

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,
507½ North Farish Street,
Jackson. Miss.

April 4, 1966.

PRESS RELEASE.

SIX CANDIDATES FILE TO RUN IN THE STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY.

Six men, five Negro and one White, walked past the statue of the ultra-segregationist, US Senator Bilbo, in the Mississippi State capitol building today, and filed their official notices to run for Congress in the Democratic primary in June.

The men, who are supported by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, held a press conference outside the Secretary of State's office. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SINCE RECONSTRUCTION THAT NEGROES HELD SUCH A MEETING IN THEIR OWN STATE CAPITOL.

The candidate for Senator James O. Eastland's US Senate seat is Rev. Clifton R. Whitley, 32. He read a statement to the Press which declared the candidates intention to disobey a state election law, section 3I29, which compels candidates in a Democratic Party primary to support White Supremacy. The statement said:

"Mississippi has used section 3I29 as an electoral device aimed principally against Negroes. It has prevented and still prevents Negroes, and Whites who oppose segregation, from participating as candidates in Democratic primaries in Mississippi.

"The use to which the section has been put prevents any chance of an "open" primary election."

Both Secretary of State, Heber Ladner, nor the State Attorney General Joe T. Patterson, who was also present, attempted to answer F.D.P.'s statement.

Mr. Ladner said the statement did not come within his jurisdiction, rather it was a matter for the State Executive Committee of the Democratic Party to take up. But he did accept the statement. delivered

Earlier in the morning the filing fees - \$1,300 in all - were ~~taxed~~ to the State Secretary of the Party, Mr. Bird Mauldin, in Pontotoc, Pontotoc County.

In the 1964 Congressional elections, Mrs. Victoria Gray of Hattiesburg, ran in the Democratic primary for the Senate seat held by Senator Stennis. She lost, and attempted to run then as an independent candidate in the general election. She was refused a place on the ballot on the ground that this was not allowed by Section 3I29. This section also says a candidate has to support the winner of a primary. Mrs. Gray was, therefore, obliged to "support" the candidacy of a segregationist.

One addition was made to the candidacies which had already been announced. He is Mr. Dock Drummond, a 73 year retired teacher and plumber, from Kosciusko, Attalla County, who will contest Thomas Abernathy's seat in the US House for the first Congressional District. Mr. Drummond's candidacy makes up the six the Freedom Democratic Party is supporting.

In his capacity as chairman of the Executive Committee of the MFDP, Lawrence Guyot, today appealed for funds to support the campaigns of the six candidates. He said the FDP would set up a special fund to deal with monies received for this purpose. Funds, he said, should be sent to the "M.F.D.P. Congressional campaign fund", c/o Mrs. Hazel T. Palmer, 507½ N. Farish St, Jackson.

A telegram was sent after filing to Mr. John Bailey, chairman of Democratic National Committee, noting the candidates' support of National Party's platform and principles, and their refusal to comply with section 3I29. Copies were sent to President Johnson, and Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S. SENATE:

Rev. Clifton R. Whitley, aged 32, Chaplain and Professor at Tust College, Holly Springs. Running for the Senate seat now held by James Eastland. Rev. Whitley studied at Rust College, and at the Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. Married, with one child, he served in Korea during 1951 with the 7th Infantry Division. He has been active in civil rights since 1958. In August, 1964, he went to Atlantic City as one of the MFDP delegates to the National Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City.

CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S. CONGRESS, 2nd DISTRICT:

Ralthus Hayes, aged 50, a farmer from Tchula, Holmes Co. Mr. Hayes is married and has five children. He is running for the seat now held by Jamie Whitten, of Charleston. Tried for 14 years to pay poll tax in the county of which he is now, county F.D.P. chairman. He was fired from his job in 1954 when he tried to register to vote. A Baptist, he helped build the Holmes Co. community Center at Mileston in 1964.

CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S. CONGRESS, 3rd DISTRICT:

REV. ED KING, AGED 30, Chaplain and Dean of students at Tougaloo College, Jackson. A Methodist, he was born at Vicksburg, and has studied at Millsaps, Boston University School of Theology and Harvard University. Since 1960, he has been arrested over a dozen times in connection with civil rights. He was selected National Committeeman by the MFDP 1964 State Convention. He is running for the seat now held by John Bell Williams. Married, with one child, he received the 1964 John F. Kennedy Freedom award.

CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S. CONGRESS, 4th DISTRICT:

Rev. Clint Collier, aged 56, a Methodist minister and farmer from Philadelphia, Neshoba County. One of a family of 13, he studied at Tougaloo College, Jackson State College, and the School of Architecture and Engineering, Howard University. He served in the Navy, 1943-45. He taught math in Neshoba Co. schools until 1964, when he lost his post because of civil rights activity. He is pastor of two churches, and co-FDP chairman of Neshoba Co. He has three children.

CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S. CONGRESS, 5th DISTRICT:

Lawrence Guyot, aged 26, from Pass Christain on the Gulf coast. Mr. Guyot, who is state chairman of the MFDP, studied at Tougaloo College, majoring in physics and chemistry. In 1962 became field secretary for SNCC, and in 1964 organized the first Freedom Day in Mississippi, at Hattiesburg. In 1963 served two months in Parchman for his involvement in Freedom Rides. He was elected chairman of the MFDP, August, 1964. In October, 1965, he appeared before Democratic National Committee to ask recognition for the MFDP as the legal Democratic Party of Mississippi. He is running for the seat held by William Colmer.
