

To: SNCC Staff  
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SUGGESTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY FOR SNCC IN  
WASHINGTON

We are not exactly unknown on Capiton Hill. Over the past few years, and particularly in connection with last summer's project, SNCC made beginning contact with a number of Congressmen, above and beyond the half-dozen who are very good friends. This contact has been extended by the challenge to the Mississippi Congressmen; even though that was done in the name of the MFDP, most Congressmen are aware that SNCC is highly involved with the MFDP.

For the past several months there has been little contact with the Congress beyond the issue of the Challenge. It is clear that this is unsatisfactory, for several basic reasons:

- 1) the MFDP challenge is essentially a narrow political focus--one state and one basic issue.
- 2) we need to maintain continued contact with the Congressmen, both to deepen their commitment and to have a relationship as a basis for further issues like the Challenge, should they come up.
- 3) The Summer Project coming up will need Congressmen to protest arrests, etc., as was done last summer; and our experience was that much more could have been done if we had prior relations.

We need, then, to re-establish congressional relations, and to do this in the name of SNCC specifically, not MFDP or COFO. We could do this as issues arise--arrests, violations of Federal law or whatever--but rather than contact primarily in emergency, crisis situations it seems we ought to have a positive and systematic program with which to reach these guys.

After talking with a few assistants to co-gressmen and various movement people in Washington we conclude that SNCC ought to implement a systematic program around Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This is the section which provides for the withholding of Federal funds from programs operated in a discriminatory manner.

Under this statute any particular program which is Federally operated or Federally financed can have its funds cut off, if it can be shown that discrimination is involved in the program. There is a fair amount of bureaucratic red-tape in the bill but if we follow through on specific violations the federal funds can be cut off. Since Mississippi, for example, receives in Federal Funds three times as much as it pays in taxes, the effect of cutting off some of these funds would be to threaten

economic collapse if the programs are not integrated.

If we could develop a program of ferreting out violations, publicising them, and asking specific Congressmen (perhaps on an appropriate committee) to push for withholding, we could accomplish several objectives.

- 1) If we can get funds cut off, we can really do some damage.
- 2) The legal issue is clear and non-controversial, and the kind that guys with only minimal commitment cannot evade.
- 3) It does not conflict with MFDP political work.
- 4) It is a "respectable" kind of issue which forms a good basis to approach new Congressmen who don't know us.

Most of the Federal agencies have now had regulations approved to govern the Departmental programs, and which they seem, at any rate, determined to enforce--but only when complaints are made, in most cases. The "watchdog" function which we could play could be used to real advantage.

Those regulations are available to the public. In addition, the Civil Rights Commission has a publication which outlines the range of the Title, for general use in the field, and they also have a section devoted to this particular issue. (The contact there is Dick Shapiro, who used to work with the Anti Defamation League in Atlanta and knows SNCC people).

#### WHAT SNCC WILL HAVE TO DO:

- 1) /Staff people in the South will have to supply reliable and complete information(not just a line in a letter or a WATS line report). The CRC guides may be helpful here, or perhaps a check list could be developed.
- 2) Someone in Washington, with a good knowledge of the law and some experience, will have to work at least half-time on the program. There are a number of Congressional assistants and other experienced people in Washington who would be happy to serve as an advisory committee.

This program cannot be done simply by the staff meeting telling someone in Washington to "go ahead with it." It will need the full cooperation from local staff, for unless the Washington SNCC office is fed information it has nothing to do in this area. I hope therefore, that we can discuss this at the staff meeting and come to some conclusions.