

NEWS RELEASE  
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
6 RAYMOND STREET, NW  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314

# 83  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 27, 1964

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATS PLAN SEATING CHALLENGE

MILESTON, MISSISSIPPI - The year-old Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) has decided to challenge the seating of four Mississippi legislators in the United States Congress.

The decision, made at a state-wide meeting of the MFDP in the newly dedicated Mileston Community Center here October 13, called for the use of "every available legal recourse" to challenge the seating of Senator John Stennis and Representatives Jamie Whitten, Thomas Abernathy and William Colmer. Whitten represents the state's 2nd Congressional District, while Abernathy and Colmer represent the 4th and 5th districts respectively.

The MFDP plans to send a delegation to Washington in January, 1965 to protest the seating of the regular Mississippi legislators.

The MFDP move was partly triggered by the refusal of Mississippi Secretary of State Heber Ladner to accept petitions signed by 1,000 voters asking that FDP candidates be placed on the official ballot for the November 3 elections.

MFDP candidates contesting the election are Dr. Aaron Henry of Clarksdale; Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of Ruleville; Mrs. Annie Devine of Canton and Mrs. Victoria Gray of Hattiesburg.

Henry faces Senator Stennis in a state-wide "Freedom Vote" sponsored by the MFDP October 31 - November 2, while Mrs. Hamer, vice-chairman of the MFDP delegation to the Democratic National Convention is challenging Rep. Whitten. Mrs. Devine faces Rep. Abernathy, and Mrs. Gray is running against Rep. Colmer.

The FDP candidates have been campaigning despite attempts by state officials to enjoin them from further participation in the affairs of the Freedom Democratic Party.

Lawrence Guyot, a staff member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and a native Mississippian, is chairman of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

Guyot said the challenge "will prove to the nation and the congress that the regular Mississippi Congressmen enjoy their high position because 90% of the state's Negroes are traditionally disenfranchised by intimidation and other repressive measures. Since our candidates have been denied the ballot we shall conduct a separate elections in which every qualified Mississippian will be allowed to vote."

Guyot said the "Freedom Vote" would prove that "if representative democracy was observed in Mississippi the results of the November 3rd election would be substantially different."

"In January," Guyot said, "the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party will go to Washington, in much the same way we went to Atlantic City, to ask the United States Congress and the nation to refuse to seat the Mississippi Congressmen until all Americans in Mississippi who are entitled to vote enjoy that right."