

NEWS RELEASE

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NORTHERN STATES BACK ATTEMPT TO UNSEAT MISSISSIPPI DEMOCRATIC DELEGATES
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI - State Democratic Party conventions in several northern states have backed efforts of Mississippi Negroes to gain a political voice in this southern state.

Resolutions denouncing the regular party delegates from Mississippi to the National Democratic Convention and urging seating of a challenge party's delegation have been passed by Democratic Party state level meetings in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, California, Oregon and the District of Columbia. Similar resolutions have been passed by Democratic bodies in Massachusetts and New York, and are expected in Colorado and other states.

The June 12-13 Michigan state convention, spurred by three Friends of SNCC groups in that state, passed the strongest resolution thus far when it "instructed" its delegates to "take all appropriate action" to seat delegates from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

State conventions in Wisconsin, June 19-20; Oregon, June 27; and Minnesota, June 28; all passed measures "urging" their delegates to support the accreditation of the Freedom Democratic delegates.

The state Democratic executive committee of California on June 27 "requested" its delegates to take action to seat the challenge party's delegation at the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, N.J. August 24.

A similar resolution urging the ouster of the regular delegates and seating of the challenge delegates was passed by the District of Columbia executive committee July 6.

Resolutions condemning the seating of delegates from state parties which are not pledged to the national party platform and principles were passed by the Massachusetts state convention June 19, and the New York state executive committee June 15.

The regular Mississippi state Democratic Party rejected the national party platform and nominees in 1960.

In the first known attempt by Negroes since Reconstruction to take part in Mississippi party politics, registered voters in the Freedom Democratic Party--officially organized in Jackson April 26, 1964--sought to attend regular precinct and county party meetings in this state last month. In most cases they were excluded from these events.

In only twelve of the 34 precinct meetings attended across the state June 16, were Negroes allowed "full participation," according to Freedom Democratic Party workers in Jackson.

SNCC workers, who accompanied local Negroes in some cases, maintain Negroes, but not whites, were asked proof of poll tax payment at some meetings. Poll tax receipts are not required by state law for precinct participation.

In five instances Negroes conducted their own meetings and elected delegates to county conventions when excluded from regular precinct gatherings. Those delegates then attempted to enter seven county meetings on June 23.

Credentials of the Negro delegates were refused at county conventions in Vicksburg, Canton, Meridian and Greenwood.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is an outgrowth of last fall's "Freedom Vote" in which 80,000 Negroes, about four times as many Negroes as the state shows officially registered, cast mock ballots, thereby showing apathy is not the reason for failure to register to vote by Negroes in that state.