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## A Proposal for Washington Studies

In keeping with our promise to try and develop local leadership, I propose that we set up a study situation in Washington that will cover the three general categories of: 1) "How to challenge a Congressman" 2) "The Poverty Bill" 3) "The Civil Rights Act". I further propose that a maximum total of fifteen people from Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Southwest Georgia be brought to Washington D.C. for study periods ranging from ten days to two weeks.

That Worth Long, who has a long experience of working in the South with the movement, be assigned to stay with the group in Washington. He will service the group in whatever ways necessary and also serve as a sort of buffer between the local people and the ones responsible for delivering the materials. He will know the schedule, make observations, recommendations, and alterations as to areas of study, within the general categories, and attempt to steer discussions and keep them on course.

The three general categories of study would be oriented as much as possible towards action.

### I Congressional Challenge:

The Congressional challenge is well underway, and as the materials begin to develop, it becomes increasingly obvious that this challenge will be complicated and taxing.

In order to follow the challenge, one has to have some idea of how the Committee on Elections and Privileges functions-when it is in session; who is on it and what kinds of districts they come from. One also needs some idea as to the statutes involved and how they govern the development of the Congressional challenge. To understand the nature of the challenge, one needs some understanding as to what happens on the day the caucus convenes and how it functions. What takes place on the first day of Congress, the workings of the Speaker, and the various statutes and precedents involved in a challenge by another Congressman at that time also needs to be known.

Lawyers and some legislative aides around Washington together with visits paid to some of the people involved in the challenge can be integrated into the seminar sessions.

### II Poverty Bill:

The new Poverty Bill has many interesting and ambiguous sections: There are sections, however, that are believed to be vulnerable for submission by some local groups. We would spend our time basically in these areas together with the study of the reasons why other areas are "not so vulnerable".

Representative Edith Green's assistant, Representative Fitts Ryan's assistant, with people like Bill Higgs could help work on areas of this program.

## III Civil Rights Act:

The idea here is to attempt to take the Civil Rights Act and begin to orient people to its various provisions. Orientation should be with a view towards action that can be taken under the Act. It would be an attempt to use the full extent of the vehicle of the law to mete out whatever changes and practices are possible under the provisions of the Act.

In this program, people such as Bill Higgs and Representative Hawkins from California, as well as others, could work with us.

The studying would take the form of seminars, where chosen people would come to spend time discussing the general topic assigned to him. Previous to the discussion, people would be given some reading materials to familiarize themselves with and to formulate specific questions about the given area of discussion. Two hours or more could be given to these seminar sessions each day.

During the remainder of the day, people would visit various agencies and departments. Some Congressmen have all but agreed to let local people serve as sort of "interns" with them for a day or two. This might even be extended, in that Congressmen can open up their homes and let our people spend a night or so with them. (If two days were spent on each given topic, then there would be four days left for "internships", special interests, etc.)

The project could be financed through the Education Committee and the Institute for Policy Studies or some other tax-exempt group can be asked to receive the money. The Institute might even allow us use of its physical facilities for these seminars. An alternative idea would be to rent and maintain a similar building of our own.

I think that such an institute does several things: It provides people with the much needed contact and thorough understanding of the existing programs. It gives people a chance to develop some first hand knowledge of the working of Congress and some of the problems involved in legislation and legislating. And finally, it gives a chance for people to make impressions and contacts with people outside their own provinces; giving them a kind of security and confidence necessary for the continuance of the kinds of programs we are trying to effect in the South.

If each area would also send a staff person along with the local people, it would give us a chance to help along the development of their staff.