

[O MAY 17, 1965]

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WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHALLENGE

The challenge being brought by the Negro people of Mississippi and their white allies to the right of the five white Congressmen from that state to sit in the United States Congress is now in the hands of the Congress. These challenges raise the question of the right of all citizens to participate in the government under which they live. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is asking Congress to unseat the Mississippians and call for free and open elections for those seats, in which all citizens of Mississippi will be able to vote.

On May 17th the MFDP delivered 600 depositions to the Clerk of the House of Representatives outlining the systematic terror and intimidation used by the state of Mississippi to keep Negroes from voting. These depositions were collected under Title 2, Section 201, et seq., which states that only the House of Representatives can decide a contested election. The MFDP has maintained that the five Congressmen from Mississippi were illegally elected because Negroes have not been allowed to vote. Notices of Challenge were filed with the Clerk of the House on December 4, 1964. Over 400,000 voting age Negroes were excluded from the last elections held in Mississippi.

The Clerk of the House is now to call a conference with both sides (the date being set for Wednesday, June 2nd) for the purpose of determining what material from the depositions should be printed. MFDP briefs will be submitted on June 1st, and 30 days after that the regular Congressmen must submit theirs. Under Title 2, Section 201, et seq., the Subcommittee on Elections of the House Committee on Administration must make a report to the Congress regarding the contested election within 6 months after the convening of Congress (by July 4th).

It appears that the Mississippi Congressmen are going to begin using all kinds of delaying tactics to see that the challenge is held over until the next session of Congress, and if so, the matter will be dead. The issue must now be brought to the people of this country. Action must be taken NOW!

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

Write letters to members of the House Committee on Administration and urge them to ensure that the challenge is handled with all due speed. Remind them that there is a House rule which says that all contested elections must be reported out of committee within 6 months of the convening of Congress.

Write letters to your Congressman urging him to bring pressure on the Committee on Administration and the Subcommittee on Elections to report the Challenge to the full House of Representatives. Urge him to vote to unseat the Mississippi delegation when the vote on the Challenge comes up.

Write letters to the editor in support of the Challenge.

See that the issue of the Challenge is kept before the public by holding public meetings at which people can become informed. If you would like to have a speaker from Mississippi to come to your community and speak on the challenge, contact the MFDP, 507 1/2 North Parish Street, Jackson, Mississippi.

Send your contribution to the MFDP--money is desperately needed to cover the expense of mailings, phone and transportation, and printing.