

3-25-1948

## Correspondence, John C. Stennis, March 25-April 10, 1948

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MANUFACTURER'S AGENT

NEW ORLEANS 12. LA.

March 25, 1948.

MAR 26 1948  
a  
Senator John C. Stennis,  
Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Stennis,

If would be hard to pack more misinformation into a statement than was done by the estimable gentleman, Representative Bender, of Wisconsin, in testifying on the anti-poll tax bill.

The original poll tax law was passed to liberalize the right of suffrage and to help the public schools. The New Orleans Picayune of January 23, 1944, described this bill when it was introduced in the Louisiana House of Representatives. It provided that every free white male American citizen of the age of 21 years should, on the payment of a tax of one dollar per year to the state, be entitled to vote in all elections. The then prevailing laws of the state attached a certain property qualification to the right of suffrage. Mr. Brewer, chairman of the committee in charge of the new bill, said that he believed this not republican enough and opposed to the liberal spirit of American institutions. He said that the pending bill would correct this and add \$20,000.00 annually to the revenues of the state, which would be used for public education.

In spite of the volume of assertion to the contrary, an unbiased examination will show that the poll tax laws are fair laws, which do not discriminate against the negro or anybody else; no citizen is deprived of the right to vote by them except of his own choice. The "liberals" who are fighting them are, consciously or unconsciously, playing into the hands of the bosses and the machines, who do not like the poll tax because it makes it harder and more costly for them to operate. Huey Long, super boss and near dictator, abolished the poll tax in Louisiana. The trouble for the bosses lies in the fact that so many of the voters that they use for their majorities don't care enough about voting to pay the tax, so the boss has to find out who hasn't paid and furnish the money for payment.

Everybody is offered full and free opportunity to pay the poll tax, even welcomed, for the more that is paid, the more money for the schools, to which it is dedicated. A citizen who will disfranchise himself rather than pay a dollar a year to the state for the public schools is the sort of voter that is not needed and should not be wanted by the state or by the advocates of good government.

Very truly yours,

C. WAYLAND BROOKS, ILL., CHAIRMAN  
KENNETH S. WHERRY, NEBR. CARL HAYDEN, ARIZ.  
BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, IOWA THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN, R. I.  
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JOHN W. BRICKER, OHIO  
IRVING M. IVES, N. Y.

ALBERT L. SEIDEL, CLERK

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

March 27, 1948

*Poll Tax*

Mr. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
New Orleans 12, Louisiana

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

I appreciate very much your helpful letter of March 25th, which has been of assistance to me in this anti-poll tax fight. I shall appreciate any further thoughts you may have on this subject from time to time.

With best wishes, I am

Cordially yours,

U. S. S.

JCS:VM

MANUFACTURER'S AGENT

NEW ORLEANS 12, LA.

April 6, 1948.

*encl. rec. 7/20/48  
J. C. Stennis*

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

Dear Senator Stennis,

Referring to your letter of March 27th  
in regard to my poll tax letter, I am enclosing an article  
I wrote some time ago, but which I couldn't get any Eastern  
paper to publish. They appear to be looking for hysteria rather  
than fact.

You are welcome to use anything in it.  
What I wrote you was taken from it.

Very truly yours,

[Redacted signature block]

APR 8 1948

C. WAYLAND BROOKS, ILL., CHAIRMAN  
KENNETH S. WHERRY, NEBR. CARL HAYDEN, ARIZ.  
BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, IOWA THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN, R. I.  
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ALBERT L. SEIDEL, CLERK

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

April 10, 1948

Mr. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 6 enclosing article on the poll tax. I have placed it in my poll tax file and know that it will be a help to me.

I am Appreciating hearing from you, and with kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

U. S. S.

JCS:eh