3, four (Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee and Virginia) would have gone Republican had it not been for Negro votes. Another, North Carolina, might have. Republicans might not have carried Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and South Carolina if those states allowed Negroes access to registration lists. Only Texas gave Democrats a majority of white votes cast.

The Southern states that voted Democratic have the highest Negro registration in the region; Republicans carried those states with less than 45% of the eligible Negroes registered.

In Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina, Republican Senator Barry Goldwater carried 54%, 57% and 59% of the vote respectively; heavy Negro votes for the Democratic ticket prevented bigger margins. In Mississippi and Alabama, where Republicans took

87% and 69% of the vote, Negro registration is abnormally low because of the state-inspired difficulties Negroes have in registering to vote.

Thus, in the five states of the deep South -- Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana -- most notorious as seats of racism, white voters supported Senator Goldwater almost unanimously. The rejection of Negroes from the traditionally integrated Republican party, the lack of support the Democratic ticket received from local and state Democratic party figures in the deep South, and the clear delineation of Senator Goldwater's position favoring states rights and "local option" of segregation all contributed toward a Republican victory.

The Goldwater states had never in recent years (except Louisiana)

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supported Republican Presidential candidates. All -- except Georgia -- had supported the racist Dixiecrat slate in 1948.

Goldwater lost three states -- Florida, Tennessee and Virginia -- that had voted Republican in 1952, 1956, and 1960, because sizeable Negro votes wielded the balance of power.

A study by the Southern Regional Council -- assuming that 95% of the voting Negroes voted Democratic -- reveals the following voting patterns throughout the South: (Negro vote totals are estimates)

I. In Florida, Tennessee, Arkansas and Virginia Democrats could not have won without the heavy Negro support they received. Florida -- Johnson margin: 37,800 votes. Negro votes: 211,800
Virginia -- Johnson margin: 77,000. Negro votes: 166,600
Tennessee -- Johnson margin: 126,000. Negro votes: 165,200
Arkansas -- Johnson margin: 65,400. Negro votes: 67,600
II. In North Carolina, Democrats probably would not have won without Negro support.

Johnson margin: 173,900. Negro vote: 168,400

III. In Texas, Democrats clearly carried a majority of white voters.

Johnson margin: 684,100. Negro votes: 325,500

IV. Republican victories in Georgia, Louisiana and South Carolina would have been greater had it not been for Negro votes. Georgia -- Goldwater, 578,509; Johnson, 487,581. Margin: 90,900. Negro votes: 178,700.

There are more eligible unregistered Negroes (343,000) than registered Negroes (270,000) in Georgia. If 40% of the eligible unregistered Negroes had been registered, and had followed similar voting patterns, Georgia would have been carried by the Democrats.

Louisiana -- Goldwater, 503,545; Johnson, 387,811. Margin 115,700. Negro votes: 122,000. In Louisiana also, unregistered eligible Negroes (350,000) outnumber registered Negroes (164,800).

Had only 45% of the unregistered Negroes been allowed to vote, and had they followed similar turnout and voting patterns, Louisiana would have gone Democratic.

South Carolina -- Goldwater, 311,144; Johnson, 219,613. Margin: 91,500. Negro votes: 90,300. Again, registration of 65% of the state's eligible unregistered Negroes (227,000) would have changed the election results here.

V. In Alabama and Mississippi, where Negro disenfranchisement is greatest, Goldwater received the highest totals of all votes cast.

Alabama -- Goldwater, 454,313; unpledged Democrats, 200,355. Margin: 240,000. Negro votes -- 68,100. In Alabama, only 110,000 of the state's 370,000 eligible Negroes are registered to vote.

Mississippi -- Goldwater, 359,693; Johnson, 53,063. Margin: 306,600. Negro vote: 21,200. In Mississippi, not more than 28,000 Negroes are registered. Another 394,000 are eligible.

In Georgia, Johnson carried North Georgia counties with low Negro populations, one urban center (Atlanta-Fulton County) and some south Georgia counties with large Negro registration. In Louisiana, rural areas stayed Democratic, while urban areas voted Republican. In Tennessee, Negro votes beat down Republican challenges on the state level, and in Arkansas, Negroes -- who split their tickets between Democrat Johnson and Republican gubernatorial candidate Winthrop Rockefeller -- and labor combined to place the state in the Democratic column, although the national Republican ticket received strong support from the state's segregationist Delta area. Significantly, winning gubernatorial candidate Orval Faubus softpedaled the race issue in his campaign against the more moderate Rockefeller.

The "Freedom Vote" conducted in Mississippi dramatically demonstrated the potential power of the Negro vote. In 37 Mississippi counties, "Freedom Votes" (unofficial ballots cast over three days by local Negroes) outnumbered votes the regular Democratic ticket received.

For example, had those who cast "Freedom Ballots" in the regular election Nov. 3, the Johnson-Humphrey ticket would have won in Benton, Holmes, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola and Tunica Counties.