"Women and Government."

Strom Thurmond

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WOMEN AND GOVERNMENT

By J. Strom Thurmond
Governer of South Carolina

The women of South Carolina do not take as large a share in our State government as they should. One of the ways to secure better government in South Carolina is for women to take a more active part in local and State politics.

Women have the full right to vote. But the right of suffrage carries with it more privilege than that. Women should go to their Senators and Representatives and tell them what laws they want enacted. They should tell them what they think should be corrected in County and State government. Then they should make it their business to see that these requests are carried out.

It has long been a theory of some politicians that women should concern themselves exclusively with such matters as juvenile delinquency, welfare, schools, and the like. Women
have certainly done a lot of good in these fields. However,
I feel strongly that women should take far more interest in
all fields of government. Women are full-fledged citizens.
They are concerned with everything which concerns men. There
are no governmental affairs which cannot be understood as
fully and as easily by women as they can by men. For years,
politicians have gained advantage by fostering the unfounded
belief that some things are too intricate for women to under-
stand.

Women can be especially effective in the Legislative
branch of our government. In South Carolina women have made
notable records in our State Legislature in the past. But in
my opinion, not enough women have sat there.

During my administration, I have appointed and will appoint
women to various positions. But I will not appoint them simply
because they are women — in order to give women some representa-
tion. I will appoint them because they are public spirited
citizens.

As Governor of South Carolina, I would like to recommend
that you speak your minds on several bills which are pending now. It is very important that these bills be passed to further my drive for good government in our State.

Among them are: Reorganization of State Government, which would streamline and coordinate overlapping, duplicating agencies, departments and bureaus;

Revision of our State Constitution, designed for the 1890's, to fit it for the needs of 1947;

Amendment of the Constitution to remove the power of clemency from the Governor except in capital cases; and

The merit system to insure selection of State employes on the basis of fitness instead of political influence.

There are other measures which I think should be made into laws. I have listed them in my radio address "Accomplishments of the 1947 General Assembly of South Carolina." I will be glad to send a copy of this address to any of you who write me.

I shall make additional recommendations for needed Legis-
lation at the next session of the General Assembly. Some of my recommendations may give rise to controversies. Disagreement is a fundamental necessity in a responsible, democratic government. I would like the women of South Carolina to engage actively in discussing the merits and demerits, as they see them, of my recommendations.

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