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Correspondence, John C. Stennis, March 18-24, 1948

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[REDACTED]
LAWYERS
[REDACTED]

BIRMINGHAM 3, ALABAMA

TELEPHONE [REDACTED]

March 18, 1948

Senator John C. Stennis,
Senate Office Building,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator Stennis:

Last Saturday I sent a copy of the enclosed address to the Democrats of Alabama to all of the candidates for Presidential Elector. As you know, there are twenty-eight candidates and the entries have closed. Twenty-one candidates have signed the enclosed document. I have typed their names on the bottom of the copy. Judge Roy Mayhall of Jasper has written a letter in which he says he favors the program but he does not want to sign the pledge at the present time in advance of the Bentley Bill being declared unconstitutional.

This clarifies the atmosphere so far as Alabama is concerned. Out of the twenty-eight candidates, twenty-two are definitely against Mr. Truman. Eleven of that twenty-two will be elected - that is a certainty. This sets the pattern so far as Alabama is concerned, and I think Mr. Truman should be prevailed upon to withdraw as a candidate and let the Democrats nominate someone who has a chance of being elected.

With best wishes, I am,

Faithfully yours,
[REDACTED]

HCW:bm
Encl:

TO THE DEMOCRATS OF ALABAMA:

The undersigned candidates for Presidential Electors in the Democratic Primary make the following statement and pledge to the Democrats of Alabama:

First: We will not cast our electoral votes for Harry S. Truman for President.

Second: If the Philadelphia Convention adopts a program hostile to the fundamental principles on which our civilization is based, or nominates a candidate for President who advocates such hostile principles, we will not cast our votes for the nominee of that convention but will cast our electoral votes for some Democrat who understands and sympathizes with the peculiar racial problems of the South.

The principles upon which this declaration is based are as follows:

1. The Democratic Party was founded by Thomas Jefferson. One of its basic and fundamental principles is the protection of State's rights. The Democratic Party of Alabama has ever been faithful to this principle. The Democrats of the South preserved the Democratic Party in the darkest periods of its history. The Democrats of the North allied themselves with our party and have received our undivided loyalty and support.

2. President Truman's villianous program to enforce racial equality by the destruction of segregation and racial integrity was obviously announced to purchase the negro vote in doubtful states. It will result in interminable interference with southern affairs, a national police state, bitterness and strife and maybe worse, and retard and destroy the substantial progress which has been made in the South towards a solution of our racial problem. This villianous program has been a tenet

of the Republican Party for many years and was lifted from that Party by Truman in an effort to attract negro votes.

3. Racial segregation is essential to the welfare of both races and to the preservation of the better qualities of each and is provided for in the Constitution of Alabama. Segregation in schools was provided by the Constitution of Alabama of 1875 and carried over into the 1901 Alabama Constitution as Section 256, which provides:

"Separate schools shall be provided for white and colored children, and no child of either race shall be permitted to attend a school of the other race."

The preservation of racial integrity is required by Section 102 of the Alabama Constitution of 1901 in the following language:

"The legislature shall never pass any law to authorize or legalize any marriage between any white person and a negro, or descendant of a negro."

Truman would nullify these provisions of our State Constitution and bring about racial equality by force of the Federal Government.

4. The National Democratic Party as is now apparently constituted under Truman leadership, is one thing and the Democratic Party of Alabama is another thing. If, under the leadership of Truman, the National Party attempts to nullify the Constitution of our State and to crucify the South, the Democratic Party of Alabama owes it no allegiance because it has departed from the principles of our Party.

We are not the so-called National Democratic Party's slave nor its product and our affiliation with it is as an equal and not a menial; it neither owns our bodies and souls or our property, and above all it does not own our political integrity and independence. We owe it to posterity to protect

the principles of democracy upon which our Party was founded. We cannot remain true to ourselves and to our Constitution or to posterity and remain true to the titular head of the National Democratic Party at the same time. There is no middle ground. We have now been basely betrayed by the titular head of the National Democratic Party in the arrogant assumption that we are his political slaves.

5. We can and will take back our influence in the Democratic Party of which we were wrongfully deprived. We can and will regain that influence by constitutional means through our vote as electors. If the Northern leaders supporting Truman are determined to crucify the South, then we, as Democrats, in concert with other Southern Democrats will use the legal methods at hand to smash the conspiracy against us. If the people of the South will remain united we can solve the problem of racial segregation and integrity, but if, under the leadership of Truman the Federal Government undertakes to solve this problem by force and the destruction of racial integrity and segregation, then the consequences which will follow will be upon their heads and not upon ours.

6. We shall regard our nomination as electors as a declaration by the Democratic Party of Alabama that if the Philadelphia Convention fails to disavow the Truman so-called "civil rights program" or if the candidates nominated by that convention fail to disavow that program, such nominees should not be regarded as the nominees of the Democratic Party of Alabama and we shall not be obligated in any way to vote for such candidates.

[REDACTED], Birmingham
[REDACTED] Mobile
[REDACTED], Andalusia
[REDACTED] City
[REDACTED]atur
[REDACTED]lorala
[REDACTED]adega
[REDACTED]tur
[REDACTED]uscumbia
[REDACTED]nsboro

[REDACTED], Safford
[REDACTED], Gadsden
[REDACTED]uskegee
[REDACTED]rmingham
[REDACTED], Anniston
[REDACTED], Tuscaloosa
[REDACTED]ttalla
[REDACTED]lba
[REDACTED]onta
[REDACTED]rdo
[REDACTED]acoda

C. WAYLAND BROOKS, ILL., CHAIRMAN
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BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, IOWA
WILLIAM F. KNOWLAND, CALIF.
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CARL HAYDEN, ARIZ.
THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN, R. I.
BRIEN MC MAHON, CONN.
FRANCIS J. MYERS, PA.
JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS.

ALBERT L. SEIDEL, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

March 24, 1948

Honorable [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Birmingham 3, Alabama

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

Thank you very much for your letter of March 18th with enclosure. I have read the document with a great deal of interest and appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending me a copy.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

U. S. S.

AWR:VM