

[JUNE 13, 1965]

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

X

For further information, contact
Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,
Steve Weissman or Marion Barry, Jr.
926 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E.
Telephone: (202) 546-4450

MFDP CANDIDATE ADDRESSES STUDENT LOBBY

Washington, D.C.- "The unseating of the Mississippi Congressmen is the only tool that will make the Voting Bill workable in Mississippi. Federal laws will have no meaning in Mississippi until we create a climate in which Negro citizens no longer fear harassment, intimidation, and economic reprisal. That climate is impossible unless we have new elections in which Mississippi Negroes can vote for members of Congress."

This statement was issued on the opening of the first of two two-week sessions (June 13-June 23, June 24-July 4) of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Lobby in support of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) Challenge by Mrs. Victoria Grey, MFDP candidate from the Fifth Congressional District of Mississippi. Mrs. Grey and the MFDP are currently challenging the seating of Mississippi's Congressmen on the grounds that Negroes were systematically denied the right to vote in the November, 1964, Congressional election.

Tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. Mrs. Grey will speak to the two hundred students who have come to Washington to persuade their Congressmen to vote for the unseating of the white Mississippians and for new elections in that state.

Mrs. Grey will discuss the history of the MFDP, last year's challenge at the Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City, and the differences between MFDP and a civil rights organization. She will speak to the students at St. Cyprian's Parish House, 1242 C Street, S.E., Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Grey and other members of the MFDP and SNCC will hold a press conference at 11:45 a.m. at the Parish House.

The students have come to Washington from as far away as North Dakota, Minnesota, California, and Texas--there is even one student from Hawaii. Several Southern states will also be represented. On Monday and Tuesday the students will attend orientation sessions on lobbying, the legal basis of the Challenge, voter registration, and the Voting Bill. The students will then visit their Congressmen on Wednesday and Thursday.

Of the two hundred students attending the first session, eighty per cent have indicated a willingness to go South if their help is called for by the local MFDP organizations.

The MFDP, which was aided by student volunteers in last year's Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, is presently orienting students at Edwards, Mississippi. Students going South from the Lobby will receive orientation in Washington during the second week of the session. There will also be workshops for those returning to work in their own congressional districts.