STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR HIS WEEKLY RADIO BROADCAST OF JANUARY 10-11, 1959 (RECORDED JANUARY 8, 1959)

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

The business before the Senate in its opening week has been limited to discussion of rules changes. In reality, this question is simply a matter of principle, but it is such an important principle at stake that most of the 98 senators desire a chance to express an opinion.

Only one of the Senate rules is open to attack by the so-called liberal senators, and that is Rule 22, which protects the minority's right to discuss fully all proposed laws/before the Senate votes to pass or defeat these proposed laws by a majority vote. Rule 22, as it presently stands, permits unlimited discussion of issues before the Senate unless two-thirds of the Senate membership vote to shut off debate.

The so-called liberal senators would change Rule 22 so that a majority of the Senate membership could vote to shut off discussion of issues before the Senate.

The so-called moderate senators would change Rule 22 so that two-thirds of the Senators present and voting could shut off discussion rather than two-thirds of the membership of the Senate.

The great majority of Southern senators, and a few other conservatives from other sections of the country, feel that the only reason a change in rules is sought is to make it easier for a bare majority of the Senate to impose its will on the minority.
In particular, the majority feared by the South at this time is that majority so intent on forcing its way of life on the South at the expense of the South's traditions.

On the face of it, rule by the majority sounds good. However, students of history know that the 13 original colonies, which won their independence from Great Britain in 1781, would never have united unless certain guarantees against majority rule tyranny had been given them.

Advocates of changes in Rule 22 say that the existing Rule 22 permits a handful of Senators to impose their will on the majority through use of the Filibuster. What they don't explain is that the Filibuster is never used unless the handful of Senators so engaged in conducting one are thoroughly convinced that the issue involved is a life-and-death matter for their section. In a sense, Rule 22 permits a section of the nation to veto legislation, but, as is the case when the President of the United States vetoes proposed laws, a two-thirds majority may over-rule the veto. In the case of the veto by a section of the nation, it is set aside when two-thirds of the Senators vote to shut off lengthy debate, or the Filibuster, as it is popularly called.

I am convinced, upon studying the actions and writings of the Founding Fathers, that they would be on the side of the South if they were alive today. They would have thought it presumptuous of a majority of the states to attempt to impose their every wish on the South today, the West tomorrow, the North day after
tomorrow. Surely, each section of this great nation has a right to some self-rule -- even in this day of centralized government.

In the case of the South, the vast majority of its 40 million voters within 11 states have clearly indicated how they feel on the subject of forced integration and other so-called civil rights. I, for one, intend to see that these voters' interests are protected and that the whims of non-Southerners are not turned into Federal laws which will result in many times more injustices in the South than those frequently alleged to be existing there today.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.