1-1-1954

Senate campaign qualifications and platform

Strom Thurmond

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. code). Use of these materials beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

For additional rights information, please contact Kirstin O'Keefe (kokeefe [at] clemson [dot] edu)

For additional information about the collections, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

Recommended Citation

Thurmond, Strom, 'Senate campaign qualifications and platform' (1954). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 1142. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/1142

For additional information about the collection, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Manuscript Collections at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100 by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.
The unfortunate action of a small group of politicians on the State Executive Committee in refusing to order a Primary election has forced upon the people the necessity of selecting a Senator without the customary joint debate, which would enable the people to know something of the record and qualifications of candidates.

The candidate of the Committee has refused to agree to meet other candidates in joint debate. It makes it necessary for me to use this medium and respectfully request you to consider my qualifications.

I was born in Edgefield County in 1902 and reared on a farm. Between school sessions I worked in a textile mill. In 1923 I graduated from Clemson College, majoring in Agricultural Science. For 6 years I was a school teacher. Then I became County Superintendent of Education. At night I studied law. I was State Senator from Edgefield County for 5 years. Then I was elected Circuit Judge.

Although exempt from military service because of being a Judge, I volunteered for active duty on the day war was declared in World War II.

In 1946 I was elected Governor of South Carolina. This year I was elected President of the National Reserve Officers Association.

I would not bore you with a recital of everything I accomplished or attempted to accomplish in public life, but I hope you will pardon me if I mention a few things.

I was chairman of the committee that wrote the school attendance law. As a member of that committee, I sponsored the Bill for higher teacher pay and longer school terms.

I was a member of the committee that sponsored the first rural electrification act and the present soil conservation district law.

While Governor I ended the abuse of the pardon power by urging the constitutional amendment removing that power from the Governor and placing it in the Parole Board.

I had passed the act providing for the reorganization of the State Government which contributed to efficiency and economy.

I sponsored the removal of poll tax as a requirement for voting.
During my term I contributed to the initiation of the State farm-to-market road system.

We greatly expanded the health services.

I advocated the Bill establishing Area Trade Schools for each race in order to train skilled workers.

I advocated the removal of the property tax on household goods.

I am proud of the fact that when I left the office of Governor the State was on a sound financial basis.

While I was Governor, President Truman started his campaign to enact a Federal FEPC law and his fight to have the Supreme Court declare our segregation school laws unconstitutional. The drive was then started to abolish all segregation laws and to destroy the rights of the States to handle other local problems. Of Governors and political leaders of other Southern States demanded of me at Birmingham that I lead the fight for the South. I knew the South could not elect a President. It meant a great sacrifice to me to lead that fight, but I agreed to do so because of my love for the land that gave me birth. Approximately two-thirds of the votes of South Carolina were cast for me. I received more than 1,000,000 votes of the people.

The candidate of the Committee says I was then nominated by our State Democratic Committee. That is true. The State Democratic Convention instructed the State Committee to name electors as required by law. But the effort to compare that with the recent action of the State Committee is inexcusable. The Presidential Electors have never been elected by the people in South Carolina. On the other hand, for 43 years our United States Senators have been elected by the people.

I have no apology for having led the States' Rights Democrats in their fight in 1948. That fight was endorsed by South Carolina Democrats at the polls.
The man who is elected by you to the United States Senate faces a tremendous responsibility because this is one of the most critical periods in our history.

It is critical because we face the issue of war or peace. Those of us who were in the military services, and particularly those who served with combat troops, know the horrors of war.

We know that with the development of the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb another world war would bring death to millions of men, women and children. I dislike to think of the suffering of those who survived an atomic war. At the same time we know that it matters not how we may long for peace, the decision to make war may be reached by the cruel men of the Kremlin. Therefore, while we pray for peace, we must see to it that America remains strong militarily, economically and spiritually.

To remain strong militarily it is necessary for us to continue spending billions for defense. It is necessary for us to maintain large military forces. We must see that this is done in such manner as to interfere as little as possible with the lives of our young people. My experience as President of the National Reserve Officers Association causes me to believe that improvements can be made in our manpower program. We can provide for more training at home and less service abroad. I will devote my best thought and my best efforts to this end.

I said we must remain strong economically. We must do this because the Soviets have no respect for anything except force and power. They know that if we have a serious depression, there would be unemployment and unrest. We would not be able to help our Allies. The minds of our people would be diverted from the defense of the country. Therefore, it is all important that we maintain the present prosperous condition of the country.

A few months ago a Bill was passed by Congress removing some
Federal taxes and reducing others. I want a further reduction in taxes just as soon as we can do so without crippling our defense program. The more money Government takes from the citizen in taxes, the less he has to invest in business furnishing employment to people.

The per capita income of our people continues high. Unfortunately, however, the income of our farmers has not kept pace with other groups of people. It is true that the price of cotton has held about 34 cents and tobacco in the neighborhood of 55 cents, but we have suffered a terrible drought and consequently the income of our farmers will be reduced.

I have favored 90 per cent parity for our staple crops. At the last session Congress placed parity payments on a sliding scale from 90 per cent to 82\frac{1}{2} per cent. In the Senate this was done by the votes of Republican and Democratic Senators. The Candidate of the Committee says this caused the price of cattle to drop. However, all farmers know that parity does not apply to cattle. It does apply to such crops as cotton and tobacco. I shall vote for the restoration of 90 per cent parity. I will do so because I believe agriculture is the backbone of our economy and the farmer must have some assurance of a reasonable profit for the products of his farm if we are to remain economically strong.

I believe, however, we can further reduce the amount of money that is spent for foreign aid. We must continue to help the western powers in a military way but we cannot raise the standard of living of all the people in the various countries allied with us in opposition to the aggression of the Soviet Government, without lowering our own standard of living. Instead of taxing the people to send abroad, I would send less and more of our surplus commodities.

Recently the Government has increased its contribution to the school lunch program. I would give more liberally of surplus commodities to that program.

I am in favor of increasing social security payments and improving the administration of those funds. The amount of money
that was allotted to an old and needy person ten years ago is not adequate today. I believe that young people should as far as possible help the parents who are no longer able to take care of themselves. But all of us realize that changed conditions make this a terrific problem in many, many families. Parents prefer to be independent of their children. They do not want to be a burden to children and grandchildren. As early as possible we must liberalize and expand the sound system of old-age insurance and make unnecessary the direct assistance which is costly and is unfair to our old people.

While serving as Governor, I worked unceasingly to bring industries to our State. I wanted those industries because they would provide more jobs for our people. I am just as much interested in the expansion of existing industries. Industry must be treated fairly by the State and by the Congress.

I am proud of the progress that has been made by the wage earners of our State. Intelligent management has realized that full production in industry can be maintained only so long as management appreciates the importance of treating employees fairly and justly. As a result there is splendid cooperation between management and employees.

I shall do all in my power to prevent the enactment of legislation discriminating against Southern industries and government orders to the manufacturers of New England.
I said we must remain strong spiritually. The people must elect to high positions in government men who by experience have demonstrated their qualifications. They should elect men whose character and habits are such as to reflect credit upon the people of a state. No one of us is perfect, but our ambition should be to inspire confidence in the young people of our State.

If those in places of power do wrong or condone corruption, that spirit will permeate the entire structure of government. If we condone wrong, young people will acquire a false conception of what is right and what is wrong.

When we consider the terrific problems confronting us in the nation and in the world, we must realize our inability to correctly solve those problems without Divine assistance. We must humbly confess our helplessness and earnestly pray that Divine Providence will guide and direct all who are in places of responsibility to use their intellects and their energies to bring about enduring peace on earth and true happiness to the people of the State we love.