

7-28-1948

Correspondence, John C. Stennis, July 28-August 5, 1948

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JACKSON 108, MISSISSIPPI

July 28, 1948

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

Dear Friend:

My pulse quickened and I figuratively stuck my thumbs in my vest and stuck out my chest this morning when I read the headlines of the paper to the effect that you have been selected to lead the fight against the President's so-called "Civil Rights" program when it comes up in the Senate.

It is also gratifying to note that your fight will be made along constitutional lines and that you are the one thought to be the best qualified to make such a presentation of the matters under consideration.

That you will do a magnificent job of it, I have no doubt. While it will take a lot of research and hard work to get the citations, quotations, and court decisions on the subject, properly arranged, if you have not already done so, it is my hope that when you will have finished your presentation of facts and arguments, the record of what you have said and done will be a pattern for others to emulate as a high order of statesmanship, and that the facts you have presented will serve as a sort of handbook on the subject for future reference for those who are interested in the subject.

It has long been my conviction that many Northern Democrats, and Republicans, too, for that matter, who are now howling their heads off about the so-called "Civil Rights, either don't know what it's all about or don't care. They are simply accepting the exaggerated statements of the minority groups who in many instances make a lot of noise without much substance.

They forget that many of the outstanding statesmen of their own section, in by-gone days, struck some heavy blows for States' Rights.

Such a line of arguments as you have in mind will be refreshing and a real news feature which I feel sure the papers will carry. If the people get the facts, I'm not afraid of the results.

Much history has been made since your letter of July 12 was written, giving me a resume of the fight in the 80th Congress on the so-called "Civil Rights" legislation; much of which strengthens our position before the Nation and will add immeasurably to the strength of your position and a more favorable hearing for your arguments now than at any time before, because people generally, and Congress in particular, realize more fully the seriousness of the situation

JUL 29 1948

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

August 5, 1948

Hon. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Jackson 108, Mississippi

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

I could not have received a letter that I appreciated any more than yours of July 28th. It was indeed thoughtful of you to write me. I assure you that your words greatly encourage me, not only for the present but for the future.

We have been very much on the defensive up here, with great concern to the very last over the prospects of this bill's passage, but yesterday afternoon about 4 o'clock the clouds rolled away and the anti-poll tax bill as well as other like bills, is beyond consideration for this session at least. They will all be renewed in January and if they are able to materially change the Senate rules, they will be passed. There will be an even stronger chance for passage unless the Democrats can win control of the Senate, which will put the South in its strongest possible position.

It is far better for us if the Democrats win control of the Senate than the Presidency, because under the seniority rule, the South will get most of the key committee positions, which will make the passage of such legislation virtually impossible, regardless of who controls the House or the Presidency. This is a point that is overlooked by some of the thinking people of Mississippi.

I have always greatly treasured your friendship and will appreciate your counsel at all times on any subject. Also, I look forward to seeing you and being with you sometime before the year is out. Every rose always has its thorn, and the thorn to me is that I am away from Mississippi so much and have such little chance to be with my friends.

With all good wishes to you and yours, I am

Your friend,

U.S.S.