

TO: ALL COUNTY CHAIRMEN, FDP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND PROJECT DIRECTORS

FROM: FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY

RE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FREEDOM VOTE AND REGULAR ELECTION

The Freedom Vote will be held October 30, 31 and November 1, 2. People will be allowed to vote at any time during those four days, up to 6:00 pm on the 2nd. They do not have to vote in their own precincts or immediate neighborhoods, they can vote at any Freedom Vote Polling Place. However, voting by precincts might well be a valuable parallel to precinct organization.

Anyone 21 years or older who is a resident of Mississippi can vote. You do not have to be Freedom Registered to vote. White people should certainly be encouraged to vote if they so desire. Keep a record of how many white people if any vote. Even a few votes from the white community will be valuable for future legal and political challenges.

Polling places should be established anywhere that is convenient. Homes, churches, restaurants, barber shops, stores are a few suggestions. If police and the weather permit it would be good to have polling places out of doors as much as possible. Cars should be used as mobile units to work rural areas, if those are not convenient to other polling places.

Each polling place or mobile unit should have one person at all times who acts as Registrar to distribute and collect the ballots. Wherever possible, there should be another person who acts as a Poll Watcher, who does not administer ballots but who watches for any irregularities regarding the vote.

Before a person votes they should be requested to sign their name and address in a notebook kept specifically for that purpose. They should also indicate whether they are Freedom Registered or not and whether they have attempted to register at the courthouse or not. The actual ballot should not be signed in any way. The purpose of this procedure is to have a record of people who have voted, both to check for multiple voting and to prove that people all over Mississippi actually cast the Freedom Votes.

If people are afraid to sign their names, they should be allowed to vote anyway - but the Registrar and Poll Watcher should fill out an affidavit that such and such a number of people voted without signing because of fear of intimidation. The Registrars and Poll Watchers should also indicate in the notebook the times during which they were on duty.

If possible, ballot boxes should be made of substantial material and should be sealed until the votes are counted. No campaigning should be allowed within fifty feet of the polling booths. Those voting are not to be encouraged to vote for the Freedom Candidates while they are at the poll.

Ballots should not be counted before the polls close on the 2nd. However, totals of those voting should be made every day relying on the notebooks. All voting should end at 6:00 pm on the 2nd. Counting should begin immediately. We would like to announce totals on the evening of the 2nd - this being the eve of the Regular Election.

A Committee to count votes should be chosen in each area. If possible this should be local FDP people, aided by the COFO staff. They should sign a statement certifying the totals of the vote. Get these notarized if possible.

Polling places should be made as attractive as possible. Bunting and signs advertising the Freedom Vote should help attract attention. Where sound equipment is available, it might be used to call attention to the location of polling places.

Press should be contacted before the vote begins, and kept abreast of numbers voting, incidents, etc. Any major developments or things of special interest should be reported immediately to Jackson, so that we can direct press attention, send telegrams, etc.

Once the votes are counted, Jackson should be notified immediately of the totals. The ballots should then be forwarded to Jackson at the earliest possible date, together with the notebooks, any affidavits surrounding the Freedom Vote, and the statements of certification of the Counting Committees.

We understand that in many areas and many cases the fairly strict guidelines set down here cannot or will not be followed. We are interested in the largest possible vote, and some flexibility will be required to obtain it. However, we are also interested in using the Freedom Vote for challenges in the courts and in the Congress. For this purpose, the strictest adherence to form will be advantageous. Our case was weakened with many delegates at Atlantic City, because we did not seem "legal" enough either. The higher the percentage of polling places for which we have accurate records of Registrars and Poll Watchers, and the larger the number of Committees we can refer to in the counting of the vote, the better off we will be in January.

We are also interested in obtaining votes from as many counties and communities as possible. If we could claim some votes from almost every county in the state, we would have made a considerable advance over our position in Atlantic City.

Though Freedom Registration will not be required for the Freedom Vote, those who have not registered should be encouraged to do so. It would be good to have one person at each poll to work on Freedom Registration. During the Freedom Vote drive, registered voters should be encouraged to vote in the actual election on November 3. However, as it is unlikely that Dr. Henry, Mrs. Harer, Mrs. Devine, and Mrs. Gray will be admitted to the ballot on November 3, registered voters should be encouraged to vote in the Freedom Vote as well. On the basis of the Freedom Vote and the exclusive character of the November 3 election, the FDP will file a suit asking the courts to nullify the Senatorial and Congressional elections in Mississippi. If this fails, an attempt will be made to have the Democratic caucus strip the Democratic candidates of their Congressional seniority.

Freedom Ballots will be distributed as early as possible. They will resemble the official ballots. However, no sample ballots will be available. A few ballots could be used for demonstration at mass meetings, etc. But projects will be expected to save the ballots until the Freedom Vote begins.

Please send Jackson a list of polling places by Oct. 20.

Lawrence Guyot