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Radio script for Senator Thurmond's regular weekly broadcast on the subject of his opposition to the so-called Civil Rights Bills pending in the congress, recorded on 1957 February 28

Strom Thurmond

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MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

This past week I appeared before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee to express my strong opposition to the so-called civil rights bills which were being considered there, and Monday I appear before a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee for the same purpose.

There are approximately a dozen different proposals under consideration in these committees, although there is a much larger number of bills. Some of them duplicate provisions contained in other bills and some of them have slight variations in their approach to the same objective.

All of the objectives of the so-called civil rights bills are repulsive. Their objective generally is to bring the South under more direct control of the Federal Government. This would be accomplished by making it possible for the Federal Courts to issue injunctions against innocent citizens when the Justice Department made application for such orders from the Courts.

I believe very firmly that the rights of all citizens should be protected, but I do not believe anybody can do the job any better than the individual States can. The States are guaranteed the right to full police powers in the Constitution. The States have been doing a good job generally and I shall oppose in every way possible the efforts being made to enact these politically-inspired bills.

The truth is very much as Mr. Dooley, the writer-philosopher, stated it many years ago, that the Supreme Court follows the
election returns. If he were alive today, I believe Mr. Dooley would also note that the election returns follow the Supreme Court.

Now it looks as if some people are trying to follow both the Supreme Court and the election returns.

The main provisions of the so-called civil rights bills are contained in one bill -- called an omnibus bill. It would create a Civil Rights Commission to investigate conditions relating to civil rights over the country and to report back to the President its recommendations.

A second provision would create a new Civil Rights Division and approve the addition of a new Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department. This would enable the Justice Department to meddle in State and individual affairs, as I mentioned earlier, by sending agents over the nation to help stir up civil cases against people.

A third provision would permit the Justice Department to start these law suits against persons "about to engage in acts" violating the civil rights of some person. That would be worse than anything I ever heard of, because it is beyond my understanding how anybody could take an oath as to whether somebody else was "about to engage in" an illegal act.

The real effect of such a law would be to deny people charged with violations of the civil rights laws the right to a trial by jury. Even though a person might not have been thinking about violating the law, the Justice Department could secure an injunction from a Federal Court and deprive the person of being heard by a jury.
A fourth very important provision of the bills would permit the Attorney General of the United States to police elections throughout the country, even though no federal office were involved in the election.

An anti-lynching law is proposed, although in the past 10 years there have been only 15 murders classified as lynchings. They have been recorded in six States. South Carolina has not had any in this period.

There were twice as many murders in the first six months of 1956 in the city of Washington, which is directly under the jurisdiction of Congress, as in the six States where the lynchings took place.

One of the worst proposals contained in the bills is the so-called Fair Employment Practices Commission. The real name should be the Forced Employment Practices Commission, because this plan would force an employer of a labor organization to hire persons who might be entirely unsuitable for the job to be done.

I shall continue to fight against these unconstitutional proposals which would deprive the States and the people of the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington. Thank you for listening and this station for making this time available each week.