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Freedom Democrats

MISSISSIPPI Freedom Democratic Party

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FOR RELEASE AT NOON, JULY 27th

Statement of;

Mrs. Victoria Gray, Temporary National Committeewoman
Mr. Edwin King, Temporary National Committeeman
Mr. Aaron Henry, Chairman, Temporary State Executive Committee

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI--Senator Paul Douglas (D-Ill.), in an interview July 23rd on the CBS radio program Capitol Cloakroom , offered what he called a "conciliatory suggestion" regarding the seating of rival Mississippi delegations at the coming Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

Senator Douglas suggested that the National Convention either seat no Mississippi delegation at all or that a hybrid group be seated--half dixiecrat, half Freedom Democrat.

In our opinion, this proposal fails to deal forthrightly with the real issues facing the 1964 National Convention because either course of action represents, at best, a compromise with rascism. The suggestion in no way represents the position of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

The basic reason for the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was the need to provide representation for the hundreds

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of thousands of disfranchised Negroes in Mississippi. Over the years a combination of discrimination and intimidation has deprived them of any voice in either the State or National Government. To refuse to seat any delegation would, therefore, be in part to perpetuate the situation we have organized to combat.

As for sharing the seats with the dixiecrats, we do not believe that a State Party whose gubernatorial campaign literature states that "...it long ago separated itself from the National Democratic Party and...has fought consistently everything both national parties stand for..." deserves even one seat at the National Convention. Nor do we believe that a systematic denial of civil rights can be half condemned, half condoned. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, we are dubious of the value of a delegation half slave, half free.