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Address for Senate campaign

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS BY STROM THURMOND, CANDIDATE FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE ORIGINATING FROM THE STUDIOS OF WIS, COLUMBIA, S. C. 7:00 PM TUESDAY, JULY 4, 1950

BY TRANSCRIPTION

MY FELLOW SOUTH CAROLINIANs:

Today our nation celebrates its independence. We are paying tribute to the founding fathers who handed down to us the greatest heritage in the history of mankind's struggle to enjoy freedom under law. We in the South can justly take pride in this day.

From the South came the first call for a declaration of independence. It was Thomas Jefferson who wrote that immortal document. And what the sage of Monticello proclaimed by pen, his fellow Southerner, George Washington, won with his sword.

With our independence won we were without the machinery of government to preserve it. From the South came the movement that resulted in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. George Washington presided, and the Constitution took form from the plans of James Madison of Virginia and Charles Pinckney of South Carolina.

Jefferson, the author of our freedom and the architect of our democracy, founded the Democratic Party on the abiding principles of States Rights.

Two years ago the constitutional division of governmental power between the states and the federal government was challenged by a president masquerading as a Democrat. Precedents were proposed where-under the federal government would come into control of our elections, a federal police force would be set up to function within the states, federal control and supervision of employment in private businesses within our states would be asserted, and every vestige of separation of the races would be broken down.

We who believed in Southern Democracy sprang to the defense of our way of life.

In the South we are already seeing the fruits of the weeds we sowed in 1948. An aroused Democracy in Florida has rejected a Trumanite. An
aroused democracy in North Carolina has replaced a Truman supporter with a States Rights Democrat. Florida and North Carolina have joined up in the fight which South Carolina led from the beginning, and on July 11th an aroused South Carolina democracy will once again let the nation know that our state will not wear the Truman halter and will not keep a Trumanite in the United States Senate.

In Florida and North Carolina outside forces tried to dominate their elections by dividing the white democrats and thus set up minority bloc voting as the balance of power to decide the results. The CIO Political Action Committee and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were both active there as they have been in South Carolina in this campaign. How they worked is shown by some official returns which I have from representative Negro precincts in four North Carolina cities. Listen to this vote:


Charlotte precinct No. 2, Graham 512, Smith 11.

Greensboro precinct No. 5, Graham 1,339, Smith 12.

In these six negro precincts alone, the Truman-supported candidate in the first North Carolina primary received 5,455 votes and the candidate who declared unflinchingly for states rights and Southern democracy received only 65 votes. Our people must take warning from what happened in these other states and avoid the trap which the blocs have set for us. The real Democrats of South Carolina are aroused as they have not been since the days of Wade Hampton. Our people are solidifying by the thousands every day behind Strom Thurmond for United States Senator and they are determined to end these bloc threats once and for all in our political life.

When the campaign meetings reached the Piedmont last week organized hecklers made their appearance and tried to interrupt me. They thought
they could damage our cause in the Piedmont but they failed in their purpose. I told these organized hecklers that I had been heckled by Trumanites before. When I took the platform at the national democratic convention two years ago to speak for Southern democracy, I was hissed and booed by the Trumanite galleries but I let the convention and the nation know just how our people stood on the Truman program to destroy our way of life in the South.

The crowds got larger and larger as we spoke in the Piedmont, and the campaign meetings turned into one Thurmond rally after another. As a result of the steady gains, we have been making day by day in this campaign, my opponent became desperate. In his desperation, he dropped his so-called Christian campaign and began resorting to cheap political demagoguery and the type campaigning which marked his previous races.

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South Carolina who want to improve the health and education of our Negro population and have them contribute more to our economy, even though we detest the program of breaking down our segregation laws and customs which the man my opponent supported for President is trying to ram down our throats. My opponent charged that I was responsible for the appointment of this negro physician, but the South Carolina Medical Association has written a letter to all the papers correcting my opponent's false accusation:

The doctors of the state know what is best for the health of our people and they chose this Negro doctor to look after Negro hospitals. They do not have to explain or apologize to my opponent for this action on their part. In this letter they quote the law providing for them to name 5 doctors on the advisory council, and the letter then states:

"Therefore, any attacks directed on Governor Thurmond alleging that he made this appointment of his own choice are false."

This illustrates the type of campaigning that my opponent will resort
to in the closing days of the campaign. I want to warn my friends in every county that you may expect all kinds of last minute circulars and falsehood and half-truths to be circulated between now and the primary.

If my opponent will resort to misrepresenting the facts as he did about the appointment of the Negro doctor, you will realize that there is nothing which he and his Trumanite supporters will not stoop to in the closing days of the campaign in their frantic effort to prevent defeat.

On every stump in this state, I have charged to my opponent's face that he permitted a pardon racket to operate while he was in the Governor's office. I challenged him to defend his pardon record as we spoke before the people, but he remained as silent as the tomb. Now in his desperation, he is publishing big advertisements citing records in the Secretary of State's office on pardons. He does not tell the people he granted over 2,500 leaves of absence from the penitentiary which are back-door pardons and are not filed with the Secretary of State, and which are unconstitutional. The very fact that he dared not discuss his pardon record on the stump when I had in my brief case a list of the over 3,000 criminals he turned out of the penitentiary and back on our law-abiding people proved the charge that I made against him.

My opponent has not even tried to explain why he promised the good church people and the temperance forces he would not sign a bill legalizing liquor and then, after they voted for him for Governor, he signed an almost wide open liquor bill.

In this campaign, I have cited my record of service as Governor. The people know that I put an end to the pardon racket, that I broke the financial back of the liquor ring by channelling their excessive profits into the state treasury and that I cleaned up the mess in the Workmen's Compensation Commission.

The people know that we have under way a program for the re-organization of the state government which will result in greater efficiency and a saving of millions of dollars in taxes. We have greatly extended the
services of our state government for health, education, and other functions and maintained a balanced budget, and have raised our credit rating from A to double A.

Don't forget this has been done without the General Assembly levying a sales tax on the backs of our working people as most states have done. The General Assembly did increase a few luxury taxes, but I am sure those who smoke cigarettes and drink beer will not object to this small increase in order that our state may provide better schools for our school children and better health facilities for our people.

The people know that since I have been Governor, we have brought in more new industries than during any other comparable period in the state history. We have provided 50,000 new jobs for our working people, and raised our industrial payroll to over half a billion dollars.

Every segment of our economy in South Carolina and every county is benefiting from the constructive accomplishments made during my administration.

I have placed before the people the record of my opponent in the Senate which clearly shows he is not entitled to their suffrage. He has not only failed to accomplish anything for the people of South Carolina since he has been in the Senate during the last six years but he has failed to use the high office of United States Senator to promote South Carolina Democracy and protect our way of life.

One of the most important qualifications of a United States Senator is his ability to understand and have a grasp of international affairs. My opponent has failed South Carolina and the nation in discharging this responsibility. He joined with a hard core of Republican isolationists in opposing this country's cold war against Russia. He thought he could make political capital out of my support of the Marshall plan but now that a serious development in our relations with Russia has taken place in Korea he now sees his mistake.

In being the only Democrat in the Senate to oppose the Marshall plan,
he set himself up to know more about our international affairs than George Marshall, General Bradley, General Eisenhower, Cordell Hull, and James F. Byrnes, all of whom supported the Marshall plan.

On September 22, 1949, the Senate by a vote of 55 to 25 passed arms aid bill to help keep other countries from falling under the Russian iron curtain. My opponent was one of the nine Democrats who voted against this law which carried $10,000,000 for arms assistance to Korea.

Our nation has been engaged in waging a cold war to stop Communist expansion and prevent a shooting war which would cost American lives and billions of dollars. My opponent set himself up as a lone Democratic isolationist to block that program and, my friends, that is another reason why he is not going to be returned to the Senate. In these critical times, South Carolina is not going to be represented in the United States Senate by an isolationist who plays politics with our national defense and foreign policy.

Now in conclusion I want to express my deepest appreciation to those who are fighting with us in the battle for South Carolina democracy in every county in the state. We have fought against great odds. The President of the United States has tried to use the prestige of his office in this primary by publicly reflecting on my democracy. I represent and speak for the democracy of South Carolina and I will put our democracy up against the Truman-Pendergast brand anytime and anywhere.

With a fanfare of publicity, Senate investigators were sent down here to meddle in our primary and intimidate our people. Remember this, never before have Senate investigators come into our state to meddle in a South Carolina democratic primary.

The National Association for Advancement of Colored People and the CIO Political Action Committee have sent their hirelings into South Carolina to dominate this primary by bloc voting. And William Boyle and the Democratic National Committee also are carrying out Truman’s orders to defeat the man who broke the solid South in 1948.
But these outside influences have run up against a stonewall of opposition in South Carolina. In every county our friends have responded to the challenge and we have a fighting and determined organization in every county which is out on the firing line every day.

We must keep on working until the last vote is counted and if we do this, I can assure you now that next Tuesday night we are going to roll up a victory which will gladden the heart of every true South Carolina Democrat.

Thank you and good night.