

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
P.O. Box 1329  
Jackson, Mississippi  
(601) 352-9605, 352-9788

For information, ask for: Communications

F A C T   S H E E T :   1964 FREEDOM VOTE CAMPAIGN (10/30-11/2)

The Freedom Vote Campaign is patterned after the Freedom Vote held last November when Aaron Henry ran for Governor. At that time over 80,000 ballots were cast.

The Freedom Vote Campaign is sponsored by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The MFDP was formed in April, 1964, at a statewide convention in Jackson. It sent a full delegation to the National Democratic Convention after holding precinct, county and district meetings and a state convention.

The purpose of the Freedom Vote Campaign is:

- 1) to demonstrate how Negroes in Mississippi would vote if they were allowed to register;
- 2) to demonstrate that Negroes in Mississippi do want to vote and that the cause of the low Negro registration is intimidation rather than lethargy.

The MFDP has campaigned actively for the Democratic presidential ticket. It is expected that the vote totals on the Freedom Vote will show Negroes overwhelmingly opposed to Goldwater.

MFDP candidates on the Freedom Vote ballot will be Johnson and Humphrey for president and vice-president and those other candidates:

For Senate: Dr. Aaron Henry, Clarksdale druggist, president of the Council of Federated Organizations, chairman of the MFDP delegation to Atlantic City.

For Congress from the Second District: Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, 47, former share-cropper and civil rights leader in Ruleville.

For Congress from the Fourth District: Mrs. Annie Devine, 47, mother of four and civil rights pioneer in Canton.

For Congress from the Fifth District: Mrs. Victoria Gray, 37, Hattiesburg housewife and voter registration leader as well as MFDP Democratic National Committeewoman.

Local citizens will cast their votes in ballot boxes in barbershops, cleaners, cafes, churches, grocery stores and other polling places across the state. Mobile voting units will cover rural areas. Each voter will check candidates under the party of their choice on the Freedom Vote ballot and will sign a poll watchers book.

Over 150 out-of-state volunteers will help with the Freedom Vote. They will join 300 workers who stayed after the summer project this summer. The volunteers are primarily from Stanford University, Harvard University and Oberlin College. Many of them were in Mississippi with the summer project. Prior to leaving for field offices they are receiving orientation in the mechanics of the Freedom Vote in Jackson.

Results of the Freedom Vote Campaign will probably be used as a part of the argument against the seating of Mississippi Congressmen in January.

The number of people casting ballots in the Freedom Vote will be released each night of the four-day balloting October 30 through November 2. A counting rally will be held at the Masonic Temple, 1072 Lynch Street, Jackson on November 2. Mail-in ballots will be counted and tallies for counties all over the state will be released about 6-7 pm.

There are 435,000 Negroes of voting age in Mississippi, of whom only 28,500 or 6.7 percent of those eligible by age and residency are registered.

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Candidate Biography: AARON HENRY  
Candidate for U.S. Senate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
RE: FREEDOM VOTE C. PAIGN

Dr. Aaron Henry is chairman of the Council of Federated Organizations, the statewide coalition of local civic groups supported by national civil rights organizations. He is also president of the Mississippi NAACP and on the board of directors of Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

A pharmacist by profession with a degree from Xavier University, he is affectionately known as "Doc" Henry in his hometown of Clarksdale, where he lives with his wife and daughter.

Doc Henry has been actively engaged in the movement in Mississippi for many years. On Dec. 7, 1961, he was arrested for organizing a boycott against stores refusing to use courtesy titles to customers. In June of 1963, with 70 other persons, he picketed every church in Clarksdale. On July 8, 1963, he was enjoined from all meetings and congregations. Three weeks later he was arrested with 86 others for "parading without a permit." He served one week on a chain gang.

Serving as temporary chairman of the Freedom Democratic Party, "Doc" was elected chairman of the delegation sent to Atlantic City to challenge the seating of the regular party. Last year, as a candidate for Governor of Mississippi in the statewide "Freedom Ballot," Doctor Henry pointed out the "shameful image of Mississippi, not only in our nation but all over the world." Calling for "participation in government by all qualified individuals and an end to segregated oppression," he continued that "all Mississippians must work together for freedom and justice, better education and a healthy economic atmosphere. Working together we will bring Mississippi to a place of economic and cultural growth."

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Candidate Biography:

MRS. VICTORIA JACKSON GRAY

Candidate for U.S. Congress

Fifth District

Mrs. Victoria Jackson Gray was one of the first local residents to house civil rights workers when the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) first came to Hattiesburg in August, 1961. She is now National Committeewoman of the Freedom Democratic Party. Mrs. Gray was a candidate for United States Senator in the regular Democratic Primary held June 2, 1964, opposing Senator John Stennis for the seat once held by Theodore Bilbo. In her current campaign for U.S. Representative she is opposing regular Democratic incumbent William Meyers Colmer, second in command of the vitally important House Rules Committee.

Mrs. Gray's initial attempt to register to vote occurred in 1959. It took a three judge panel of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals to register her on July 15, 1963. She is one of the first Negroes to register in Forrest County.

Mrs. Gray attended Wilburforce University (now Central College) in Wilburforce, Ohio. An ex-schoolteacher and an ex-businesswoman, she is now a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. She is a lay leader in the Methodist Church and directs the intensified voter-registration campaign in Hattiesburg.

Mrs. Gray's husband, Anthony Gray, is a trained plumber. He cannot practice his trade because the city of Hattiesburg does not license Negroes. He has worked instead for the city department of water works, but was fired from his job when it was learned that his wife was a candidate in the spring primary.

In an opening campaign statement for the spring primary, Mrs. Gray emphasized the total absence of issues in Mississippi elections. "Unemployment, Automation, Inadequate Housing, Health Care, Education and Rural Development are the real issues in Mississippi," she said, "not 'States Rights' or 'Federal Enroachment.' Our state is number one as far as poverty, ignorance and prejudice are concerned and number fifty as far as education, employment, public health and voting. Mississippi can be expected to fall even further behind so long as people who represent us in national offices use their power to oppose most of the legislation that this state really needs."

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Candidate Biography: MRS. ANNIE DEVINE  
Candidate for U.S. Congress  
Fourth District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
RE: FREEDOM VOTE CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Annie Devine was born in Mobile, Alabama and moved to Canton, Mississippi when she was two years old. She has the equivalent of two years university credit from Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi. Mrs. Devine served as a teacher in Madison County for eight years. She has also worked as Debit Manager for the Security Life Insurance Co.

In June, 1964, Mrs. Devine, long a civil rights leader in her community, joined the staff of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) in a full time capacity. COFO is a statewide coalition of local civic groups which formed in response to vote drives, supported primarily by SNCC, and by CORE.

Mrs. Devine believes in the necessity for "vigorous local participation in politics if Negroes are to achieve their rights in Mississippi. The real keys to Freedom are education and organization. We have registered 500 Negroes in Madison County, but there are more than 10,000 qualified to vote. The reason the White Citizens Councils are so powerful in this state is because they are so well organized. It is time that the forces of justice and emancipation become as well organized as the forces of injustice and oppression.

"And just as important, we must become better educated. This means political education and citizenship training for adults, and it means long, hard hours of studying by our younger generation. We want freedom, not only for our children but for ourselves, now. But if we are to participate in our society as equals, and even to advance as individuals, we must concentrate on education with all the effort and all the determination with which we seek our freedom."



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RE: FREEDOM VOTE CAMPAIGN

Candidate Biography:

MRS. FANNIE LOU HAMER

Candidate for U.S. Congress

Second District

In a speech during the spring primary campaign, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer declared that "politically" our district remains isolated from the mainstream of American life. "The conditions that prevail in Mississippi are horrible. Cotton, our chief product, has become an increasingly less profitable commodity. There is little industry and few towns. The dominant economic system is still sharecropping and we have the lowest family income levels in the nation. And we know we want to change these things."

Mrs. Hamer is opposing Jamie Whitten, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture. The district is 59% Negro. In her campaign speeches Mrs. Hamer vows to "undo everything Jamie Whitten has done in Washington." Whitten several years ago was responsible for the death of a program which would have trained 2400 tractor drivers in the state. 600 of the prospective trainees would have been white. Whitten claimed the program would "upset the local economy."

On August 31, 1962, Mrs. Hamer filed a voter registration application; the same day she was fired from the job of plantation timekeeper that she had held for eighteen years and was told she must immediately move off the plantation. Ten days later sixteen shots were fired into the home in which she was staying.

Mrs. Hamer has attended the citizenship and leadership courses of both the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). While returning from the SCLC workshop in June of 1963 Mrs. Hamer was arrested for "disorderly conduct" and severely beaten while in jail. She has never fully recovered from the effects of this beating. She was arrested for going into the white rest room at a bus station that night.

Mrs. Hamer is 47 years old and lives with her husband and two adopted children in Sunflower County, home of Sen. James O. Eastland.