

[Undated, assumed 1965]

SPECIAL NOTE: URGENT PRIORITY

LETTERS SUPPORTING THE NEW AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AMENDMENT
MUST START GOING OUT TO CONGRESSMEN VERY QUICKLY. THE BILL WILL BE
UP FOR CONSIDERATION ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE IN APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS
AT THE LATEST. LETTERS TO CONGRESS ARE COMING OUT OF THE SOUTH IN SUPPORT
OF THIS AND WE SHOULD COINCIDE OUR EFFORTS WITH THE PUSH OF NEGROES IN
THE SOUTH.

Even if such an amendment is not added, it is entirely possible that
two things will be achieved:

1. Southern congressmen will spend so much effort trying to block
that amendment they may let the rest of the bill pass unencumbered by
crippling amendments.
2. The issue of new elections will be before the Congress and will be
present in the minds of Congressmen when the challenge comes up for
final vote.

Quite apart from strategic considerations, we must support this measure
on principle. This is the real test of the seriousness in which the
principle of "government with the consent of the governed" is held by
Congress, and on this basis alone we should support the new and democratic
elections amendment.

SUGGESTED ACTION FOR INCLUDING NEW ELECTIONS IN VOTING LEGISLATION

Since the new voting laws that the Congress is now considering is intended to allow all citizens who had been previously deprived of the right to vote, and since everyone now admits that hundreds of thousands of Negroes in the south have been kept from voting in past elections, we feel that as soon as these people become registered, new elections should be held so that they can begin immediately to start voting. We feel that elections should be held for all positions, not just for Senators and Congressmen, but for Mayor, Sheriff, and all other elected positions.

At present the voting bill does not require that these new elections must be held. A group of organizations, SNCC, CORE, MFDP and the Louisiana Ad Hoc Committee of Concerned Citizens are working to see that it is included. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell of New York will very probably attempt to introduce such an amendment calling for new and democratic elections six to nine months after federal registration of voters begins in an area.

In about two weeks the bill will be before the Congress. It is important that we let Congressmen know that we want new elections to be held as soon as we are registered. It will be little use to write to the Southern Congressmen who are supposed to be representing us so we should write to Northern Congressmen who might be willing to support our call for new elections. The following is a list of Congressmen and Senators to whom we should write. It is important to organize campaigns to send waves of letters to these Congressmen.

Senators

Jacob K. Javits
Paul H. Douglas
Thomas Kuchel
Clifford P. Case
Thomas J. Dodd
Robert F. Kennedy
Earnest Gruening

Representatives

John Lindsay
Edith Green
John Blatnick
James Resnick
William F. Ryan
Charles Mc. Mathias
Sylvio Conte
Adam Clayton Powell

Letters should also go to Reps. George Brown and Don Edwards, Leonard Farbstein, Donald Fraser and Phillip Burton.

These letters must arrive next week and the week after, so if we are going to do this we must begin now. Here is a sample of the kind of letter being used in Louisiana. Similar campaigns are being started in the north, but letters from the South from the people most concerned are more effective.

SAMPLE LETTER: Dear Congressman ****: I am a resident of Louisiana and am writing to you because I do not feel that the Congressmen from my state really represent the wishes or needs of Negroes in that state. The reason for this is that the majority of Negro citizens here cannot vote. We hope that the new legislation will make it possible to vote, and that as soon as this is so new elections will be held. We feel that since most of us had no vote in any elections held up until now, we should be allowed to vote in new elections as soon as we are registered.

We urge you to write into the new law a provision for new and democratic elections within six to nine months after the federal registrars come.