

2-9-1948

Correspondence, John C. Stennis, February 9-March 19, 1948

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/jcs-civil-rights-correspondence>

Preferred Citation

[Title], John C. Stennis Collection. Mississippi Political Collections, Mississippi State University Libraries.

This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the John C. Stennis Digital Collections at Scholars Junction. It has been accepted for inclusion in Civil Rights Correspondence by an authorized administrator of Scholars Junction. For more information, please contact scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com.



DEKALB, MISSISSIPPI

3-15-48

MAK 10 1948

Dear Senator:

I have a few minutes and feel that I should write and tell you that I think your first speech to the Senate was a masterpiece. We Southerners have suffered many an indignity in the past decade for lack of someone to decently present our argument.

We have let prejudice elect men of the type of Rankin, Bilbo, Rush Holt, etc, whose utterances, though not our thought, represented us, and brought the South to a very low estate. Had we elected men of a different calibre in their place, you would not have had a subject to talk on. It is they, not us, not the President, not the Republicans, who brought on this civil rights program.

Right now, I have in my office an order for a half page ad calling a "mass meeting" of the "Jeffersonian States Right Democrats of Kemper County" to adopt a resolution and program written by a group of deep water politicians in Jackson. As chairman of the county executive committee, and not in accord with what they advocate, I don't know what the hell to do. For some strange reason, I believe in Democracy, and so far this bunch has not given the voters of Mississippi a chance to say what they want to do. If they want to bolt the party and stone Truman, okey. But, I believe they have intelligence enough to select their own course of action without me entering into this game of telling them what they should do. And with this high pressure group deciding the course of action for the several hundred qualified voters fo Mississippi I don't like.

What disappoints me most of all with the politicians and others handling this, is that what the Christian motifs of the South will do in a way suitable to all, they are trying to cram down our necks as a political football. I don't like any part of it--Democrat or Republican.

Thank goodness for one man in high public office that can and did speak sensibly on the subject without calling anybody a nigger lover.

C. WAYLAND BROOKS, ILL., CHAIRMAN
KENNETH S. WHERRY, NEBR. CARL HAYDEN, ARIZ.
BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, IOWA THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN, R. I.
WILLIAM F. KNOWLAND, CALIF. BRIEN MC MAHON, CONN.
HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR., MASS. FRANCIS J. MYERS, PA.
WILLIAM E. JENNER, IND. JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS.
JOHN W. BRICKER, OHIO
IRVING M. IVES, N. Y.

ALBERT L. SEIDEL, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

March 19, 1948

[REDACTED]
DeKalb, Mississippi

Dear [REDACTED]

I enjoyed your good letter of March 15th very much. I'm glad you approve of my first effort in the Senate. I just spoke from the heart and tried to speak for our people.

I wish I could get down and help work out the problems created by these so-called Civil Rights proposals. I stated in my speech at the first mass meeting in Jackson that I thought the people should have an opportunity to vote if possible. I hope you will work it out some way and I am sure you will.

We are debating the tax bill now and expect it will take some time.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

U. S. S.

JCS:MVM

FEB 12 1948

DEKALB, MISSISSIPPI

2-9-48

My dear Senator:

It has never been my inclination to write our representatives in regard to legislation, always figuring they knew more about it than I. That is true in respect to the purpose of this letter, but I thought possibly you might be interested in one person's opinion on this will-o-the-wisp Eastland floated over the wondrous eyes of our governor and legislature.

In my estimation Eastland is a political opportunist of the first water and that he and we are playing with fire and are in a most advantageous position to get hell burnt out of our fingers.

He states that we can capture the presidential election with our 127 electoral votes. If my figures are correct, there hasn't been an election in the past few years where 127 votes would have made any difference.

Inasmuch as our electoral votes are proportioned by Congress and we were fortunate enough that they gave us our votes on basis of **population**, and not on the basis of those who vote, we are asking that our congressional representation be cut to the melting point and our electoral votes cut with it.

Talk about influence, how much would we have then?

Eastland was aloof and dignified as a southern statesman as long as Bilbo waved the negro flag. Now that Bilbo is dead and Eastland is up for re-election, he grabs the flag as if it were his and becomes the saviour of the South. Wright crawls out on the limb with him and if they are lucky they may get the apples off the branch, get back and get down the tree safely, both heroes to the South, the champion of the redneck and in a most formidable political position. On the other hand, the North, Democrat and Republican, might saw that 127 size limb off.

This is not advice, just comment on hwo I see it. Any action you take or do not take ~~xxxx~~ is your privilege, for I know you are in much better position to see things clearly than I.

Best regards

PS: We have a red hot factory prospect and I have been asked to put nothing in the paper until it is much more definite.

over

Second thought: Please don't get the idea that I am asking you to follow my line of thinking with action parallell to it. I certainly don't want you to commit political suicide. I know you have too much intelligence and political savvy to do so. I just wanted someone to know that everybody in Mississippi didn't feel like long staple jim.

C. WAYLAND BROOKS, ILL., CHAIRMAN
KENNETH S. WHERRY, NEBR.
BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, IOWA
WILLIAM F. KNOWLAND, CALIF.
HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR., MASS.
WILLIAM E. JENNER, IND.
JOHN W. BRICKER, OHIO
IRVING M. IVES, N. Y.

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

February 17, 1948

Civil Rights

[REDACTED]
DeKalb, Mississippi

Dear [REDACTED]

I appreciate very much your good letter of February 9th that contained some of the most helpful and enlightening comment on the general situation that I have had. You mentioned the matter there about our electoral votes being proportioned by Congress. This is something that a great many people have overlooked in their thinking, but it is a highly important point.

For your information I am enclosing a copy of a memorandum that I made when I returned here regarding my speech last week in Jackson. This was not a written speech, but for certainty and for future reference I did have the last page of it and the last three-fourths of the next-to-the-last page of it written out, and I read these word for word in my speech. I am not trying to think nor speak on the emotional side of this matter because it is too serious to be so badgered about.

I am going to fight it out on the lines that I was elected on and I think that in due time we can make some headway on this basis. A great number of the letters that I am now getting from Mississippi are telling me to "raise hell."

Let me suggest, if I may, that you at least for the time being not express yourself further as to Governor Wright's design for running for the Senate against me. You could be correct about that, but I would like a chance, just between us, to talk it over with you before you say anything further.

I thank you for your thought and appreciate your personal and political friendship and want you to always feel very free to write to me, both as to the good and to the bad. I was sorry that I did not get to see you last week, but I had to hurry back.

With best wishes to you and Frances and the children, I am

Your friend,

Enc.

U. S. S.

JCS/11