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N.O.
MAY 28, 1964

PETITION TO GOVERNOR JOHN J. McKEITHEN

WHEREAS, many people of good will in our commonwealth like to believe that Negroes are satisfied with present conditions and, in such false belief, find balm for their conscience, and

WHEREAS, the discontent of Negroes statewide is blamed on outside agitators, and

WHEREAS, politicians and businessmen are deluded into believing that token gestures will pacify our unrest and extinguish the flame of indignation within our hearts.

BE IT HEREBY UNDERSTOOD AND PROCLAIMED:

1. That Negroes of this commonwealth are not satisfied with present conditions;

2. That our discontent is due, not to outside agitation, but rather to the harsh realities of rejection, deprivation and humiliation which beset us and our children in almost every facet of our lives;

3. That our unrest cannot be lulled into complacency by mere tokens of equality and opportunity--for our unrest is the unrest of the human spirit, destined to dignity and to freedom. It cannot rest unless it be free.

TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO OUR CLAIMS:

1. We hereby call for repeal of all state statutes and laws requiring segregation based on race, creed, color or national origin;

2. We hereby call for the appointment of Negroes to all State Board Agencies, Commissions and other policy-making bodies;

3. We hereby call for all Civil Service facilities be made available to Negroes on a non-discriminatory and non-segregated basis;

4. We hereby call for a system of fair employment practices for our commonwealth in all departments and divisions of government;

5. We hereby call upon the State Board of Education to voluntarily desegregate all public institutions of learning commencing in September, 1964;

6. We hereby call for the desegregation of Delgado Trade and Technical Institute;

7. We hereby call upon the Governor and the Legislature to enact legislation which will activate the Man Power Development Training Act in Louisiana;

8. We hereby call upon the officials of our state to declare that the decisions of the Supreme Court of the U.S.A. are the law of the land, regardless of whether we agree or not, to be respected by all, and that they will not resort to legal delaying tactics in matters affecting discrimination and segregation;

9. We hereby call upon Registrars of Voters to apply the registration laws fairly, and upon our Legislators to enact legislation to simplify the forms by removing meaningless and oppressive aspects of registration procedures;

10. We insist that access be given to all persons, white, Negroes and others, to places of public accommodations; and we call upon all persons in public, civic and economic life to support this policy; and not to resort to subterfuges which would circumvent this policy;

11. We hereby call upon all hospitals and clinics to open their facilities for use by both staff and patients, to all persons, without regard to race, creed, color or national origin;

12. We hereby call for immediate action by state officials directing "OPEN OCCUPANCY" in public housing and urging non-discriminatory practices in private housing;

13. We hereby call upon all the people of our great state to help YOU fulfill YOUR inaugural address which we quote in part--

"Let us face the problems of our time and the challenges of our day. Not by reliving the past of the great men who walked here, but by making our own history as proud Louisianians and as loyal and dedicated Americans of this great nation."

CONCLUSION

The above statements do not constitute an exhaustive list of our grievances. For we sincerely recognize that true and final freedom for our commonwealth, for white and for Negro, for those of different creeds and national origin, can be found only in the acceptance of all men in the hearts of other men. It is further noted that all responsible people, Negroes and whites need to recognize that all persons have a right to fulfill their economic destiny, unhampered by race, color, creed or national origin and to also recognize the worth of individual skills and abilities.

Finally, we hereby call upon all people to look deep within their hearts to see if they are presently fulfilling God's commandment, "To Love Your Neighbor As Yourself."

CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE
2319 Third Street
New Orleans, Louisiana

CC: All Legislators - Senate & House
All Departments of State
All Commissions
All State Boards