

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
926 Pennsylvania Ave. SE  
Washington, D.C.

August 4, 1965

TO: Supporters of the Mississippi Challenges

FROM: Lawrence Guyot

SUBJECT: Final Drive During August to Unseat the Mississippi Delegation

A CALL TO ACTION

After two and one half months of delay, obstruction, and shifting stories from the office of the Clerk of the House, the printed testimony in the challenges was referred to the House Administration Committee by Speaker of the House on July 29th.

Now that the challenges are formally in the hands of the committee, it must be our task to see that public pressure is maintained on every Congressman and on the Congress as a whole to see that the challenges are brought to a vote in this session. Even if the Committee refuses to report--a likely possibility given the Southern composition of the Sub-committee--it is possible to bring about a vote on the continued seating of the Mississippians if enough public pressure and concern can be generated.

OUR JOB MUST NOW BE TO REALLY LAUNCH A PROGRAM OF LETTERS, WIRES, PHONE CALLS, DEMONSTRATIONS, DELEGATIONS, NEWSPAPER STORIES AND EVERY OTHER POSSIBLE MEANS TO BRING THE CHALLENGE TO PUBLIC ATTENTION.

Should the committee stall, the issue can be brought to the floor on a "motion of highest Congressional privilege," and we must line up the support to ensure that such a motion is voted upon by the full House. It appears now from our research that such a motion would call attention to the clear facts, to the time that the Committee has already had, and would ask that the Committee be relieved of jurisdiction and that the Congressmen be unseated.

If the Committee does not report by the last week of August, this may have to be our resort to avoid being left over after the adjournment of this session. If the Committee does report in good time, then we must try to win the vote on the report.

Whatever happens, it is vitally necessary that the month of August see much activity on the Challenge here in Washington and wherever we have support. We are tentatively working on a series of activities in Washington to culminate in a vigil by 1000 Mississippians at the Capitol. They will be there to petition the Congress to take up the Challenge.

We are hoping that their presence will be a great incentive to the Congress to deal with the Challenge so that they will leave.

WE ARE ASKING ALL SUPPORTERS TO SEND DELEGATIONS AND CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS HERE TO SPEAK WITH CONGRESSMEN AND TO SUPPORT THE MISSISSIPPIANS. We hope that while the vigil continues you will work to have telegrams and letters sent to the Speaker and your own Congressmen calling on the Congress to discharge its responsibilities. Mobilization for this should begin as soon as possible.

These activities are planned for the last week in August, IF WE CAN GET THE MONEY. Any sources of funds in your community that may be willing to support this effort should be explored. The vigil will not be possible without your help.

Leading up to this vigil we are planning a series of events to again bring the facts of the challenge to the public attention. This afternoon a group of Congressmen are going to see the Chairman of the Committee. They plan to publicize a delegation of national figures to go ask the Speaker for speedy consideration. We plan a lawyers lobby for August 16-18. Interested lawyers should contact Bill Kunstler or Arthur Kinoy, 511 5th Avenue, New York City. A lobby of Clergymen is also being put together for later in the month.

We will be holding regional meetings--one scheduled this Saturday in the Midwest, and on the West Coast August 15. It is important that representatives from local organizations supporting the Challenge participate in these meetings to work on development of final plans to bring the Challenge to a vote before the end of this session. Notification of exact time and place for these meetings will be sent to the regions involved.

Please keep the Washington Office informed as to Congressional contacts.

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
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TO: Supporting Groups of MFDP

FROM: Washington Office  
MFDP

RE: PETITION CAMPAIGN

At our organizing meeting on Sunday, January, 18th it was decided by all the supporting groups of FDP represented and the Mississippi representative that a massive petition campaign would be launched throughout the north. The purpose is to involve the public at large in the Challenge and through that bring pressure on congressmen. The petition is a request of the congressmen to make a commitment to vote for unseating of the Mississippi representatives. Accompanying that would be a pledge card for congressmen to sign announcing his commitment on the challenge.

The following is the text agreed upon for the petition and pledge card:

SAMPLE PETITION

Dear Congressman (name)

We believe that the honor of the House of Representatives of the United States and the integrity of our system of government is deeply compromised by the presence of congressmen from the State of Mississippi who are there by virtue of elections that are conducted in blatant and notorious violation of the requirements of the Constitution of the United States of America.

We, therefore, urge you to do all in your power to support the Challenge brought by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and vote to unseat the congressional delegation sent to the US House of Representatives from the State of Mississippi until such time as a delegation elected in free elections, open to all and conducted in accordance with the Constitution, is sent to the Congress from Mississippi.

SAMPLE PLEDGE CARD

I pledge to vote for the unseating of the Congressional Delegation sent to the U.S. House of Representatives from the State of Mississippi until such time as a delegation elected in free elections, open to all people and conducted in accordance with the Constituion, is sent to Congress from that state.