

July 27, 1965

Dear Friends of SNCC:

We're sorry that no information mailings could go out to you last week. The truth is that there was no paper in the office to have them printed on--and no postage money in the meter. SNCC's finances are in sad shape, and we hope that everyone is working hard on fundraising so that we can carry on.

The depositions for the Congressional Challenge have yet to appear. According to the Clerk's office, the proofs have been returned to the printer. The Clerk's office says they have received "thousands of requests for copies of the depositions but there won't be enough to go around" (work out!) We should demand that more copies be printed up.

Since it has become obvious that this session of Congress will extend on into the fall, it appears that MFDP is again getting the run-around--all sorts of delaying tactics regarding the printing and the Challenge are being tried by the administration. For this reason, we are asking that PRESSURE CONTINUE ON CONGRESSMEN FOR 1) copies of the depositions and 2) that the Challenge be brought to the Floor of the House as quickly as possible.

Plans are underway already in Mississippi to bring 1,000 Mississippians to Washington to lobby and to stand vigil during the latter part of the Challenge. You will remember that last January the presence of the Mississippians had a profound effect on many Congressmen who weren't quite sure how they would vote.

AT THE LAST SNCC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, THE COMMITTEE VOTED TO COMMIT SNCC'S FULL RESOURCES TO BRINGING THE MISSISSIPPI PEOPLE TO WASHINGTON DURING THE LAST PART OF THE CHALLENGE--PROBABLY IN AUGUST. WE ARE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP. IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT THE MISSISSIPPIANS WILL BE SENDING OUT A CALL FOR THEIR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH TO JOIN THEM IN WASHINGTON IN THIS CRUCIAL VIGIL. You can help now by sending your contribution to the Challenge Trip to the Washington FDP office, 926 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC.

Yesterday, the Senate voted 78 to 8 to confirm James P. Coleman to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Those Senators voting against confirmation were: Javits, NY; Hart, Mich; Case, NJ; Cooper, Ky; Douglas, Ill; Morse, Ore; Nelson, Wisc; Proxmire, Wisc. Thanks again for all your hard work to oppose this appointment.

On August 17th there will be a state-wide referendum on the new voting laws passed by the Mississippi legislature (see SNCC research memo: "Mississippi Legislature--Old Wine in New Bottles).

Freedom,

Esther, Margaret, Betty, Shirley

July 24 -- This afternoon 500 people marched to the county courthouse and jail. They had four demands: (1) release the four women arrested at the polls and drop the charges. (2) void the election for Justice of the Peace (3) provide complete police protection for civil rights activities (4) open the voter registration office with Negro registrars, during hours that Negroes can get there. At present it closes at 4 and is open during working hours only.

July 26 -- 1100 people just participated in a march from Allen Chapel to the Sumter County courthouse. The purpose is to get the four ladies out of jail; protest segregation in church (on Sunday, four people went to an all-white church and were refused admittance). The march was led by SNCC, SCLC and local ministers. There was no violence. State, city and county police were around. They are demanding that if Sheriff Fred Chappell doesn't drop charges and release the four women by tomorrow at 5, they will return to the Courthouse and have an all-night campmeeting on the courthouse lawn.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

1. Write or wire congressmen; call your friends to do the same. Congressmen should be urged to ask the Justice Department for immediate action to secure the release of those in jail in Americus and to file suit enjoining local police from the brutal tactics in Baker County.
2. Write and wire the Justice Department directly.
3. Request that newspapers in your area carry full stories on what is happening in Southwest Georgia. If this does not occur, begin a letter writing campaign to the editor.
4. Get the information on Americus and Baker County out to as large a group as possible...set up information tables, prepare leaflets and distribute them at busy corners, hold a rally.
5. Baker County has called for Northerners to demonstrate with them July 28 through July 30. Recruit people from your community to go down there.
6. Ask for money...we barely have enough paper to get this mailing to you.