4-18-1957

Radio script of Senator Strom Thurmond for regular weekly broadcast, for week of 1957 April 21, recorded 1957 April 18

Strom Thurmond

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Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, "Radio script of Senator Strom Thurmond for regular weekly broadcast, for week of 1957 April 21, recorded 1957 April 18" (1957). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 1564. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/1564

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RADIO SCRIPT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND FOR REGULAR WEEKLY BROADCAST, 
RECORDED APRIL 18, 1957 (for week of April 21, 1957).

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

During sessions of the Senate, it is necessary for me and other members to be away from our States for months at a time. This means that unless we have some direct means of communication with constituents, we are likely to lose touch with the thinking of the people in the States.

I cannot imagine anything worse than failing to have sufficient communication with the people of South Carolina -- and other States too.

I am happy to say that many citizens have taken the time and trouble to write me since Congress convened in January. Many letters come to my office in Washington every day. I believe they have provided me with a reasonable basis for knowing what you are thinking about and what concerns you most.

Sometimes the mail will vary because of a particular event. For example, on April 14 I appeared on a television program and debated the subject of federal aid to education with Senator Case of New Jersey. Since that appearance, I have received an increased flow of letters urging me to continue my fight against general federal aid to education.

I receive mail dealing with many topics other than legislation. I am always glad to assist constituents in every way possible and to provide them with the information or assistance they request.

However, the principal job of a Senator is that of legislation and representing the interests of his Nation and State when issues arise in the Senate. So, the bulk of my mail deals with matters
pending before the Senate or in its Committees.

Thinking you might be interested in knowing what people have been writing about, I have had a survey made of my mail. I have included the seven major categories.

It is quite interesting to me that four subjects dominate incoming mail at this particular time. There is less than 2 per cent difference between the first and fourth groups of letters.

Leading the seven groups of mail are the letters I have been receiving on the advertising of alcoholic beverages and the serving of alcohol on airplanes. Those letters comprise 18.6 per cent of the mail.

Less than one percentage point behind the first group is the mail I am receiving on economy in government. It comprises 17.7 per cent of the mail.

Third, in volume, is mail concerning proposals to change the minimum wage law. These letters run to 17 per cent of the total.

Fourth, and increasing, is the subject of federal aid to education with 16.9 per cent at this time.

Fifth, and likely to increase if bills on the subject come up for consideration in the Senate, is mail on civil rights, segregation and trial by jury. This category now runs at 13.3 per cent of the seven groups.

Next in line, in sixth place, with 9 per cent of the total, are the letters on agriculture.

Seventh is foreign aid. Letters on this subject make up 7.4 per cent of the mail I have been receiving.
I should point out one other facet of my mail. In many instances the letters I receive contain an expression of views on several subjects rather than on just one. In the classifications listed above, I have counted only the principal matter taken up in each letter.

As long as people continue to write me, I have no fear of losing touch with the views of citizens at home. But without your views on the various matters which come up in the Senate, I would find it much more difficult to arrive at many decisions.

During the past week, farmers let me know of their opposition to a bill, pending in the Senate Commerce Committee, which would have required trucks to be registered with the Interstate Commerce Commission each year. Without the views of the farmers on this bill, I would not have had the necessary information about it to have held it up in the Committee, as I was able to do. When the bill is considered in May, I shall oppose it and try to amend it/to remove the proposed bureaucratic, federal control/which the bill now contains.

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