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Correspondence, John C. Stennis, February 23-25, 1949

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MISSISSIPPI

JACKSON

RECEIVED
FEB 25 1949

West Point, Mississippi
February 23, 1949

Senator John C. Stennis
Washington, D. C.

Dear Friend John:

I noticed in the little town paper an item from Washington, the heading of which is "Republicans ask Southerners to join in fight on labor," and from reading the article it seems that the Republicans will join in the fight against the Civil Rights proposal of the President if the Southern Democrats will assist them in preventing a repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law.

Of course, you are on the ground, and you understand this more thoroughly than I do, but the Civil Rights program is very much against our inherent rights, and if the Civil Rights can be overthrown by swallowing the Taft-Hartley Act, personally I would be in favor of swallowing the Act.

There are some things that the Federal Government should not tamper with, and one of them is the race question. They should not tamper with it because the aspects of the race question are different in every locality, and the Federal Government, for this reason, should leave this race question alone.

I have read a good many articles on the race question, and in none of them did the author know anything about the race question. There is just one question in the race question that is so much more important than all the other questions which may arise that the other questions should not be considered.

The race question is dependent on one thing, and one thing alone, and that is the question of ratio of the different races, the negroes and the whites in a particular locality.

I give you just one instance. In Washington County, Mississippi, they have approximately 15,000 white people and about 65,000 negroes. The race question in Washington County, of course, is very different from the race question in a county where there are 65,000 white people and only 15,000 negroes, and the white man, regardless of whether he is a Southerner or a Northerner, is not going to be dictated to regardless of what laws are passed.

MISSISSIPPI

JACKSON

I wish it were possible to defeat this Civil Rights Bill to the extent that it would never come up again, and if it can be accomplished by keeping the Taft-Hartley Law, I, personally, would be in favor of keeping said law. It is none of the business of the Federal Government if Mississippi charges a poll tax, the funds realized, as you know, go to the schools.

As I stated above, you are there on the ground, but it would help us immensely if we had some way to defeat this Civil Rights business, most of which is extremely local, and prevent the Federal Government from going into that which is absolutely none of their business.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very respectfully your friend,

FAC/AM

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32
United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

February 25, 1949

[REDACTED]
West Point, Mississippi

Dear Friend [REDACTED]

I certainly want to thank you for your very interesting and informative letter on the situation here in the Congress relative to the civil rights program.

As you know, the first big skirmish in this fight is scheduled to get under way here Monday, when the resolution to change the rules of the Senate to abolish filibuster is called up. I have already mailed to you under separate cover a copy of my minority report on this resolution, in which I was joined by Senator Long of Louisiana and Senator Hunt of Wyoming. With your background of legislative experience I am sure that you will find it interesting.

We are exploring every angle in our efforts to secure support to defeat the civil rights program. The Republicans have made no offers in this matter and naturally we will welcome any support outside the South that we can get, whether it be Republican or Democrat.

We are somewhat encouraged about the overall picture at the present time and recent developments indicate that it will be a hard matter to secure action by the Congress on any of the civil rights measures.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

U. S. Senator

FES:eh