

Suggested Platform for the Freedom Democratic Party and its Candidates

This is a rough outline of a Platform for the Freedom Democratic Party and its candidates --- Mrs. Victoria Jackson Gray (Senate), Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer (2nd Congressional District), Mr. James Monroe Houston (3rd District), and Rev. John E. Cameron (5th District). The idea of this paper is to suggest what major issues should be included in a Platform and to outline possible policy positions to be taken on each issue. COFO members should begin to acquaint themselves and the people in their area with these issues. At the next COFO convention we will try to discuss these issues in more depth and decide on a formula for adopting the Platform for the Freedom Democratic Party.

DISARMAMENT

Disarmament is the key to world peace. We can view favorably the "first step" --- the test ban treaty. But we must realize that this is but a very small step indeed. The U.S. must:

(1) Push on for a treaty that will ban underground tests, as well as tests in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater that are already banned.

(2) In accord with President Johnson's suggestion, make whatever unilateral reductions in armaments are compatible with national security.

(3) Give more careful consideration to certain proposals from the other side, especially the Polish plan to neutralize and disarm Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

(4) Declare unequivocal that the goal of U.S. policy is general and complete disarmament, with adequate inspection.

VIET NAM

How much longer are we going to attempt to solve this situation by force? And what will this type of solution lead to? Why must Americans die to defend a doubtful freedom in South Viet Nam when thousands of Negroes are not free in Mississippi and other states? The U.S. should ask the U.N. to supervise open and free elections in both North and South Viet Nam (this was part of the original partition agreement -- North Viet Nam agreed to this long ago, South Viet Nam refused). The U.N. should also be asked to set up a military-adviser force adequate to guarantee the borders of both countries.

THE U.N.

If disarmament is the key to peace, the U.N. is the lock. Developments in disarmament must be paralleled by a gradual strengthening of the U.N. Only a strong and fully supported

U.N. can maintain world peace. The U.S. should lend every possible aid to the cultural, social, and economic programs of the U.N. The U.S. should realize that national guns and soldiers can no longer solve international problems --- and use the U.N. fully for what it is: the negotiating table for the world. Even when negotiation fails, the U.S. should try in every situation to have the U.N., rather than national forces, act as the police force to guarantee national borders and human rights. The U.S. must realize that the U.N. is not, and should not be, American property --- but a new and hopeful forum where all nations can come together to solve the problems that effect all men.

CHINA

Neither the U.N. or Disarmament can ever become the means to international peace without the cooperation of China. The U.S. must stop trying to exclude China from the international community of nations. Communist China should hold the seat for China in the Security Council, and the U.S. should attempt to work out with Communist China a formula whereby diplomatic relations can be established in a form acceptable to both countries. As much as possible, the U.S. should also insist that the people of Taiwan be allowed to decide their own destiny. The U.N. should be asked to guarantee Taiwanese independence and to allow Taiwan to remain as a member of the U.N. General Assembly.

FOREIGN AID

We as the most economically developed nation should be willing to provide in abundance financial and technical assistance to all developing nations who are willing to make the social, political and economic reforms necessary to insure that all will share equally in the benefits of American aid. It is criminal that the U.S. should have reduced its aid to underdeveloped countries by millions of dollars this year, in a period when so many nations are still struggling to overcome the most basic problems of development. The U.S. must stop insisting that those nations receiving aid follow American foreign policy positions or adopt the American system of government. That system is not equally applicable to all parts of the world, and even in America, it has failed to eliminate grave injustices. The only test for a country's receiving aid should be its sincerity in working for the development and well-being of its own people.

LATIN AMERICA

The Alliance for Progress should be a cornerstone of American generosity, not a cornerstone of American foreign policy. The U.S. must realize that Latin America faces almost insuperable problems, many of them aggravated by Latin America's long subordination to its mighty neighbor in the north. America should offer abundant aid --- adequate to the real needs of the region. It should insist that the aid be used for real development --- in all countries. America must stop pretending that democracy

can be maintained by military coups and development accomplished by those who are only interested in their own wealth. National leaders who show a sincere desire to solve their nations' problems should be supported, even if their politics do not always agree with ours.

CUBA

There are eight million people in Cuba. It is criminal of the U.S. to maintain a blockade that directly effects the welfare of so many because as a nation we cannot adjust to the political beliefs of the Cuban leaders. Let us now, on the third anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion, pledge to work in cooperation with the Cuban people and their self-chosen leaders. Let us admit that much that is good, as well as much that is disturbing, has happened in Cuba since Castro took power. Let us recognize the sincerity of the Cuban leaders in striving for the development of their country. The U.S. should attempt once more to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba, recognizing that the present regime will not collapse, and that friends are in a better position to influence friends, than enemies are with enemies.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The civil rights bill must be passed, as it is, and as soon as possible. President Johnson must pledge now, not only to see the bill passed, but to use the full weight of the federal government to implement its provisions. The Justice Department must not take up the fight for civil rights only where it thinks it can win or where precedent has established the effectiveness of federal suits. Rather, the Justice Department and the entire federal branch must act now, in the courts, in statements by officials, and through federal programs, to guarantee that every violation of Constitutional rights in this country is met by immediate and effective federal action.*

ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM

Poverty is this country's most pressing domestic problem. Civil rights are inseparable from economic rights, and Negroes will never be able to take their full place in American society as long as there are not enough jobs for every American to be gainfully and usefully employed. The anti-poverty program of the President is long overdue. It must be passed and followed through with immediately. But it must also be strengthened. Special government schools should be established, or scholarships expanded to already existing schools, so that any man who does

*This does not attempt to sum up the issue of civil rights, but only to suggest the major issues on the federal level.

not have a job or is being removed from his job because of automation will have immediate access to retraining. Close watch should be kept on the local administration of the anti-poverty program so that it does not become an all-white program or the means for shifting population out of areas of high unemployment. The program should be used as much as possible to insure that those who so desire are employed and integrated into their own local communities.

AID TO EDUCATION

Any large-scale retraining program will necessitate federal assistance for education. Federal aid to education is also needed in many other areas of the nation's educational system. There are of course certain dangers in federal assistance --- no one wants federal control of education. Nonetheless, it should be possible to find a formula which will allow federal assistance while maintaining essential local control. The only federal requirement should be that federal funds are used to ensure equal educational facilities for all children.

MEDICARE

The medicare bill should be passed and implemented immediately. A better job and better education mean little if money and time are used up in fighting illness. Adequate medical care, adequately financed, must be available for every American citizen, regardless of age or economic level. No one should be denied medical care because he is poor. No one should be denied medical care because he is no longer working --- the savings of a lifetime are often inadequate to meet medical costs for even a few weeks or months. Beginning with 1964, government financed medical care must be available for all who are not able to secure it through private means.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural underdevelopment and poverty go hand in hand. Large sections of the country, especially in the South, still suffer from lack of adequate electrification, roads, and sanitation in rural areas. In 22 rural counties in Mississippi, more than half the families have annual incomes of under \$2000. Federal, state, and local governments must work together to see that poor rural areas are brought into the mainstream of American economic life. Without rural development, economic and political freedom will never be a reality in large areas of the American countryside.

URBAN RENEWAL

The Mississippi House of Representatives voted on April 8 to end urban renewal in the state except in the four cities where programs were already under way. Those who presented the bill argued that it was needed to keep the federal government out of municipal affairs. The legislators

thereby put fears for "states rights" and "federal encroachment" before the needs of the people. Urban renewal is needed in every important city in America, and the federal program should be employed where useful. However, too many places, urban renewal has been used simply to push unwanted low income and minority groups out of the cities. Urban renewal must be used to integrate these groups into new and healthier cities, not to drive them from one depressing urban area to another.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In voting to end urban renewal because it might involve federal participation in local development, the Mississippi legislature essentially declared that it will accept federal aid only when it feels that such aid will not interfere in any way with local interests. Yet Mississippi receives more money every year in federal aid than it pays in federal taxes. What the legislature seems to want is federal money without sharing responsibility with the federal government. Mississippi should end this hypocritical policy of pick and choose. If it does not, the federal government should also weigh its programs more carefully --- insisting that Mississippi will receive federal money only when it is willing to accept cooperation with the federal government and full compliance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

UNPLEDGED ELECTORS

The all-white one-party power structure of Mississippi is afraid of sharing responsibility not only with the federal government but with the national political parties as well. Though the Democratic Party of Mississippi has a stranglehold on the politics of the state, it does not want to accept the principles of the national party of which it is a part. Therefore, state officials are trying to have a slate of 'unpledged electors' on the November ballot. Unpledged electors would not be pledged before the election to any particular candidate. This means that Mississippi's voters would not be able to vote for candidates in the election, but only for local officials who would 'interpret' their votes. In such a system the actual individual votes --- the foundation of the American political system --- would have no meaning. Only the political views of the 'unpledged electors' would actually count.

The system of unpledged electors would turn Mississippi from a one-party system into what would be essentially a 'no-party' system. Through the system of unpledged electors, Mississippi's ruling political forces hope to be able to isolate Mississippi from the political system of the nation, using Mississippi's votes to bargain with the national parties for pledges of "states rights" and "no civil rights" after the election.

In contrast with the regular Mississippi Democratic Party, the policy of the Freedom Democratic Party is to make its views openly and widely known --- so that each individual can learn and choose, so that every vote will count.