October 7, 1964

To: Friends of SNCC

Re: Bail

Bail money is a continous and vital need of our projects in the south. As the organization of statewide areas continue, such as in Mississippi this fall and in the proposed Black Belt project, it becomes more imperative that we structure and systematize the collection and use of bail.

I am faced with a need for bail money on a 24 hour basis and have been dependent upon Friends groups, interested individuals, or "Summer Project" contacts, to supply the necessary money. But this system is extremely inefficient for time is wasted while we attempt to raise the money. We need a constant and speedy source of bail money.

TWO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. There is a bail fund being established for the Mississippi Project which is unrestricted, that is, available for all those arrested in connection with their work in the movement, volunteers, staff, and local people. This fund would be formally structured with two trustees and hopefully, supplied by large contributors ($500 and over types). It will be operating from New York used for large fines or extreme emergencies only. There are many legal problems involved in setting up such a fund, so we are suggesting that Friends groups follow the procedure for getting bail that Boston Friends of SNCC has been using.

2. Bail Bond Pledges: Bail Bond how to make it flow in by Boston Friends of SNCC

Bond Pledges are solicited in regular fund raising appeals. It is explained that bond is a loan of indefinite length WITHOUT INTEREST. People are encouraged to pledge at least $100. We have found that pledges of less than $50 aren't worth it in an emergency.

After a person has been contacted for a bail pledge, his name, address, and phone number, and the amount pledged are kept in a file in the office.

A. MONEY SOLICITED AND KEPT ON HAND

The person sends in the money to be kept in the office in American Express Travelers Checks. If an agreement can be made with the local office of Western Union, in certified checks made out to Western Union. Western Union accepts only cash or travelers checks. This would solve the problem of finding cash at night, one of our biggest problems.

When money is needed the bond "cash" on hand is sent immediately. It is recorded on the cards of the donors, to whom, for whom, and the date the money was sent. A letter is then sent to the lender telling him this information. Another letter is sent to Atlanta and Jackson telling them who the sender was and the amount sent.

B. MONEY SOLICITED AND KEPT UNTIL NEEDED

If the lender prefers to keep his money until it is needed, this is designated on his card. Sometimes the party will telegraph the money directly, when told where and when it should be sent. Hopefully, a record of who sent what will be kept by the Friends, Jackson, and Atlanta offices.

If there is enough cash or a substantial balance in the Friends of SNCC treasury, the money is sent down when needed on the promise of the pledge that he will send the money to Friends of SNCC. This is duly noted on his card. When the money is received, a receipt is sent to the donor with a letter telling the details of the case. The same information is sent to Atlanta.

C. RECORDS

It is imperative that accurate records are kept, especially since we are dealing with large sums of money, most of it loaned.

A separate file should be kept with all prospective bail pledgers. If possible duplicate cards should also be kept. All receipts should be made in duplicate. Carbons of all letters sent should be kept in your office; especially, those mailed south to Atlanta and Jackson, for we are very suspicious of memories and we necessarily have frequent turnovers in staff.

D. RETURN OF FUNDS

This involves some long term record keeping and periodical checking on the progress of the cases. Hopefully the money will be returned when the case is finally adjudicated, but this may not always be the case.

Also, although we strongly discourage short term loans for a year or two, sometimes we may have to use them. Thus, it will be up to our joint efforts to return the necessary funds when the time period is over. We, therefore, must keep accurate records.

At the end of this month, COFO is sponsoring a Freedom Vote, and we will need some effective system of bail arrangements made by then. We expect like last year's Freedom Vote there will be many "harassment arrests." Though volunteers will be working on the vote and will have money for bail. Local people and staff will need bail, so it is important that we begin to set up some kind of fund.

I hope you will appreciate the importance of beginning this project as soon as possible. Please write me of any suggestions, comments, or criticisms. Also, keep me posted of all your activities in this connection.

Freedom,

Barbara Jones