

Department of Justice
Washington

MAR 30 1965

University of Wisconsin
Friends of SNCC
Box 83
Memorial Union
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Members:

This is in reply to your recent petition concerning events in Selma, Alabama.

Many of the issues involved in the Selma situation have been before the United States District Court in Montgomery in a lawsuit filed on behalf of certain of the civil rights demonstrators and joined in by this Department. On March 17 the District Court ruled that the demonstrators have a right to conduct a march from Selma to Montgomery without interference by state police or the Dallas County Sheriff. On request of the Attorney General, the Court also ordered the defendant law enforcement officials to provide police protection for those participating in the march.

On March 16 the President addressed a joint session of Congress, urging it to enact his proposed "Voting Rights Act of 1965." This Act would provide for the appointment of Federal examiners to determine qualifications and register eligible voters in areas where tests and devices have been used to disfranchise Negroes. The enactment of this legislation, we believe, will permit the speedy elimination of all barriers to voting by Negroes in places such as Selma, and thereby eliminate what is, perhaps, the major underlying cause for the recent unrest.

Your interest and concern is appreciated.

Sincerely,



JOHN DOAR, Acting
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division