

*A Statement
of Political
Objectives*



What the

NEGRO

Wants



Foreword

Meeting in New York City on May 9 on call of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, representatives of the leading national Negro organizations formulated this statement of political objectives. Keenly aware of the ill-concealed desire on the part of both major parties to tone down the civil rights planks in the party platforms, these organizations propose to rally their memberships and friends to avert such a step backward, and to move forward.

Negro voters are insisting that both the Republican and the Democratic parties pledge support to revision of the Senate Rules to permit stopping of the filibuster by majority vote, to enactment of an FEPC law with enforcement powers, and to the elimination of discrimination and segregation in all federally-aided developments and facilities.

In other words, Negro voters are asking for the removal of all the artificial barriers raised against them as a race and for the full enforcement of the constitutional guarantees of equality. Simply this—nothing more or less.

June, 1952.

Walter White, *Executive Secretary*,
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People

As Americans, Negroes of the United States share with their fellow citizens of all races a deep concern for the national welfare, for security against our foes, within and without, for the integrity of our governmental officials, for conservation of our economic resources, and for the extension and implementation of democratic practices.

These are basic issues which confront the whole American people and require the united support of all segments of the population without which we all stand in grave danger of losing our cherished freedoms. Despite arbitrary limitations upon full and free participation in American life, Negro citizens have repeatedly and continuously demonstrated their devotion to the nation's highest democratic ideals and their willingness to make any sacrifice to maintain and extend the practice of these ideals.

Negro voters are playing an increasingly important role in national political campaigns. Wartime migrations have greatly expanded this vote in the North, East and West. Meanwhile a concerted drive is steadily increasing the number of Negro voters in the South with the prospect of 2,000,000 in that region by November.

The vital role of the Negro voter was never more convincingly demonstrated than in the 1948 presidential election. Although repudiated by the Dixiecrats following adoption by the Democratic National Convention of a forthright and specific civil rights pledge, the Democratic candidate won the election in the most phenomenal upset in the nation's political history. The Dixiecrats chose to make civil rights the central issue of the campaign after their failure to prevent adoption of the straightforward minority report of the Resolutions Committee. Campaigning on this issue, the candidate went on to victory despite the walk-out of the Dixiecrats and the defection of the Progressive Party.

The 1948 Experience

Contributing importantly to his triumph was the 70 per cent vote of Negro citizens in the key states of California, Illinois and Ohio. These votes were cast for the Democratic candidate on the basis of his firm stand for civil rights and the unequivocal advocacy of these rights in his party platform; and this notwithstanding the fact that his leading opponent was an able Republican whose civil rights record was well established, but who eschewed this issue in the campaign and whose party platform was less forthright.

In the light of the 1948 experience, Negro voters are amazed at the reluctance of all save one of the avowed candidates to take a forthright position on civil rights. Moreover, they are committed against any candidate who fails to speak up for this goal.

As representatives of 20 leading national Negro organizations, we affirm our essential Americanism and accept as minimum standards in the field of civil rights the historic report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights in 1947. Realization of the objectives set forth in that report will infinitely strengthen our democracy at home and immeasurably heighten our prestige abroad.

The Minimum Program

It is because of our great concern for the national welfare and our devotion to the cause of extending full democratic rights and privileges to all American citizens irrespective of race, color, religious faith or national origin that we present to both major parties our declaration of principles. Further, we ask that presidential and vice-presidential candidates chosen by the party conventions publicly affirm their active support of these principles.

1. **THE FILIBUSTER:** The Senate of the United States is plagued with the filibuster today because northern Senators refused to support the ruling of Vice President Barkley

in 1949 which would have paved the way for a workable anti-filibuster rule. Instead, these same northern Senators, some of whom are up for reelection, helped to fasten an unworkable rule on the United States Senate. Therefore, we call upon the Republican and Democratic Parties to include a firm pledge in their National platforms that the first order of business in the 83rd Congress will be to curb filibusters through support of a new rule designed to provide cloture on a majority vote of the members present.

The Senate need only reassert the inherent right of any deliberative body to determine its own procedures. The newly-elected Senate of the 83rd Congress will be entirely free of any stifling precedents by refusing to adopt automatically the rules of previous Senates and by writing instead a new and efficient set of rules. Such a new set of rules can be and should be adopted on the opening day of the 83rd Congress, providing for cloture by majority vote. By taking such action in that way and at that time, the Senate can give timely burial to the present Rule XXII which sanctions filibusters.

2. **FEPC:** The practical demonstrations of effective FEPC legislation in the states show that those who oppose Federal legislation with enforcement powers either have neglected to take the time to study this legislation or are deliberately and dishonestly confusing the public. FEPC simply means that all citizens shall have an opportunity to obtain work on the basis of merit rather than on the basis of color or religion. Therefore, we call for endorsement of FEPC with enforcement powers as a legislative objective. We will not be satisfied with platform generalities on this subject.
3. **ANTI-LYNCHING LEGISLATION:** The decline in lynchings by rope and faggot and other public exhibitions of terror has lulled some of our citizens into the false belief that

this crime has disappeared. The death of Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Moore by the bombing of their home in Mims, Florida; the destruction of Harvey E. Clark's apartment in Cicero, Illinois, by a mad mob; the floggings in North Carolina; death by shooting in Groveland, Florida—all of these incidents indicate that lynching is still with us. Thus, the bomb, the gun and the whip have been added to the rope and faggot, making the need for strong anti-lynching legislation greater than ever before. Federal legislation must also be strengthened to provide safeguards against police brutality, unconstitutional arrests, and other deprivations of civil liberties under the color of state law.

4. **VOTING:** The Federal government must protect the right of citizens to vote. We call for the immediate and outright abolition of the poll tax by Congressional legislation.

Intimidation in polling places must be outlawed. Such subterfuges as asking applicants for registration: "How many bubbles in a bar of soap?" for the purpose of depriving them of the right to vote must be ended.

5. **DISCRIMINATION IN THE ARMED SERVICES:** There has been a decline in practices of segregation in the Air Force and the Navy. There has also been some progress in the Army. This progress has been achieved by executive direction from the Commander-in-Chief. This Commander-in-Chief has already announced that he will not be a candidate for reelection. Progress must not stop when the new President takes office. Therefore, a commitment for complete elimination of segregation in all branches of the Armed Services is essential.

6. **SEGREGATION IN INTERSTATE TRAVEL:** There is at present a crazy-quilt pattern of segregation in public transportation in the United States that exists despite numerous court decisions that clearly show such segregation

unconstitutional. The time has long passed for Congressional correction of the practice of segregation which harasses our own citizens and humiliates visitors from foreign countries, if they happen to be colored.

We call for legislation eliminating segregation in interstate travel facilities including those provided in railroad stations, bus terminals and airports.

7. **OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS:** There must be Federal protection against peonage and violations of civil rights. There must be a halt to the spending of Federal money to support or extend the practices of segregation. We call upon both Parties to catch up with the great majority of the American people, and certainly a great majority of the people of the World, by proclaiming that as a condition of Federal assistance for housing, health, education or other programs, there must be firm guarantees from the states that this assistance will not be used for segregation.

We are for non-segregated housing. We recognize that housing is vitally important, but it is secondary to the complete abolition of segregation and discrimination based on color.

We ask that the major Parties pledge support to elimination of all segregation in the District of Columbia and in all other areas or facilities under Federal control such as the territories, parks, government hospitals, etc.

Our duty as American citizens imposes upon us the obligation to oppose actively any candidate of either party who is not explicit and uncompromising on the basic issue of civil rights.

Participating Groups

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	<i>Jawn A. Sandifer</i>
American Council on Human Rights	<i>Patricia Roberts</i>
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, AFL	<i>Theodore E. Brown</i>
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, Social Action Department	<i>Bishop William Y. Bell</i> <i>Dr. Channing H. Tobias</i>
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority	<i>Bertell Collins Wright</i>
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity	<i>Frank M. Summers</i>
National Alliance of Postal Employees	<i>W. C. Jason, Jr.</i> <i>Ashby B. Carter</i>
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	<i>Walter White</i> <i>Roy Wilkins</i>
National Association of Colored Women	<i>Dora Needham Lee</i> <i>Ella P. Stewart</i>
National Beauty Culturists' League	<i>Cordelia Greene Johnson</i>
National Council of Negro Women	<i>Ruth Caston Mueller</i>
National Dental Association	<i>Leon W. Scott, D.D.S.</i>
National Medical Association	<i>Robert S. Wilkinson, M.D.</i>
National Negro Funeral Directors	<i>C. L. Dennis</i> <i>Charles H. Chew, Jr.</i>
National Negro Insurance Association	<i>Charles A. Shaw</i>
Negro Labor Committee	<i>Arthur Chapin</i>
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity	{ <i>Grant Reynolds</i> <i>Ted Poston</i> <i>Clarence Mitchell</i>
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity	<i>C. L. Townes, Sr.</i>

**National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People**

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