

April 27, 1964

TO: James McCain, Director of Organizations, Congress of Racial Equality.
Wiley Branton, Voter Education Project.
Richard Haley, Southern Office, Congress of Racial Equality.

FROM: Patricia Stephens Due, Field Secretary, Congress of Racial Equality.

SUBJECT: Report on voter education project for Leon and Gadsden Counties as of closing of books on April 4, 1964.

In this report we intend to summarize activities leading to registration results as of April 4, 1964. Included please find newspaper clippings from the Tallahassee Democrat which reflect registration changes in these two counties from November, 1963, to April, 1964. Also, we include tabulated results in this report.

ACTIVITIES WHICH CONSTITUTED CAMPAIGN

LEON COUNTY

In Leon County the campaign consisted of many sorts of activities. We began there by contacting Negro and white leaders, by speaking in many churches about the proposed campaign, and by having discussions of it in civil rights meetings. We formed an integrated steering committee which aided in obtaining an office, funds to run the office and which set the policy for the campaign. We then opened an office in the Negro business area of Tallahassee, the county seat.

The campaign began with a number of projects and activities. We spoke every night for weeks in Leon County at labor union meetings, lodges, churches and civil rights meetings. We held a number of musical benefit programs which provided funds and an audience for registration encouragement. We canvassed from door to door. In Frenchtown, the Negro business area, we talked in restaurants and poolrooms, bars and barbershops. People came into the office and were taken to register from there.

We found volunteers from many areas. White and Negro college students helped in speaking, canvassing and manning the office. Unemployed Negroes who had registered under our guidance came back to sign up for office time and to canvass--some aided in the speaking engagements and fund raising. Adults in the community similarly aided our efforts.

Shortly after the opening of our campaign, a group was formed in conjunction with ours called the Community Awakening Crusade. The chairman of our steering committee is also president of that group.

* Through the Community Awakening Crusade many Negro teachers, businessmen and other leaders, about 100, were brought into the campaign. This group broke the county down into precincts, areas and blocks, and proceeded to do a concerted canvass of the county. We aided by providing clerical help, further canvassers, and the speaker's bureau.

* Participating in the drive in Leon County are every civil rights group, including the NAACP, SCLC, CORE, Unitarian Liberal Forum, churches, the AFL-CIO, The Tallahassee Business League, the Ministerial Alliance, civic groups and clubs and many individuals. The group is now carrying on very well, and plans to continue the effort until every Negro in Leon County who can register, is registered. Detailed lists and block-break-downs are being kept, and we know exactly who is and who is not registered.

The group has, through the ministerial Alliance, begun to support candidates. Concerted campaigning is now under way for the May primaries. Many cars and offices will be ready to provide transportation for Negro voters in all elections. We feel that the establishment of this permanent organization which seems to be working effectively is a major result of the campaign, along with the addition to Negro registration in the county.

Gadsden County

In Gadsden County we began by speaking individually to a great number of leaders in the community. A steering committee with representatives from each of the ten areas in the county was formed, and this steering committee is responsible not only for policy but divides up the work to be done. We also spoke in churches and a few civic groups there. We have formed Quincy CORE which is carrying on much of the speaking, leafleting and person-to-person contact. This group also provides a very large Freedom Choir which sings at meetings on voter registration and civil rights, and has a number of invitations to appear in Gadsden and Leon County.

Leaders in the county areas provide some transportation to the registration office. We also have a small office in a church there, with a phone. Members of Quincy CORE keep this office open at times when people can register, and after school.

A number of elements have contributed to what we consider a very significant rise in voter registration in the county. Negroes in Gadsden County were initially interested in the campaign when interracial groups were harassed and jailed for simply being together in the county. Much interest was shown in registration immediately after these incidents, for example, the registration of about 200 Negroes on the Monday following the Saturday night arrests of 4 CORE workers--an interracial group.

-2-

We further feel that the involvement of teachers and other leaders in the community has given many Negroes confidence that they can register. Gadsden County is a very oppressed area, and this sort of involvement is very encouraging, as evidenced by the events of the evening where James Farmer spoke.

As a part of the campaign we held several mass meetings in Gadsden County. The most successful meeting was the one at which James Farmer spoke. We did a great deal of advance preparation for this meeting in the form of leaflets and the composition of the program. We were able to get a number of important people in the community to appear on the program, including several teachers and a school principal. When the principal concluded his remarks, for example, the crowd went wild in appreciation of his stand. We consider this very significant.

We feel that a concentrated effort should be continued in this county because of the great need and the great potential there. Negroes can effectively control and improve politics in the county if they are registered, and as the statistics indicate, there is a registration potential remaining of over 10,000. People in the county have begun to openly question many of the visible symptoms of discrimination there, and candidates for office are, for the first time, beginning to come to Negroes to ask them what they want.

The present organization in Gadsden County can be expanded and when the students get out of school, around May 1st, a very intensive registration drive can be conducted, as well as many direct action projects.

REGISTRATION CHANCES IN LEON AND GADSDEN COUNTIES

COUNTY	NOVEMBER, 1963			APRIL, 1964			REG. POTENTIAL
	ELIGIBLE	REG.	% REG.	REG.	% REG.	NEW REG.	
LEON	12,322	5,752	45.2	6,349	51.5	771	5,973
GADSDEN	12,261	452	3.7	1,387	10.8	875	10,934

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Stephens Due

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