

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BALLOTS FILED BY NEGRO CITIZENS
DECLARED INVALID IN MISSISSIPPI
3 FIELD SECY'S ARRESTED IN RULEVILLE

GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, AUGUST 8 -- Field secretaries of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee reported today that all ballots cast by disenfranchised Negroes here and in Itta Bena have been declared invalid.

Dick Frye, a SNCC field worker, said today that according to Hugh Middleton, executive secretary of the Leflore County Democratic Party Executive Board, ballots cast by Negroes here will "not be counted."

Middleton said, "Each ballot has been examined by the Board and they are all not qualified to vote in the election under the laws of Mississippi so none will be counted."

Yesterday some 400 Negroes in Greenwood and 150 Negroes in Itta Bena filed affidavits and ballots at the two respective polling places. The affidavits were to the effect that they had been denied the right to vote, which is itself contrary to Mississippi state law.

In Ruleville, Mississippi, three field secretaries for SNCC were arrested on August 6, the morning of the state primary election. Curtis Hayes, Charles McLaurin and Charles Cobb had gone to seek the election manager to inquire about voting procedures and to see if they could be poll-watchers when they were arrested at the request of Ruleville Mayor C.M. Dorrough. Mayor Dorrough presided at their trial which, Cobb said, "took 30 seconds," and charged with "interfering with an election."

The three were sentenced to 30 days in jail and \$100 fine each.

John Lewis, SNCC chairman, strongly protested the arrests to Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall and demanded "immediate Justice Department intervention."