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Opening Senate campaign radio speech

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS BY J. STROM THURMOND, CANDIDATE FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE, IN OPENING RADIO SPEECH OVER STATE-WIDE NETWORK ORIGINATING AT WIS, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, MAY 23, 1950, 7:00 P.M.

Today in Lexington and Saluda the South Carolina senatorial campaign got under way. Not in recent years have the Democrats of South Carolina been confronted with such a serious responsibility as is now presented to them in the nomination of a United States Senator to represent them during the next six years in the greatest deliberative body in the world.

These are critical times in which we live. Serious international conditions confront us. The Russian bear is spreading out its greedy paws over a great portion of the earth. The Soviet government today constitutes a danger to the democracy of the world as great as the axis powers which we so recently crushed.

Here at home forces are at work to socialize our economy, communize our social relations and undermine the American system of government by centralizing in Washington powers of government which rightfully belong to the states under the Constitution.

In these times, South Carolina can confer no higher honor or place no greater responsibility on one of her citizens than by bestowing upon him the power and prestige of a United States Senator.
The Senate has vast powers to investigate and legislate, tax and appropriate, confirm and reject executive appointees, ratify treaties and provide for the national defense.

Those who represent South Carolina in the Senate can exercise a tremendous influence in preserving peace, instilling character, efficiency and economy in the federal government, and in moulding public opinion behind those principles and institutions which are essential to the perpetuation of this republic.

Because of the importance of this campaign, I have engaged radio time each Tuesday night until the primary so that I can discuss with the Democrats of my state the issues involved. I hope you will be by your radio for these weekly Tuesday night talks and that you will invite your friends to listen in. I promise you they will be informative, interesting, and will help you in deciding who can best serve South Carolina in the Senate.

In announcing for the Senate, my first pledge was to stand firm by the principles of the Democratic party of South Carolina as enunciated by our State Convention in 1948 and reaffirmed in 1950.

Those are the principles for which I fought in 1948, for which I am fighting in this campaign, and for which I will fight as a representative of a sovereign state in the United States Senate.
The people know I am not a "fair weather" South Carolina Democrat. They know I will not be one kind of Democrat in Washington and another kind of Democrat in South Carolina.

In this opening talk, it is proper and fitting that I should give you a report on my stewardship since you elected me your Governor four years ago. To have led in a field of 11 candidates in the first primary, and nominated by a majority of over 35,000 in the second primary is a mark of confidence I shall always treasure and appreciate.

Also, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people for the fine way they stood by the Democratic Party of South Carolina in the 1948 election.

At great odds and in the face of the most vicious propaganda ever unleashed against a political movement seeking only to preserve state sovereignty and constitutional government, our Presidential Electors received 90 per cent of the votes cast by "real" South Carolina Democrats in the 1948 election.

I want to assure you tonight that as Governor of South Carolina and as Chairman of the Southern Governors' Conference I have sought at all times to merit the trust the vast majority of South Carolina Democrats have placed in me and I shall never let them down.
When I took office as Governor, hostilities had recently ended and we were beginning to emerge from the post-war adjustment period. Our hopes were high, and we in South Carolina faced the future with a determination to set our governmental house in order and work out for ourselves and our children a better standard of living and a higher ceiling of economic opportunity. The 1940 census had shown that we stood at the bottom of the list of the states of the union in economic statistics, and we set to work to solve our long-standing economic problems, as a means of paving the way for the solution of our many educational, health, welfare, and economic problems.

We realized that the task would not be easy and that it could not be done in a short period of time, but by the adoption of long-needed progressive measures and by an infinite amount of hard work we struggled toward the goal of building a better state.

Only recently we as South Carolinians have been gratified to read in the newspapers concrete evidence that we have been succeeding in our task. We learn that South Carolina's economic development for the past few years has been proportionately greater than that of any other state in the United States. During my administration, more than $420,000,000 has been spent or allocated on new and expanded industries. Translated into jobs and payrolls - and that is really what counts - this means 48,500 additional jobs for our people and new payrolls aggregating $104,000,000.
annually.

One of the major factors considered by new industry and business is whether a state has a sound, stable and progressive state government. Our industrial growth in the past three years is strong proof that our efforts to bring about better government in South Carolina have succeeded in a substantial way.

We have instilled character, honesty and efficiency in our state government in keeping with my pledge as Governor to the people. Governmental reorganization to eliminate overlapping, duplication, waste and inefficiency is under way. I have insisted on a sound, business-like administration of public affairs. The shameful pardon racket has been ended; the influence of the powerful liquor ring in government has been deflated; our election laws have been modernized and fraud and corruption will now be punished; the unconstitutional practice of dual-office holding has been broken up, and secret spending of the tax payers' money has been ended by requiring all appropriations to be shown in the state appropriation bill.

We have made vast progress in the support and improvement of our public school system, including an increase of state public school appropriations from $17\frac{1}{2}$ million in 1946 to $32\frac{1}{2}$ million in 1950, and an average increase in teachers' salaries of 50%.
Progressive measures to aid labor have been enacted, including an occupational disease compensation law, the Area Trade School to train skilled workers, and the cleaning up of the Workmen's Compensation Commission.

Our agricultural economy has been further developed by the construction of farm-to-market roads and a marketing system for agricultural products which will greatly assist our farmers in marketing their crops.

Much needed additions to our state institutions, deferred during the war period, have made them better able to discharge their important public functions.

Large sums have been made available to aid counties in hospital and health center construction, and provisions have been made to enable us to educate more doctors and nurses in furtherance of our health program.

These and many other progressive measures serve to indicate that we have gone far in our acceptance of the challenge of the future. Our progress has given to new business and industry the assurance that South Carolina is a good state in which to cast their lots in years to come.

The last four years have been progressive years in South Carolina government. On that record I solicit the support of the Democrats of South Carolina to the United States Senate.
In my talk next Tuesday night I am going to discuss with you the measures I will advocate, the principles of government to which I subscribe, and the policies I will follow as your United States Senator.

Before closing tonight, I want to stress upon the real Democrats of South Carolina the importance of registering. Those who have joined with me in this campaign are not unmindful of the opposition we will encounter. We know that outside influences that hate and seek to destroy our way of life in South Carolina are already at work seeking to dominate this election.

We know that large blocs of people will vote in this primary as they are told to vote, and they do not subscribe to the principles of the Democratic Party of South Carolina.

A turn-coat federal judge in our state has disrupted the white Democratic primary in South Carolina, but he cannot disrupt the determination of the real Democrats of South Carolina to control government in this state. We know what is going on in South Carolina to get non-Democrats registered to vote in our primary. Now I want my friends to see to it that the real Democrats, those who believe in the principles of our party and from which the South Carolina State Democratic Convention solemnly declared last month there would be no retreat, get their names on the roll books.
In this campaign I want the support of the good men and women who believe in clean and honest government, who take orders only from their heart and conscience, and who are determined to preserve the principles of our party despite those who fight us from without and betray us from within.

With real Democrats, I shall make the fight for South Carolina democracy; for Americanism and against socialism; for the right of the people of a state to govern themselves and against further concentration of power in the national government; and for the right of South Carolinians to choose who is to serve them in the Senate without interference from outside influence.

There can be no middle ground in this campaign. The time has come when our people must take sides and stand up and be counted if we are going to retain home rule, block the trend toward socialism, and preserve our way of life.

To these ends, I shall wage this campaign, confident of victory when the voice of South Carolina democracy speaks at the ballot box on July 11.