

[MISSISSIPPI]

STATEMENT concerning Activities of COFO and the Grand Jury hearing

An article in the newspapers recently referred to a Grand Jury hearing at which leading Negro citizens were supposedly interviewed about their feelings toward COFO. The article indicated that the Grand Jury found dissatisfaction among the Negro community with the COFO activities. As one of the witnesses who were interviewed, I would like to say the following: The students from outside the state of Mississippi were invited here by me and other Negroes active in the struggle for Civil Rights. We completely endorse their work; and we are working along with them to achieve common goals. Their programs of Voter Registration and Freedom Schools are much needed and appreciated by the Negro community. In my opinion, the conclusion reached by the Grand Jury that the Negro community does not support COFO is incorrect. The atmosphere of the Grand Jury proceedings did not allow for freedom of expression and should not have been used for this purpose. No crime has been committed when people assist others in exercising their constitutional right to vote. The NAACP and COFO are working hand in hand to win greater freedom for the Negroes of this community.

The below signatures authorize COFO to use this statement as they see fit.

*originals signed*

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