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MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY

926 Pennsylvania Avenue, S. E.

Washington, D. C.      546-4450

August 30, 1965

TO: SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

FROM: WASHINGTON OFFICE - MFDP

SUBJECT: URGENT -- EVERY CONGRESSMAN SHOULD BE VISITED DURING LABOR DAY RECESS

Last Wednesday, August 25th, thirty-one Congressmen announced their plans to introduce a "Privileged Resolution" on September 21st should the Subcommittee on Elections fail to report out the Challenges by that time. This resolution would call on the House to discharge the Committee from further consideration of the Challenges and vacate the five seats from Mississippi. There is great precedent for such a motion and it is one of highest constitutional privilege, which means it must be heard by the House and voted upon. A copy of the Congressmen's statement and the list of those who signed it is enclosed.

This resolution is our prime focus for lobbying. The MFDP and its supporters are convinced that for the Challenges to have any meaning and to stand a chance of success they must be brought to a vote during this session of Congress. To ensure this vote, the first step is a commitment from every Congressman to support a roll call vote on any matter pertaining to the Challenges and secondly to support the Privileged Resolution. (See Congressmen's statement about why a vote is necessary this session.) In terms of success, should we wait until next session, many Congressmen will use as an excuse the fact that the Congressional term of office is almost complete and that it would be better to wait until the 1966 elections rather than to disturb and disrupt the whole Congress.

An eight-page Brief was filed today by the Mississippi Congressmen. At this writing we have not seen a copy, but what it does mean to us is that all relevant material is now before the Committee. From now until September 21st they have every opportunity to consider the contests. If they do not, Congressmen have every right to say that they are derelict in their responsibility and that it should therefore be taken out of their hands and considered by the full House.

Also being circulated now is a statement of support for the Challenges and the Privileged Resolution among major national organizations. Enclosed is the partial list of those organizations that have committed themselves to this national mobilization for a vote on the Challenges this session.

Although not totally complete, this memo is being sent so that you may have the needed information in time to lobby Congressmen while they are home politicking over the Labor Day vacation. Delegations, not necessarily mass but representative of our organizational strength, should visit Congressmen while they are home. MFDP supporters should make sure Congressmen are questioned about the Challenge at whatever public meetings they attend. Petitions should be presented to Congressmen at their local home town barbecue or seaside tour.

If you plan to see your Congressmen and feel you need further information, call this office.

Please send us a full report on Congressmen's responses, particularly whether or not he will join his colleagues in support of the privileged resolution.