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Vote for Thurmond of the States' Rights Campaign

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AND STATES' RIGHTS DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, IN RADIO BROADCAST, OVER ABC NETWORK COVERING 14 SOUTHERN STATES, FROM GOVERNOR'S MANSION, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, AT 8:45 P.M., NOVEMBER 1, 1948.

FELLOW AMERICANS:

Never before in our lifetime has the priceless privilege of the ballot meant so much to us in preserving our American way of life.

On February 2nd of this year, there was transmitted to Congress the most astounding Presidential message in American political history. If the program it proposed is enacted into law, it will absolutely destroy the foundations of the American system of government, by wiping out the clearly defined separation of powers between the federal and state governments.

This message was misnamed a civil rights message. In reality it was a political message designed to enable President Truman to outbid Governor Dewey and Henry Wallace for blocs of minority votes in doubtful states. It sprang from no humanitarian desire to help the negro. It was a cold-blooded proposal by a President of the United States to barter away the sovereign rights of the 48 sovereign states to win an election.

Dewey had made his bid for these minority votes by imposing on New York a vicious state FEPC bill, and by having his hand-picked Senator Ives introduce a federal FEPC bill and press for its passage by Congress. Dewey, of course, believed he
had nothing to lose because he had already forfeited any support from the South by bitterly opposing the efforts of Southern States to win equal freight rates.

The big city machine bosses convinced the President that he must promise the negro voters more than Dewey or Wallace, even though in so doing he would stick a dagger into the back of the people of the South.

The Congress was shocked. Southern members were outraged. The Republicans were not pressing for action on their proposals would go for nothing. The Southern Governors Conference. The Southern Governors not only resolved to fight the nomination by the Democratic party of any candidate for President who favored the so-called civil rights program, but a course of action was charted for the Southern states should Truman force his nomination, as was anticipated. They declared that if the Democratic
party should nominate candidates for President and Vice President who favored the so-called civil rights program "the people of the South," and I quote, "shall see to it that the electoral college votes of their states are not cast for such nominees."

The Southern Governors solemnly declared, "we pledge our influence in our respective states to that end."

The shameful proceedings of the Democratic Convention at Philadelphia insulted the South by repudiating the States' Rights plank and inserting a vicious civil rights plank into the party platform.

To add insult to injury, President Truman strutted out on the convention hall rostrum and with a great dramatic gesture called an extra session of Congress to enact, among other things, his so-called civil rights program.

My friends, after this kind of treatment, the people of the South had to fight. If we had not, we would have forfeited any claim to the nation's respect. We would have entered into a state of political bondage which would have made our section of no consequence in the affairs of the country.

The Birmingham convention put into operation the plan of action formulated and recommended by the Southern Governors conference.

Governor Wright and I have informed the nation that the South is now on the road to economic security for all races.
We have cited the remarkable progress of our Negroes, and have challenged anyone to show where any race in history has done more for another race than the white people have done for the Negroes in the South.

We have made clear our support of our country's bi-partisan foreign policy. We have urged a stronger hand in dealing with the Soviets, who respect military might and nothing else. We have urged the strengthening of the United Nations as the best means of bringing about world law and order.

We have set forth our views on the nation's economic problems. We believe in sound and progressive government and have cited our records in our respective states in this regard.

We have placed before the American people the danger to Constitutional government of the civil rights programs.

I will not take the time tonight to discuss these proposals in detail, but don't forget that enactment of the anti-poll tax bill would set the precedent for the federal government to take over the election machinery in every state in the union.

Don't forget that the anti-Lynching bill would set the precedent for the Federal Government to usurp the powers of our state courts and subject our sheriffs and local police officers, and even our counties to legal punishment by the federal government.
Don't forget that if Congress should enact a federal FEPC law federal agents would move into every business and industrial plant, telling employers whom they could and could not hire and forcing employees to work with persons of other races or color with whom they do not want to work.

Don't forget that the so called civil rights program would bring about the end of segregation in the South, forcing mixing of the races in our hotels, in our restaurants, in our schools, in our swimming pools, and in all public places. This change in our customs is not desired by either the white or colored race.

To bring all this about, the federal government would set up a super-police force with power to rove throughout the states and keep our people in constant fear of being sent to a federal jail unless we accepted the decrees turned out by a bunch of anti-Southern bureaucrats in Washington.

When both the Republican and Democratic parties espoused this un-American and communistic program, the people of the South had no way to express their opposition at the ballot box. That is why the States' Rights Democratic ticket entered the field. We were determined that the people of the South would not be disfranchised in this Presidential election.
If we are to back up the effort of Southern Members of Congress to block civil rights laws, we must vote the States' Rights ticket. A vote for States' Rights is a vote against the FEPC and against the breaking down of separation of the races in the South. A vote for Truman, for Dewey, or for Wallace is a vote that says "We want the FEPC and mingling of the races."

Some Members of Congress support Truman while they profess opposition to his civil rights program. Even in the Revolutionary War, there were those who stuck by King George while professing to be against everything he stood for. There never would have been a United States of America if there had been many like these. No man can serve two masters. If he is for Truman, Dewey, or Wallace he's against the South — and no amount of double-talk can obscure this fact. No false cry of party loyalty will hoodwink the people of the South tomorrow.

Our primary objective has been to throw the election of the President into the House of Representatives. If Truman can prevent Dewey from getting a majority of the electoral votes in sections outside of the South, then the electoral votes we will receive will throw the election into the House, and in that event we would have a splendid chance of winning in the deadlock which would develop.
Regardless of the outcome tomorrow, however, we will have paved the way for the reorganization of the Democratic Party and its rededication to the principle that the states shall govern their own internal affairs. We will have made it unprofitable for any candidate for President to barter away liberty of the American people to win blocs of racial votes. We will have crystalized sentiment against the so called civil rights program and made its passage improbably. We will have brought about recognition for the South in the political affairs of the nation which it has not fully enjoyed since the War Between the States.

Every vote cast for the States' Rights ticket tomorrow will be an important contribution to these objectives.

As the campaign ends, I want to thank personally all those who have worked so hard in this cause. The great headway we have made is a direct result of your good work. We have awakened this nation to a realization that if state sovereignty is lost, America is lost.

I want you to know that we have waged your fight with all the ability and all the energy we possess. We have kept the faith with those who passed on to us a great heritage. If you believe the South is right in this fight, then for your sake, — your children's sake and for generations yet unborn, go to the polls.
tomorrow and vote your honest convictions. If in your own heart you feel that this cause is right then vote the States' Rights ticket.

In casting your ballot tomorrow remember the immortal words of Shakespeare when he said —

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

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They will not support a President who will go into the Harlem Negro district in New York as Truman did Friday and promise to destroy Southern traditions for Harlem votes, after refusing upon challenge to discuss this issue in the South.