

PARENTS MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

604 G Street SE

Washington, D.C.

202 547-8522

or 547-8524

Dear Parents:

We who send you this letter, like you, are parents of young people participating in COFO's Mississippi Summer Project. Proud as we are of our sons and daughters, we are nevertheless concerned about their safety and the safety of the citizens of Mississippi with whom they are working this summer. We are sure that you have already taken action, as we have, to secure protection for them, but we would like to report to you our activities up to date.

1. We are enclosing a copy of our press release and a letter from Boston legal authorities, presented at a press conference in Washington on June 24, for which we received national TV, radio and newspaper coverage. This conference was arranged with the help of the Washington Human Rights Project, and we have been assured that groups of parents will have no difficulty in arranging local press conferences. If you need guidance, contact your local Civil Rights organizations or Mr. Tom Leatherwood or Mr. Ron Wilmore at 202-547-8522 or 8524.

2. Since we have been in Washington this week, (we are parents from New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington D.C.), we have been successful in arranging interviews with Nicholas Katzenbach, Deputy Attorney General of the U.S., Lee White, Assistant to President Johnson, Senators Keating and Javits of N.Y., Speaker of the House John McCormick, Representative Reid and Ryan of N.Y., as well as assistants of Senators Case and Williams of N.J., Senator Saltonstall of Mass., Senator Humphrey of Minn., Sen. Brewster of Maryland and Rep. Osmer of N.J. IT IS MOST URGENT THAT CONGRESSMEN RECEIVE DELEGATIONS FROM THEIR CONSTITUENTS, as well as concerned citizens who feel that all Congressmen represent all the people of the United States. NOTE: In the event that your son or daughter is arrested, notify your Senator and Congressman immediately and ask them to telephone the jail. We have been advised on Capitol Hill that such a phone call from Washington is effective.

3. Fortunately, the NAACP National Convention is now in progress in Washington and we have talked with many leaders of that organization. Their members are enthusiastically supporting us and already many, many telegrams have gone to the President asking for Federal Marshals to be sent to Mississippi.

4. By means of this letter, we are contacting parents nationally. Enclosed is a list of participants in your state. Will you take the responsibility of contacting other parents immediately to organize group action? This is a MUST! The White House and Capitol Hill must know that large numbers of people want them to act before any other tragedies occur. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (June 30, July 1 and 2) are vitally important. We need more people to bring the necessary pressure and it is most urgent that parents and friends from every state converge on Washington to lobby for all available protection immediately.

We are certain that your emphasis, as is ours, will be that the Federal Government can and MUST assume responsibility for the protection of its citizens any place in the Union. We have asked for Federal Marshals to be sent to Mississippi. If you have any additional ideas or suggestions please let us know.

Yours in freedom,  
Parents Mississippi Emergency Committee

THINGS TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

1. Call all other parents in your area and organize. Please send us a corrected list of participants and parents as soon as possible.
  2. Arrange a press conference. (If you need help, let us know.)
  3. Letters and wires to the President, Attorney-General, Congressmen, Senators, and local officials urging that Federal powers be used to protect the people in Mississippi.
  4. Ask your friends, neighbors, community leaders and clergy to ACT.
  5. Begin to arrange for trip to Washington -- together if possible. We have found that it is very easy to organize parents around this matter.
- NOTE: Make sure Congress is in session on the day you plan to come.
6. Raise funds to support your activities and ours.

THINGS TO DO IN WASHINGTON

1. Check in with Tom Leatherwood or Ron Wilmore at the above address.
2. See your Congressman and all other Congressmen from your state. See your Senators.
3. Demand an interview with top officials of the Justice Department.
4. Since the Federal Government has clear powers to act, insist on a meeting at the White House.
5. We can help to arrange a press conference in Washington if you come with a state delegation.
6. Bring letters or other material from your son and daughter about what is happening in Mississippi to use in your interviews.

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( Personally delivered to the White House on June 9, 1964 )

Mr. President:

You are undoubtedly aware that this summer almost 1,000 Americans are traveling to Mississippi under the auspices of the Council of Federated Organizations in that state. The purpose of their trip will be to carry on educational activities, community center programs, and voter registration work, in order to insure equal opportunity for all. Among these volunteer workers will be forty-five students from Harvard, Brandeis, Radcliffe, and Boston Universities, whose names are appended to this appeal.

As you know the record of the past several years indicates that the liberties, and the lives of these people will be in jeopardy this summer. That record is full of intimidations, arrests, beatings, shootings and even murder, inflicted upon Negro and white citizens. It is clear beyond doubt that they cannot depend upon the State of Mississippi for protection.

The Constitution of the United States vests responsibility in you, Mr. President, to enforce the laws of the nation. For this purpose you have both inherent and statutory powers. We urge you, in the name of that humanity which the nation espouses and that equality of rights to which you have pledged support, to use the plenitude of your Presidential authority to take preventive and collective measures to protect the life and the constitutional liberties of all persons within the State of Mississippi. We ask that you station in Mississippi, in advance of trouble, Federal Marshals sufficient to deter, prevent, or immediately suppress actions which would deprive Americans of their constitutional rights.

The eyes of the nation, and of the world, will be on Mississippi this summer. Let them see right and justice prevail in that State through the authority and dignity of the Executive of our nation.

Mark DeWolfe Howe, Professor of Constitutional Law,  
Harvard University Law School  
Rev. Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Dean, Boston College Law School  
Prof. Joseph T. Witherspoon, Jr., Univ. of Texas Law School  
Albert O. Beisel, Boston University Law School  
Prof. Sanford J. Fox, Boston College Law School  
Prof. Robert G. Haber, Boston College Law School  
Rev. Wm. J. Kenealy, S.J., Boston College Law School  
Prof. John D. O'Reilly, Jr., Boston College Law School  
Prof. Robert S. Sullivan, Boston College Law School

(over)

Professor Kenneth T. Bainbridge, Harvard University  
Edmond C. Berkeley, Editor, Computers & Automation  
Dr. Ruth Berman  
Right Rev. John M. Burgess, Suffragan Bishop Episcopal  
Diocese of Massachusetts  
Dr. Ross Cannon  
Dr. Robert Coles, Harvard University  
Prof. Paul Deats, Jr., Boston University  
Rabbi Roland B. Gittlesohn  
Mr. & Mrs. John Chipman Gray  
Rabbi Albert I. Gordon  
Mrs. Melvin Gordon  
Prof. Oscar Handlin, Winthrop Prof. of History,  
Harvard University  
Mary Howe  
Kivie Kaplan  
Prof. Leonard W. Levy, Dean of Faculty, Brandeis Univ.  
Dr. Bernard Lown  
Mrs. Herbert Marcuse  
Prof. Bernard McCabe, Tufts University  
Drs. Wm. & Ruth Murphy  
Mrs. John B. Paine  
Mrs. Malcolm E. Peabody  
Rabbi Samuel Perlman, Hillel House, Boston Univ.  
Katherine B. Perlman  
Prof. Douglas Reynolds, Tufts University  
Mrs. David Riesman  
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Ryerson  
Arthur Schlesinger, Prof. Emeritus, Harvard University  
Rabbi Steven J. Schwartzchild, Chariman, Social Action  
Comm., New England Region, United Synagogue  
Dr. Bradbury Seasholes, Tufts University  
Dr. Alfred Stenton, Director McLean Hospital  
Rev. Francis W. Sweeney, S.J., Boston College  
Rev. Richard L. Twomey, S.J., Boston College  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Webb  
Prof. Harold Weisberg, Dean, Graduate School,  
Brandeis University  
Prof. Victor Weisskopf, M.I.T.  
Rabbi Leonard Zion, Associate Dean, Student Affairs,  
Brandeis University  
Prof. Howard Zinn, Boston University

Affiliation of the signers of this appeal are for the purpose  
of identification only.

cc: Attorney General Robert Kennedy

(List of 45 students attached)