

NEWS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

58 ARRESTED IN ITTA BENA,  
SERVING TIME IN CITY FARM

ITTA BENA, MISSISSIPPI, JUNE 20 -- Robert Moses, director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Mississippi voter registration project, reported today that 58 Negroes were arrested June 18 in Itta Bena after whites had smoke-bombed a voter registration meeting.

Moses said that when Negroes walked out of the meeting to go to the marshal and protest the lack of police protection, 58 were arrested on charges of "breach of the peace."

Twenty-nine of the group are children between the ages of 10 and 17 and may be released from jail in their parents' custody, but the other 29 adults -- some of whom are women in their 60's -- are now serving time in the Greenwood city farm.

At their trial yesterday, the group was convicted of the charge and sentenced to 6 months in jail and \$500 fine each. Moses said that bond had been set at \$500 for each female and \$750 for each male, but that the total cost was likely to be prohibitive to win the group's release.

Moses said today, "This incident cannot be ignored by the American people. Surely the conscience of this country will not allow these Mississippi men and women, who merely wanted police protection, to remain in jail."

Two of the 58 -- William McGee and Nick Hampton -- had been working as volunteers on the SNCC vote drive, which was instituted in the Delta area last year.