ADDRESS OF J. STRONG THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF
SOUTH CAROLINA AND STATES' RIGHTS DEMOCRATIC
CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, AT MARIANNA, ARKANSAS,
THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 1948, 6:30 P.M. C.S.T.

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

It is a genuine pleasure to be in the great State
of Arkansas tonight. Situated as you are, south of the Mason-
Dixon line and west of the Mississippi, you personify both the
charm and grace of the Old South, and the pioneering spirit of the
Old West. Your outstanding scholars, lawyers, captains of indus-
try, agriculturists, statesmen, and soldiers, have spread your
fame to the four corners of the nation.

Today, Arkansas is making tremendous progress toward
that balance of industry and agriculture which can help so much to
solve Southern economic problems. Your people have demonstrated
that with patience, kindliness, and forbearance, two distinct
races may march side by side toward their destinies. And with it
all, you have lost none of the independence of political thought
and action, and none of the reverence for Constitutional government,
which your pioneering ancestors bequeathed you.

The advice and counsel of the people of Arkansas in
this race has been most beneficial. In the campaign upon which we
have entered, we are fortunate in having the firm backing and val-
uable assistance of your own Governor, Ben Laney, the Chairman of
our South-wide Committee. I am glad my friend, Lt. Gov.

Nathan Gordon, is here this evening.
It is from the people of a nation that the government of that nation gets all its powers. It was one hundred and sixty years ago that our Federal Government came into being by ratifying the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution recognizes that sovereignty springs from the people, and that the people have divided it between the State governments and the Federal government.

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights of the American people. They were intended to spell out human rights in no uncertain terms — to define human rights so sharply that they might never be lost in the logic of lawyers, or the mandates of courts, or the debates of legislatures.

They guaranteed free exercise of religion, freedom of speech and the press, the right to bear arms, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, the right to speedy and public trial by jury, and many other rights essential to the freedom of the individual.

The right to local self-government and home rule was guaranteed by the 10th amendment, which stated forthrightly and emphatically that powers not delegated to the Federal Government, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people. This amendment followed the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, which stressed the principal grievance of the people of the colonies that they had been denied the right to
govern themselves. It defined States’ Rights, in order to prevent the American Federal Government from ever developing the habit of centralizing power which had led to our revolt against King George.

Those who founded this nation considered local government and home rule just as important to individual liberty as the right of free speech, the right of trial by jury, and freedom of religion. They learned the importance of home rule through bitter experience with the centralized government of King George.

The genius of our government is the sovereignty of the States—a system of checks and balances which guard the individual’s freedom from government encroachment. Under this system our people have enjoyed the blessings of liberty as have no other people in history. The American way of life is the inspiration of people everywhere—the hope of those who struggle to throw off the yoke of tyranny.

From the beginning, there have been those who, like Alexander Hamilton, thought the masses needed to be under the control of a strong and centralized Federal Government. There have been others, who, like Jefferson, believed the people fully capable of self-government.

Until recently, there have been major political parties representative of both these divergent views. We who are Democrats have faithfully adhered to the doctrine of Jefferson and
the great leaders who came after him.

But evil days have fallen on American political life. Three national conventions met in Philadelphia in 1948. All three committed themselves to principles which are subversive of the American way of life under our Constitution, and which outrage the Bill of Rights. All three have entered on the road to a dangerous centralization of power in the Federal Government, and to certain destruction of the right of home rule and local self-government.

The authority these three candidates propose to delegate to Washington is authority which now rests in the officials of Lee County and every other county of Arkansas, or in your state officials. This means that if their plans materialize, officials you elect to perform certain functions, will, upon taking office, find that those functions no longer dwell on the Delta plains, or in the hills of the Ozarks.

Unless this trend is halted, unless the American people insist that the form of government laid down in our great Constitution shall not be mangled, our generation shall utterly fail in the trust to preserve the blood-bought heritage which history has given to our care.

Those who want to bring about the centralization of all political power in the Federal Government and destroy the
reserved rights of the States -- which are our most effective safeguard against national socialism in America -- these people are using for their purposes the so-called Civil Rights program.

Let us tonight look over this civil interference program endorsed by all three of the Philadelphia nominees.

There is a federal election control bill. It is called an anti-poll tax bill. In a way, it is an anti-poll tax bill. But it is more much more. It is also a measure which acts to reform election laws through federal intervention, despite the fact that one of those matters which the Bill of Rights reserves to the states is the regulation of qualifications for voting. Nowhere in our laws, by either letter or implication, has the Federal government been given a voice in the management of our ballot boxes.

More than that!

The Constitution says specifically that the qualifications for voting shall be the same as in the state elections of members of the largest branch of the state legislature. As late as 1913, when the 17th amendment was adopted providing for direct election of senators, the same phrase was written in, again recognizing that even in elections to federal office, those eligible to vote were to have their qualifications and requirements prescribed by the states.

It is obvious, then, that any kind of federal anti-poll
tax law is more than a measure to end poll taxes. It is a measure which would tear down that Bill of Rights barrier which prevents the ever-expanding hoard of Washington officials from dickering with our elections. If we accept any kind of federal regulation of election matters, we create a tool which would be a temptation and a convenience to any unworthy politician or administrator seeking to subvert the American system. I seriously doubt that a dictatorship ever could be established in America as long as our elections remain under the complete control of the people within their own states.

Our elections must remain free from a dictatorship, and shall remain so. We must keep them out of the hands of the Federal government and under State control.

A menace of the same nature lies in the Federal Police Bill. This measure also is disguised. It is called an anti-lynching bill. Actually, it is much more. It is the entrance of federal police power into the field of crime control, when the crime is not against the federal government. Except when specific federal laws are violated, a crime is, and always has been, considered an offense against society, which is represented by the State.

Now, the sponsors of the anti-lynching bill know that the American people would not tolerate a wholesale invasion of this system of local policing and local courts. They would not
dare sponsor, for instance, a bill suggesting federal police intervention in the 325 murders which were committed in 1946 in the City of New York. Instead, they have chosen lynching, which occurred only once in 1947 in the entire country, to provide an opening wedge for a federal police system. They are using the rare crime of lynching because they believed the American people would not realize the vast implications of such a law.

Regardless of what good causes a Federal police system is alleged to serve, we are opposed to this step towards dictatorship.

Another assault is launched on us by Washington socialistic planners. They would force mingling of the races on our trains and busses, in our restaurants, in our theaters, in our schools, and who knows where in the future.

They have no right, they have no just power to upset the harmonious racial relations in the South in order to buy -- I said buy -- the racial bloes in their own bailiwicks.

There is no cheaper political tactic than an attempt to stir up racial and religious hatreds for political advantage. If corrupt machine politicians feel that they must play politics with the race issue, let them play at it in their own dirty back yards!

Today we have the disgraceful spectacle of men who are aspiring to be president of the United States who are eager to conspire with ward-heelers in Harlem.
They conspire to sacrifice the racial peace of the whole nation in order that small men of petty ambitions can maintain their political control of a couple of streets in a big city slum.

The results of these deals are just beginning to spread about and affect us in our daily lives. Already we have seen Truman, as a political-minded president, bring about an order forcing the mixing of the races among people who work for the federal government. This affected men and women from every section of our country who work for our government, and must depend upon it for pay checks by which to support their families and meet their obligations. The same order was imposed on the employees in the Democratic National Headquarters where it has already been carried out.

You and I have lived to see the day when a frightened politician has even advocated forced racial mingling in the Armed Services. This step was taken against the advice and over the protests of our military leaders who have no social or political axes to grind, but who do have the responsibility for the morale of their commands and the safety of our country.

Rather than tamper with the invincible morale which has carried American fighting men through 170 years of victories, my friends, it would be better to ground a thousand planes and
snipe ten thousand guns.

If New York wants to have forced mingling of the races, that is their business, as long as they confine their force to New York. If Arkansas wants segregation, that is Arkansas' business, and nobody else's.

Of all the schemes to break down our state lines and turn our government into some kind of dictatorship, the most vicious and un-American is the plan to place all private employers and all workers under political control. This insidious concept is being foisted upon the American people under the false pretense of being a Fair Employment Practices Act to protect the right to work, and to prevent discrimination on account of race, color, creed or national origin. Such benevolent purposes, however, are just a smoke-screen for the most dangerous assault on liberty ever conceived by the mind of man.

Under this kind of law, every employer and every worker would be under constant harassment by a cloud of administrative police agents which would hover over the land. No business man could call his enterprise his own. No worker could call his job his own.

Employers, in the hiring or promoting of men who work for them, could be hauled before a federal inquisition by anyone who failed to get a job or a promotion. There, the employer's business methods would be subjected to prying, to determine if racial or other
discrimination had affected his employment actions. Since such accusations would, in virtually all cases, be impossible to disprove, decisions would finally lie in the arbitrary will of the inquisitors. And if experience is any teacher, we can expect to find these inquisitors to be left-wingers, cut to remake the world in accordance with their own views.

Workers would be forced into association with people they do not want to associate with, both in their jobs and in their labor organizations.

Such a law is made to order for Communists and their fellow travelers. By unrelenting use of it, they could place their agents in every factory and defense industry in America. And America, threatened as we all know by the rumblings of another war, would find it had created the instrument of its own destruction.

There are four candidates in this presidential campaign. The other three all advocated the FEPC law in their platforms. Governor Dewey already has sponsored such a law in New York. The people of Governor Warren's home state, California, refused to submit to such a yoke, and rejected that type of legislation when it was proposed to them. I think it is bad enough as a state proposition, but to impose it on all the nation is unthinkable. The States' Rights ticket is the only one people can vote for to protest the capture of their liberties by federal political autocracy.
Enactment of a national FEPC law would bring about regimentation in this country never known before. The American people do not want it and will not stand for it.

States' Rights Democrats have three main objectives in this campaign.

First, we shall oppose the centralization of power in Washington.

Secondly, we shall inform the people that the American way of life if threatened by the catering of both Democratic and Republican leaders to the demands of minority blocs.

Thirdly, we shall restore the South to her rightful place in the political life of the nation.

We propose to accomplish these things by using the electoral powers granted our people by the Constitution. Already three states are pledged to us. Similar pledges will come from other states. If Dewey and Truman split up the remaining electoral votes, the election will be decided by the House of Representatives. There, each state will have one vote, and the smaller states will have the same voice as the Big-City States.

Our votes—and not the minority bloc votes—will then be the balance of power. And we shall use that power for the benefit of every state.
Those who claim that our ticket is helping Tom Dewey are sadly mis-informed. The Republicans have espoused the very proposals we are fighting. Our ticket will not get Governor Dewey any electoral votes. Instead, we will take from him the votes he might have gained from people who are determined to protest the shabby treatment received by the South at the hands of the Democratic national leadership.

Those leaders who try to concoct an explanation for supporting Truman talk much of party "loyalty."
Those leaders who try to concoct an explanation for supporting Truman talk much of party "loyalty."

Good for them.

I am for party loyalty.

I am a loyal Democrat.

The Democrats of Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina, and other states who are supporting me and Governor Wright, are loyal Democrats.

The thing to find out is what is meant when they talk of party loyalty?

Does it mean sticking by a clique which has seized party leadership and then abandoned the principles of the party?

Or does it mean instead being loyal to the principles of the real Democratic Party?

I believe the only men who can call themselves loyal Democrats today are those who stand firm and immovable in loyalty against government by self-styled specialists in Washington. That is what the Democratic Party has always stood for, that is what I stand for today!

Most of you go to church. You are loyal to your church. But if your preacher suddenly forgot their religion, and preached the worship of Baal, you would pull out quickly, and take your Church with you! You would be loyal not to the church building, but to the principles of your religion.
Suppose the Communists should seize control of our Government. Would we be traitors to oppose them? And now that the anti-democratic big-city boys have taken over our Democratic Party, are we who are loyal to its principles going to tag along like camp followers? The loyal Democrat is the Democrat who is willing to oppose the politicians now seeking to trample underfoot every principle for which our Party stands.

In the eyes of the nation, the vote of any Southerner for Truman or Dewey would be saying, "Yes, we want force laws for the co-mingling of the races in the South. Yes, send your Federal police into our Sheriff's offices, our work shops, our labor halls. Yes, we want our free ballot boxes placed under Washington control."

A vote for Dewey or Truman is not only an invitation, but a mandate, for the passage in January of all those vicious bills.

I am hopeful that the Democratic Convention of Arkansas will name electors pledged to support the States' Rights ticket, and make us the regular nominees of the Democratic Party of Arkansas, as your sister States across the river have done. I urge all the citizens of Arkansas to make their voices heard throughout the land when that convention meets in September.

We, the States' Rights Democrats, are determined to carry on the fight against the concentration of political power in the Washington government, because we believe that power concentrated
on the banks of the Potomac is just as dangerous to human freedom as it was on the banks of the Tiber in Italy, or on the banks of the Spree in Germany, or on the banks of the Volga in Russia.

I saw many brave Americans fall on the terrible fields of battle in the great war just past. To have had a part in that struggle for freedom causes my heart to thrill with pride. But, ladies and gentlemen, I did not risk my life on the beaches of Normandy to come back to this country and sit idle by while a bunch of hack politicians whittle away your heritage and mine.

We found the tree of human liberty planted here when we came into this world. Let us see to it that we leave it standing.

We found the sacred torch of freedom and self-government burning. Let us keep it burning, and let us pass it on to our children and to generations yet unborn.