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MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY
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TO: ALL MEDIA, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LABOR, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS CALL ON CONGRESS
FOR VOTE ON MISSISSIPPI CHALLENGES THIS SESSION**

Washington, D.C. September 3rd.

Twenty-two national organizations including labor, civil rights, religious, and student organizations today called upon the House of Representatives to vote on the challenges to the House delegation from Mississippi in this session.

Released by Mrs. Victoria Gray, of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, at a press conference in Washington, the statement called upon all Congressmen to support a privileged resolution calling the challenges to a vote on September 21st, if no previous action is taken by the House Administration Committee which has jurisdiction over the challenges at this time.

The resolution referred to in the statement is being presented by 31 Congressmen, led by Rep. Ryan (D-N.Y.) and Edwards (D-Calif.), who stated in a press conference that they would move to bring the challenges to a vote on the House floor on September 21st because: "though the challenges have been before the Committee since July 29th, to date the Committee has not scheduled a single meeting on the challenge."

Among the signers of this statement were Dr. Martin Luther King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Mr. John Pemberton of the ACLU, John Lewis of SNCC, A. Phillip Randolph of the Negro American Labor Council, Dr. Robert Spike of the National Council of Churches (Commission on Religion and Race), James Farmer of CORE, Mathew Ahmann of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, and the Americans for Democratic Action.

The statement listed six reasons for demanding full and immediate Congressional action on the challenges: "This issue (the Challenge) goes to the very heart of those principles of democratic representation upon which the honor and integrity of the Congress and the political rights of all Americans rest. It deserves the full and prompt attention of the House of Representatives."

According to the statement, "The inescapable fact is that the sitting Mississippi House delegation was elected under conditions that ruthlessly and unconstitutionally excluded over 90% of the Negro citizens of Mississippi from the ballot. . . . For the House to fail to deal openly and seriously with these challenges is to encourage those forces opposed to Negro voting to disregard the Voting Rights Bill and to invite continued political exclusion of Negroes in the South."

The complete list of signatories follows:

American Civil Liberties Union
Americans for Democratic Action
Commission on Religion and Race, National Council of Churches
Congress of Racial Equality
Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Department of Christian Social Relations
Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity
Methodist Board of Social Concern
Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice
National Council, Methodist Student Movement
National Medical Committee for Human Rights
National Student Association
Northern Student Movement
Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers/District 65 (AFL/CIO)
Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Southern Conference Educational Fund
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
Students for a Democratic Society
Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship for Social Justice
United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom