



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
TWENTY WEST FORTIETH STREET • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10018 • BRyant 9-1400

July 25, 1963

TO: PRESIDENTS OF BRANCHES, YOUTH COUNCILS AND STATE CONFERENCES
FROM: ROY WILKINS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ACTION MEMO, NO. 2 - CIVIL RIGHTS BILLS
NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, D.C.
AUGUST 6 through 8, 1963

The Big Push for Civil Rights Laws is under way. The success of this drive depends in large measure upon the amount of thrust the NAACP and allied organizations put behind it. There is no time to waste. Action has to be continuous, against all obstacles, until Congress enacts laws to assure to Negro citizens full equal rights.

The delegates to the 54th Annual Convention in Chicago, July 1-6, unanimously adopted a resolution calling for an all-out drive for the President's civil rights proposals plus three additional measures proposed by your convention.

This Emergency Resolution on Civil Rights (attached), the pertinent sections of which are enclosed, called for the convening of a conference in Washington, August 6-8. You have already received an Action Memo, July 18, on the program, initial plans and reservations for the conference.

Meanwhile I have presented testimony before a subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee in support of the public accommodations section of the President's proposal. I am scheduled to appear today, July 25, before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee in behalf of the President's entire bill and tomorrow, July 26, before the Senate Education and Labor Committee for the FEPC bill.

In order to make an impressive showing at the Washington conference, we need:

1. From two to six delegates from each congressional district. Such a turnout can be far more effective than hundreds from a few large urban centers.
2. Delegates who are informed on this paramount issue of civil rights and on the meaning and content of the President's proposals and our additional measures and who are able to exert some influence on the political leadership of their respective communities.
3. Delegates who can politely but firmly let their congressmen know that the NAACP means business and calls upon Representatives and Senators for full support of the legislation all down the line without crippling amendments.

Delegates who can report back to mass civil rights rallies in their respective communities the results of their conferences with their congressional representatives.

If you're dead sure your congressman is going to vote right you may want to send a delegation anyway to express your appreciation for his strong civil rights position. If not, you should certainly do this by letter or telegram.

The Washington Bureau is arranging with members of Congress for meetings with their constituents whom the branches are sending to Washington. Accordingly, it is essential that you let Mr. Clarence Mitchell, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau, 100 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington 1, D.C., know the number, names and congressional districts of your delegates.

Let's make this the most significant and productive legislative effort in the history of our Association. The branches have within their leadership and ranks members with the know-how to make this an historic conference.

Meanwhile, get as many persons and organizations as possible in your community to write to your representatives in Congress urging full support of the civil rights legislation. Also try to get editorial support from your daily and weekly newspapers.

Keep us informed on your actions and we will keep you informed on overall developments.

Attachment

4. EMERGENCY RESOLUTION ON CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION ..

WHEREAS, the President of the United States at long last has submitted to the Congress five specific proposals intended to ameliorate this crisis, as follows:

- (1) To prohibit discrimination in places of public accommodation affecting interstate commerce;
- (2) To authorize the Attorney General to initiate and file suits for desegregation of public schools;
- (3) To make permanent the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, which deals with discrimination in employment by the federal government and by private contractors with the federal government;
- (4) To establish a federal agency to provide technical information, assistance and conciliation services to communities faced with problems arising out of desegregation; and
- (5) Authorizing the President to withhold or withdraw federal funds which could aid, abet or perpetuate racial segregation or discrimination;

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED that we commend the President of the United States for proposing the enactment of this civil rights legislative program as a step toward discharging the moral obligation of our federal government to its Negro citizens; but we deem the President's proposals inadequate to meet the minimum needs of the existing situation and insist that legislation also must be enacted:

- (1) Creating a fair employment practice commission, with adequate authority to compel the attendance of witnesses and production of evidence and for the enforcement of its decrees;
- (2) Extending the authority of the Attorney General to initiate and file suits for the protection and enforcement of all civil rights; and
- (3) Providing sanctions against labor unions which discriminate against Negroes; and

Be it further RESOLVED that the enactment of this entire civil rights legislative program, without compromising or sacrificing any of its parts, is the minimum to be demanded and expected at this session of the Congress; and

Be it further RESOLVED that should the imposition of cloture in the Senate become necessary to effect the enactment of this minimum civil rights legislative program, we shall construe the failure of any Senator to support such action as a vote against civil rights; and

Be it further RESOLVED that we will cooperate, support, and participate in a "March on Washington" or other mass demonstration which may be jointly sponsored, planned and executed by those organizations and individuals similarly committed to supporting the enactment of this minimum civil rights legislative program; and

Be it further RESOLVED that we shall call upon our State Conferences and branches;

- (1) To convene mass civil rights legislative conferences in states and, where indicated, in Congressional Districts, to be held the last week in July, for the purpose of mobilizing local grass-roots support for the enactment of this legislative program at this session of Congress;
- (2) To invite their Senators and Congressmen to appear at these Conventions and indicate their position in regard to the program;
- (3) To invite and encourage the participation and support of church, fraternal, civil rights and ethnic groups similarly committed to the program; and
- (4) To take such other actions as may be indicated to bring local influence and pressure to bear upon their Congressmen and Senators; and

Be it further RESOLVED, that we call for a National Civil Rights Legislative Convention to be convened in Washington, D.C., August 6-8, 1963, during which personal visits will be made by the delegates to their Congressmen and Senators for the purpose of securing their commitment to support this minimum civil rights legislative program; culminating in a Mass Rally on August 8 to which the President and the congressional leaders of both parties will be invited to report on the progress and plans for the passage of this legislation.