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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New Orleans, La., May 27, 1964: In Louisiana as in other southern states, Negroes have been denied the right to vote on the basis of race. Out of a voting potential of little over 500,000, we have less than 170,000 Negroes registered. Less than three months ago, there were parishes in Louisiana which did not permit its black citizens to register. At present, neither Negroes nor whites are allowed to register in West and East Feliciana Parishes because registrars Fletcher Harvey and Henry Earl Palmer have vowed to halt registration indefinitely rather than obey Federal court orders. Negroes in many parishes of the Sixth Congressional District and in every parish of North Louisiana are harrassed, intimidated, and brutalized merely for attempting to register to vote.

The Justice Department has filed numerous suits to end the Louisiana legal and political conspiracy to restrict Negro suffrage. The state appoints prejudiced registrars and passes laws which demand of applicants that they complete technically graded application forms and exhibit knowledge of constitutional government by passing a six question test selected at random from a sixty question card system. The Justice Department, however, has not kept up with the

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impatient desire of the Negro people in this state to have full access to the ballot.

Since these problems on voting exist in Louisiana and other southern states, CORE plans to initiate in early June a massive non-violent campaign aimed at focusing national attention on the denial of the right to vote to Negroes in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, northern Florida, and other southern states.

We plan to start the campaign in Louisiana on June 11, 1964 by training a staff of 60 workers in Iberville Parish at Plaquemine, which remains the headquarters for CORE's voter education program in Louisiana. Richard Haley, Associate National Director of CORE and Southern Regional Director, and Ronnie Moore, CORE's Field Secretary for Louisiana will conduct the training session and coordinate the campaign.

The objective of the summer project will be to awake the nation to the fact that Negroes want to vote. They want to vote now without being forced to suffer the humiliation of going before the registrar time and time again, without being afraid of getting fired from their jobs, run out of their home towns and molested by their white brothers who are protected by state political coalitions and traditions from criminal prosecution.

We plan to dramatize our cause by setting up our voter registration campaign in the Fifth and Sixth Congressional Districts, concentrating in seven parishes of the Fifth
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District; namely, Jackson, Ouachita, Richland, Franklin, Madison, Union, and Morehouse parishes, and in the twelve parishes of the Sixth District - East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, Iberville, Ascension, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Livingston, and St. Tammany. These parishes were chosen because of their Negro voting potential and because of strong established community backing for our organization.

The highlights of the Louisiana Summer Freedom Campaign will be as follows: Freedom Candidates, Freedom Registration, Freedom Days, and Actual Registration. There will also be a Freedom Delegation challenge at the National Democratic Party convention.

(1) Negroes will make strong bids for public office. Names of candidates will be announced later.

(2) Negroes will protest disfranchisement through mock registration. In such registration all potential voters who are over 21 years old, residents of the state as required by Louisiana laws, and who can supply the Freedom Registrars with information asked for on the Louisiana application form, verbally or in writing, will be registered. No test will be used in Freedom Registration. Freedom Registration will be conducted specifically in East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, Ouachita, Jackson, Madison, Richland, Franklin, Morehouse, and Union parishes. Application forms of freedom registrants will be collected by Freedom Registrars who will be appointed by

a State Board of Freedom Registration (which will be announced later) and such forms will be presented to parish registrars and if rejected additional steps will be taken to involve the Federal judiciary and the National Democratic Party.

(3) Freedom Days - On certain days when the registration offices will be open this summer, we plan to hold non-violent direct action protests at the registrars' offices.

(4) Actual Registration - On as many days as possible when the registration books will be open, we plan to flood the registrar's offices with applicants.

(5) A challenge of the Louisiana delegation recently selected by the Louisiana State Democratic Central Committee to the National Democratic convention will be staged by a Freedom Delegation. The delegation will be selected at a Leadership Conference for the Fifth and Sixth Congressional Districts, to be held in early June. Verbal notice of such a challenge was served on the Chairman of the State Central Committee on Friday, May 22, 1964 by Dr. Berttrand Tyson of Iberville Parish, Henry Washington of Ascension Parish, and Ronnie M. Moore of East Baton Rouge Parish, who represented various civic groups in the Fifth and Sixth Districts. The Chairman ignored the notice. The Freedom Delegation from Louisiana will join similar groups from Mississippi and other southern states in Atlantic City.

The black constituency of Louisiana and other southern

states plans to be represented before both state and national structures which direct the public affairs of America. Many conservative and blind Americans will claim that such a constituency does not exist. However, the day of the non-existent Negro is past. This very campaign year, the people who have long accepted dual citizenship mean to be heard and represented. We cannot sit back while the White Citizens Council, the State Sovereignty Commissions, and KKK members and sympathizers run our state governments and make deals with the Federal government and major political parties.

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