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STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR HIS WEEKLY RADIO  
BROADCAST OF FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1, 1959 (RECORDED FEBRUARY 26, 1959)

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

As part of my report to you this week, I would like to introduce to you Miss Emily Pruitt of Columbia, South Carolina's winner in the Voice of Democracy contest sponsored by the South Carolina Broadcasters, the National Association of Broadcasters, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Electronics Industries Association.

Miss Pruitt and I have just returned from a banquet at the Statler Hotel where the 50 winners from the 49 States and the District of Columbia were honored. At this time I would like for Miss Pruitt to read to you a portion of her presentation.

MISS PRUITT: "I Speak For Democracy" - It is Sunday. The lazy afternoon sun hovers over the trees in the park where young lovers enjoy a paradise of togetherness. The angelus bell is ringing in the church tower, families are gathered on their porches content in just being alive and with one another. This is America.

A group of carefree teenagers eagerly plan a party on the patio, or the smaller children are thoroughly engrossed in a mystic tale of fantasyland. This is liberty.

This is freedom and this is the Democracy for which I speak. I shout it out from the highest hill. I whisper it softly to the wind. My voice echoes in the valley. I am truth.

I am as a torch lighting the way for wanderers--keeping alive the last spark of hope in lonely souls warming the hearts of cruel and ruthless men.

Democracy is many things. To men and women it may be going to the polls in November and selecting leaders of our government. It is sending their children to the best schools and colleges. It is having the right of promotion and betterment in business and society. To the youth of our Nation it is choosing their own friends, planning their own future, making their own decisions. But to all men, women and children alike, freedom is one thing.

It is the right to live, to speak, to love, to believe as they see fit. To all Americans freedom is life. Very true, our Nation, uninfalible as it is, often errs on matters of government and leaders do not always agree on various policies. Oftentimes laws

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are made which some citizens aren't in favor of. It is only natural, only human that everyone does not always agree on everything, but of one thing we can rest assured:

We could search to the four corners of our Nation, could ask every living American and the answer would and always will remain the same. To all Americans--freedom is life. This is our whole way of life, our dearest possession, our American heritage. We have heard it so many times so many ways, but never in all our life could we thank God enough for having granted us this land of freedom, justice, equality, liberty. Each time I see our American flag, the symbol of freedom, of courage, of past hardships and persecutions for the things we love and hold dear, I utter a silent prayer of thanksgiving that I am free.

Free to believe, to speak, to live as I desire. Thankful that I am an American. Therefore, believing in the principles and ideals of my country and hoping for the perpetual presence of the banner of truth, waving freely above me among millions of other thankful Americans.

I speak for Democracy.

South Carolina is proud of her young people and we are pleased to have this talented young lady, Miss Emily Pruitt of Columbia, in Washington to attend the finals in the Voice of Democracy contest.

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At the Senate Agriculture Committee hearings this week I testified in support of a proposal co-sponsored by me which would allow farmers to rent cotton acreage allotments within their counties. I sincerely feel that passage of this legislation would give the small cotton farmer the opportunity to earn a better livelihood.

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Peachgrowers of South Carolina and throughout the South and Nation will be adversely affected by revised peach standards set up by the Department of Agriculture. New hearings were granted at my request last year, and I am again urging Secretary Benson to

reconsider his department's drastic move.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.

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