ADDRESS OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, AND STATES' RIGHTS DEMOCRATIC
CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, AT JACKSONVILLE,
FLORIDA, OCTOBER 16, 1948, AT 8 P.M.

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

No good American who loves his country ever misses
an opportunity to visit the great State of Florida. Your history
is rich with the traditions of almost every kind of culture, and
with the traces of every kind of civilization that went into the
building of America. Your people represent the finest traditions
of every state. They are typically American.

By the time Florida had become a part of the Union,
her people had known several kinds of tyranny and harsh rule.
Perhaps that is one reason for the love of liberty so evident
among Floridians today, and for their independence of thought, and
their tolerance of other people.

Today, the people of Florida are confronted with
the rapid encroachment of another kind of tyranny -- a tyranny
which was unknown in the days of the Spanish and French in Florida.
It is a kind of tyranny peculiar to our times, but one which we
must resist as stoutly as Americans have ever resisted the tyrant.

We live in an age when the central government under
which we exist threatens to reach down and engulf us -- to control
our daily lives in a manner never intended by those who wrote
the United States Constitution. We face a tyranny of centralized government which, if we do not fight it, may seize the power of our states and remove the reins of government from the hands of the people.

The election year of 1948 is a critical one in our history. No thoughtful American can afford to ignore its implications. We cannot be complacent in the face of changes which threaten to remove the fundamental guarantees upon which our democracy has depended for 160 years.

All our great statesmen of the past -- and particularly those of the Democratic Party -- have warned us time and again that the Constitutional principle of the rights of states can never be destroyed, without undermining our form of government and our way of life. For, they said, the preservation of states rights means that the individual voter may have a voice in his government, on all levels.

But the brilliant statesmen of other days have no counterparts in the leadership of the Democratic and Republican Parties today. At Philadelphia this summer it was clearly demonstrated that the leadership of those parties has fallen into the hands of men who are either too ignorant of our Democratic fundamentals, or too indifferent, to want them preserved.
Both of these parties committed themselves to political promises of measures which are in direct violation of the Constitution, and which would deal a crippling blow to the principle of state sovereignty. They did so at the behest of politicians who sought thereby to appease and mollify a selfish minority machine, which claimed to control doubtful states.

Thus we were offered the spectacle of two candidates for the great office of President who were willing to sell out American principles for the sake of bloc votes. A third candidate, Henry Wallace, had long ago fallen in line.

Apparently, neither of these three candidates cared a whit for the fact that the program they advocated was not merely demanded by the minorities, but also was part of the platform of the Communists. Apparently, they did not object to the fact that each and every phase of that program was applauded and supported by those who are trying to undermine the government of the United States.

Nothing that they have said thus far has indicated that either Truman, Dewey, or Wallace knows where that platform would lead us. But the Communists know -- and they know very well indeed. The Communists are perfectly aware that their philosophy will never gain control of Americans until state lines are broken down, and power centralized in Washington.
And let me tell you something else the Communists know -- that the so-called human rights of a minority group may be used as a very effective blind for the breaking down of governmental principles. That is a tactic used by all the dictators in the recent past.

And there you have the picture: Truman, Dewey, and Wallace all bidding against each other for minority votes, each trying to outdo the other by making promises to violate the Constitution.

But, my friends, the States' Rights Democrats came into being because they believed that the American people would not stand for an invasion of their fundamental rights to satisfy the minorities. The States' Rights Democrats, springing up out of the grass roots and out of the hearts and minds of real Americans everywhere, have thrown up a barricade against that invasion.

Today, millions of Americans have dedicated the only political power they have -- their votes -- to the purpose of putting these three candidates on notice that American will resist the drastic changes in government they propose.

By the millions, we are telling these pygmies of politics that they cannot trade away our heritage to the demands of a minority machine, in order to gain political power!
And the millions who vote with the States' Rights Democrats will know, in years to come, that their action was of historical importance in the growth of our democracy. Each and every vote cast for our cause will be a testimonial of faith in the American way. It will be a stout denial that Communism -- or any other total-state "ism" -- can ever flourish in this country.

Every vote cast for the States' Rights Democrats will be a powerful repudiation of those petty politicians who have joined the Reds, the parlor pinks, and the subversives in the Democratic Party. And in a like manner, every vote for our cause will tell the Republicans and the Progressives that they cannot sell out our birthrights for the immediate purpose of winning an election.

Thus every man and woman who votes our ticket may be proud of the fact that he has helped to write the history of this nation.

Those of you who have studied the so-called Civil Rights proposals of Truman, Dewey, and Wallace, know that I do not speak lightly. These proposals represent the most wholesale assault on our form of government, with its checks and balances, ever attempted in this country. They also represent changes in our customs and in our way of life which would cause strife and
upheaval wherever they were enforced.

The Anti-Poll Tax Bill is an assault upon the constitutional right of the states to establish voting qualifications, and thereby to control their own elections. It would establish a precedent which would make it easy for a President to take over state elections to maintain himself in power.

The Anti-Lynching Bill is an assault upon the constitutional right of the states to establish their own laws within their borders. The precedent it establishes would enable the Congress to pass national laws against any crime now entirely within the control of the states.

The Anti-Segregation proposals are an assault upon the constitutional right of the people to establish their own social laws, and to come and go within their own communities as they are accustomed. If such a right is given over to the federal government, the precedent would enable it to reach down and order us around in our daily lives without regard to our personal desires.

The so-called Fair Employment Practices Act -- better known as the FEPC -- represents an assault upon private enterprise -- the right of a businessman to employ those he wants to employ, and the right of a worker to associate with persons of his choice. If
we yield to the minority groups and the Communists by passing this
law, we will have opened the doors to iron-clad control of business
by the Congress.

Finally, the enforcement proposals for these laws
represent a long step toward the police state. We already have
President Truman's word for it that he is training a special
division of the Department of Justice for their enforcement.

He is already "indoctrinating" special national police officers
with the necessary propaganda weapons, just as Hitler "indoctrinated"
his Gestapo with the evil doctrines that won him absolute control
over the German people.

Under Truman's present plans, this federal Gestapo
would roam the land, sticking the long nose of government inter-
ference into the personal and private affairs of all Americans.

I cannot believe that the American people will accept
this kind of Communistic claptrap, once they have been informed as
to what it will mean in their individual lives.

The States' Rights Democrats are dedicated to the
belief that the police state, and all those who serve its ends, will
be forever repudiated by the American people &n this election!

All these proposals are offered on the pretense that
they will gain human rights for a minority group.
Yet as any student of government knows, the minority groups are the first to suffer when Constitutional principles are destroyed. We have learned that finally and forever through the experience of Germany. Hitler broke down state lines in Germany, nullified state legislatures, took over state courts, and gained control of the ballot box and the police. When he had done this, he crushed the German minorities under his heel.

When we in America compare our way of life with that of Hitler Germany and with the dictatorship of the Communists in Russia, we like to think of it as a comparison between free enterprise and totalitarianism. That is why so many of us are opposed to the FEPC, because we have recognized it as a terrible assault upon the traditions of free enterprise by which America has earned her greatness.

We have all had cause for alarm over the extent to which Communist spies have infiltrated our government, and also at the failure of the present administration to cooperate with the Congress in its investigation of the Communists.

The FEPC is the first plank in the Communist platform. The first version of the FEPC was written by Stalin and he used it to gain power. The American version was copied almost word for word from that of Stalin -- a fact known to anyone who has compared the two.
And yet Mr. Truman, Mr. Dewey, and Mr. Wallace have all three endorsed the FEPC bill, as a means of bidding for minority votes.

Under the proposed FEPC, the commission would have the power to set up its own rules and regulations as to what an employer may or may not do in hiring, firing, promoting and demoting his employees. Let us see what these rules and regulations might be, by taking a close look at the rules of the New York law already set up by Governor Dewey.

Under the New York law it is unlawful for an employer to ask an applicant what his former name was if he had changed it.

It is unlawful to ask an applicant where he was born, or where his parents were born.

It is unlawful to ask him to show his birth certificate.

It is unlawful to ask him what his religion is, or even whether he is an atheist.

It is unlawful to ask him whether he will follow the rules of the employer in observing only certain holidays -- such as the 4th of July or Christmas.

It is unlawful to ask him what his complexion is, or even to ask him to produce a photograph, if he should apply.
in writing.

It is unlawful to ask him whether he is a naturalized or a native-born citizen, or to make him show his naturalization papers.

It is unlawful to ask him where his family lives, or where they came from.

And here is one requirement of the New York law that I wish every veteran in America could read. It is unlawful to ask an applicant for employment what his military experience is, or where he was during World War I. He might have been a draft-dodger, or he might have been shooting at our boys overseas, but you're not allowed to ask him about that.

Governor Dewey has set this law up in New York, which is entirely within the right of a state to manage its own internal affairs. Governor Warren has tried to force it upon California. But there, where the people voted on it, as they did not in New York, it was turned down. I do not deny that Dewey and Warren have the right to support such a law within their own states. But I emphatically deny that they have the right to force it upon the entire nation, as Dewey has publicly said he desired to do.
It is perfectly plain that the Communists are pushing the FEPC, because they know it would permit them to invade any industry and any secret munitions laboratory that Stalin wants invaded.

But, ladies and gentlemen, the States' Rights Democrats are making it equally plain, that we will resist this foreign doctrine, and that it will never be forced upon a free America.

The three candidates who endorse the FEPC and its companion bills are denying that the states of this nation are capable of solving their own internal problems in a sensible manner. They are denying that the people of the various states are efficient enough, and decent enough, to preserve the rights of their minorities.

They would have us turn all our problems over to a paternalistic Uncle Santa Claus, who would be the source of all our economic gains, and who would solve all our social problems. Apparently they forget that the American ideal has been one of independence of thought and action, which cannot be yielded for any reason.

They forget, too, that under the American system of representative government, all races have moved forward together to make the greatest progress ever recorded in the history of mankind.
Let us remind them that when our states forget their responsibilities to the people and turn their rights over to Washington, they also confer upon Washington the authority to mould and fashion our lives in a pattern over which the people themselves will have no control.

Let us remind Truman, Dewey, and Wallace that the American people will be rendered powerless to resist the encroachments of the total state, if their promises to the minority machines are carried out.

My Fellow Americans, we can make human rights secure only by following the historic precepts of the United States Constitution. We can make progress only by keeping our government close to the people, and subject to their direct control. We cannot hope to gain anything by yielding our rights to a remote, all-powerful government at Washington.

The States' Rights Democrats have taken their principles from the desires of the people themselves. We have faithfully adhered to the belief that a government that is close to the people is the best government.

That is the American way -- the principle of representative government. And yet it is a way that Truman, Dewey and Wallace are asking you to give up.
The States' Rights Democrats stand between you and the loss of your democratic rights.

At Philadelphia three months ago the radicals and the crackpots launched a terrible assault on those rights. They joined the machine politicians and kidnapped the Democratic Party. But the parlor pinks and the subversives did not destroy the real Democratic Party. They gained control of the political framework -- yes. They sold the good name of the Party down the river. But they could not steal away the ideals for which that Party has stood for more than a century.

All over the South and in many other States, millions of good Democrats are determined that their great Party shall be restored to the principles for which it was organized. They are determined that the false leaders who betrayed us shall be cast out, and the Democratic Party purified.

We shall rebuild our Party, beginning with this election, and make it once again a great voice for the doctrine of the sovereignty of states and for the personal freedom of the individual man. In doing so, we are joined by many thousands of Republicans who have seen the Republican Party going the way of the Reds and the political pygmies.

We ask you to join with us in bringing about a
rebirth of faith in the American ideal. We invite your assistance in our effort to cast out the evil influences which have invaded our government and taken control of our political machinery.

Let us take advantage of our Constitutional right under the rules of the Electoral College, which provide that if no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes, the election must be decided in the House of Representatives. In the House, the smaller states of this nation will have the balance of power. We shall choose a President who has the mandate to resist the unconstitutional measures which would change our way of life and undermine our form of government.

Let us repudiate forever the kind of leadership which snatched control of all three conventions at Philadelphia.

We Americans, unlike many hundreds of millions of oppressed people on this earth, have within our grasp the means by which mankind may destroy political oppression for all time. We can, by the example we set, lead the peoples of the world into a new life of self-fulfillment and happiness. That is our great challenge today.

Let us meet that challenge by our opposition to tyranny in government, and to our faith in the democratic ideal.