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Address by Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) in campaign for renomination to United States Senate at Columbia, S.C., 8:00 p.m., 1960 May 6

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) IN CAMPAIGN FOR RENOMI-
ATION TO U.S. SENATE AT COLUMBIA, S.C., 8 P.M., MAY 6, 1960.

It is always a pleasure for me to get away from Washington/to return to the people of my home State/to visit and get your views first hand/and also to report to you on what is going on in the nation's capital. It is refreshing to be among people who believe in Americanism, who support the Constitution as written, who realize the value of our thriving free enterprise system, and who are willing to give a day's work for a day's pay. These are the principal ingredients/which have turned our State and our Southland/from what the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt once described/as the "Nation's No. 1 Economic Problem" into the land of opportunity/and the last fortress of individual freedom and initiative.

I am particularly pleased to be in Columbia, the capital city of our great State. The people of South Carolina/gave me the opportunity to live here for four years/during my term of office as Governor from 1947-51. Prior to that, I spent much time in Columbia as a State Senator and as a Circuit Judge. Through the years I have established many warm friendships here/which I value dearly, and I have always found the people of Columbia and Richland County/to be most kind and hospitable.

Columbia and Richland County are both growing very rapidly/as a result of the many fine opportunities which they offer for development purposes/and also because of the astute planning and the hard work/of their leaders and various organizations. It has
been my pleasure to cooperate with them to the fullest extent possible in having Fort Jackson maintained as a permanent Army training installation and in trying to locate regional headquarters here for agencies of the Federal Government.

Fort Jackson is one of the world's best training installations for ground troops. I have worked hard to keep it in operation on a permanent basis not only because of its economic value to Columbia, Richland County, and South Carolina, but also because of the vital role it plays in our national defense program as an Army training center. I know of no city or area which is more deserving of a good service installation than Columbia. You people have given splendid cooperation to the Army and this has paid good dividends for both the Army and Columbia.

When I came to the Senate in 1955, the Army officially referred to it as "Camp" Jackson because it was not on its list of permanent installations. Congressman John Riley and I made many contacts and visits with Defense Department officials about the matter, and before long "Camp" Jackson became Fort Jackson and it was added to the list of permanent installations.

We have fought off every attempt to close Fort Jackson. Only recently I had a long conference with Army Secretary Wilber Brucker about Fort Jackson, and he assured me of the Army's firm determination to maintain the Fort as a permanent installation. I am glad that Secretary Brucker and the Chief of Staff, General Lemnitzer, recently honored South Carolina with a visit to Fort Jackson. I regret that votes on the foreign aid bill prevented me from being present to welcome the Secretary and the Chief of Staff.

I hope that when the Federal Aviation Agency decides to establish a new regional headquarters in the Southeast, we can convince the appropriate FAA officials as to the wisdom of establishing
the headquarters in Columbia. At present, I am working diligently to locate the nation's first 50-million-dollar electronic computer center or the Internal Revenue Service in Columbia. It was at one time on the way to another large Southeastern city in another State, but we have succeeded in winning a reconsideration which we trust will be favorable to Columbia's bid for this important installation.

I am always glad to cooperate with the people of South Carolina on any project or on any matter which will aid in the development and growth of our State.

The right to represent a sovereign State in the United States Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world, is one of the highest positions of trust and responsibility which can be entrusted to any person. I am very grateful to you, the people of South Carolina, for giving me the opportunity to serve you in this capacity during the past six years. During this period I have tried to represent you objectively, conscientiously and honestly and in keeping with the finest traditions of our great State and Nation. You elected me to the Senate in 1954 in an unusual write-in election. After I resigned in 1956, in accordance with my promise to give the people an opportunity to vote in a primary election, you again elected me to the Senate to serve the remainder of the six-year term.

During my service in the Senate I have been concerned with many pressing problems and issues which vitally affect the people of our State and Nation. Being aware of the twin dangers which confront the security of our liberties--collapse from within and armed attack from without--I have fought to maintain a strong national economy and a strong national defense program. In speech after speech I have warned that unless we curb waste, extravagance
and socialistic and non-essential programs here at home, we will bankrupt this country and give to Mr. Khrushchev and his Kremlin cohorts/the economic victory he has boasted he will win without firing a shot. This is why I have consistently voted for economy in government spending, ranking first among the Senate's 65 Democrats/in an independent tabulation of economy voting records.

I have advocated and supported legislation/to protect the interest of our working people and the public/against the abuses and corrupt practices of big labor bosses. I have worked diligently in an effort to save our vital textile and plywood industries/and the jobs of our employees/from the flood of low-wage imports from foreign countries. I have voted against every foreign aid appropriation bill in an effort to bring this maladministered and extravagant program into realistic bounds. I have attended to every request made of me by South Carolinians/for information and assistance/while attending to my primary duty in Washington—that of being present to vote and represent my State on the pending issues in the Senate. Last year, I was one of five Senators to have a perfect record on attendance for roll calls and quorum calls.

The issue which has caused me the most concern during my service in the Senate is that issue generally referred to as "civil rights". I know it has been a cause of primary concern to you also. I have spared no effort, nor ignored any avenue of approach known to me, in serving the best interest of the people of South Carolina with respect to this problem. I am particularly grateful for the advice and counsel/given me on this matter by so many South Carolinians/and also the many words of moral support and encouragement.
The issue of so-called "civil rights" is basically neither a legislative, a judicial, nor a moral question. On the contrary, it is by its very nature a political question, and its ultimate solution lies not in the courts of the land, nor in executive officers, nor even yet in legislative halls—but in a united and firm application of political power by the people of the Southern States, initially followed by similar action on the part of sound-thinking citizens from the entire country.

The advocacy of unconstitutional, unwise and unrealistic measures by the Judicial, Legislative and Executive branches of the Federal Government for changing the segregated pattern in the South arises from no concern for the almost fictional plight of the Negro, either in the South or elsewhere. The professional agitators who run the NAACP, the South-baiting members of the ADA, the Union bosses who finance the agitation, the extremists in Congress who seek to return the South to Reconstruction—these people with few exceptions have no real desire to assist the Negro. Their sole goal is political power or political office. The rare exception to the politically motivated is the starry-eyed dreamer who has become deluded by his own false propaganda, who is bereft of reason, and blinded by passion.

In the last 30 years, and particularly in the post-war years, Negroes have migrated to the heavily populated States in the North and West. Here they either vote as a bloc, or have convinced politicians that they vote as a bloc. In many populous States, they are now considered to constitute the balance of political power. Since the Negro race comprises a relatively minor percentage of the total population in these Northern population centers, as compared to the concentrations of the Negro race in the South, and since the Northerners...
have devised a system of segregation of their own, many of the Northern voters have no particular concern about the despicable proposals made by their politicians on the race issue. For the bloc vote of the Negro, therefore, the politicians seek to excel in the demagogic advocacy of measures and steps to gain their favor. Since the populous States have the largest numbers of electoral votes, both political parties also attempt to outdo each other in order to gain this bloc vote, which comprises the balance of political power.

The realization that the South's persecution on the so-called "civil rights" altar stems from political considerations, is not a conclusion I arrived at only recently. It was this realization that prompted me in 1948 to accept the leadership of the States Rights Democratic campaign to consolidate, unite and bring to bear the full potential of the South's political power against the "civil rights" forces in both major political parties. Incidentally, few people realize how close that effort came to success. Truman was elected by a majority of 38 electoral votes. California and Ohio, each with 25 electoral votes, and Illinois, with 28 electoral votes, were expected to go for Dewey. If any two of these three States had gone Republican, the election would have been thrown into the House of Representatives. Even if only one of these States had gone Republican, and the Southern effort had been successful in Texas or a combination of other Southern States, the election would have been decided in the House. I cite these facts to show that even with a late start, little prior organization, and limited financing, the 1948 effort came very near being successful. Had the election been thrown into the House, the South would
have been in a strong bargaining position, and I am convinced that we would not be faced with this dilemma on the so-called race issue. Unfortunately, however, that effort was unsuccessful in this regard, for in 1948, the Southern people as a whole were not yet sufficiently aware of the threat, or were not yet convinced that the only solution lay in united political action.

There are many battlefields on which the so-called "civil rights" issue can and must be fought with every means at our disposal--in the courts, in State legislatures, in Congress, in the national news media--the arenas are many, and I shall discuss these battles shortly in more detail--but in the final analysis, the outcome will be decided in the political arena. The South has the potential political power to win. This power can be applied through another effort, as in 1948, to throw the Presidential election into the House of Representatives. It can be applied within the framework of the Democratic Party at conventions. It can be applied through the medium of unpledged electors. Perhaps it can be applied by Southern Senators and Representatives in the organization of a new Congress. Any of these methods could successfully resolve our problem, provided there is unity throughout the South. Without concerted action and unity, the South is politically impotent to resolve the issue with any degree of finality. It is my sincere hope that this unity will materialize soon.

In the meantime, there are battles which must be fought, and your Senator bears a major responsibility in waging the fight. I submit to you my record in these conflicts.

In 1954, the Supreme Court struck a major blow at the South with its desegregation decision. I do not propose to review either the reasons for that decision or its lack of legality and logic.
We are all too familiar with this event.

In 1955, when I went to the Senate, I was determined to exert every effort to overcome, to the maximum extent possible, the effect of that decision. As one avenue of approach, I initiated the movement to repudiate the decision, and drafted the original of what later became known as the Southern Manifesto. This document stated the unconstitutional, illegal nature of the Court's desegregation decision, the impracticality of its enforcement, and the intention to resist it by all lawful means. After drafting it, I presented it at a meeting of the Southern Senators, and thereafter worked diligently for its execution by the maximum number of Senators and Representatives. A total of 101 members of the Senate and House signed it, and it was presented to the Congress. This manifesto served notice on Congress, the Court and the people of the country that the members of Congress from the South, and indeed, the overwhelming majority of Southern people would not accept tyranny at the hands of the Court. This Southern Manifesto put the South on the offensive.

My efforts, along with those of the other Southern Senators and Representatives, to keep the offensive resulted in decisive steps. Under the circumstances, some came surprisingly close to success. For instance, in 1958 we came very close to passage of HR 3, known as the States' Rights Bill. If passed, this measure would have prevented the Supreme Court from striking down the powers of the States and indeed, would have reversed the trend of centralization of power in the National Government in almost every conceivable field. The bill, authored in the House by Congressman Smith of Virginia, passed the House in 1958, but was stalled for
lack of votes in the Senate Committee. In the latter days of the 1958 session, we undertook to attach this legislation in the form of amendment, to other legislation on the Senate floor. I personally secured 34 co-sponsors on the amendment. I spared no effort to obtain support for it. After a vigorous fight, in which we won initial success, we were defeated by the narrow margin of one vote. Once again political expediency prevailed despite our most strenuous efforts. This was our nearest approach to curbing the tyrannical powers of the Supreme Court, although by no means was it the only effort. I personally have introduced several bills dealing with qualifications for members of the court and limiting the appellate power of the court. There are any number of other bills on qualifications, terms of office, and jurisdiction pending.

In order to change the machinery through which the minority bloc votes are able to wield the balance of power in National elections I have introduced a constitutional amendment to revise the electoral college system, so that a small minority, in an otherwise relatively evenly divided State, politically, could not swing the entire electoral vote to the party or candidate of their choice. Although we obtained a majority vote in the Senate on the amendment which I co-sponsored, we fell shy of the two-thirds vote required to pass an amendment to the Constitution.

In 1957, competition between the political parties for minority bloc votes set the stage for passage of a so-called "civil rights" bill through Congress. I resisted passage of the bill by the Senate with every means at hand. I testified against the bill when it was considered by the committee. I invited our State officials and any other interested South Carolinians to appear before Congressional committees to testify and made
arrangements for their appearances. At each appearance they made a splendid case in opposition to the various so-called "civil rights" proposals. Incidentally, the Senate Committee reported no "civil rights" bill then or later, until this year when the Committee had no alternative because of specific instructions from the Senate. I spoke against the bill on the Senate floor many times and at great length. I spoke on the unconstitutional features of the bill and the various amendments. I discussed the many impractical aspects of the proposal. I reviewed the progress of race relations in the South and the setback these relations would suffer as a result of passage of the legislation. I directed the attention of the Senate to the fact that the bill was solely political in nature and not designed to assist the Negro. I denounced the NAACP and its pro-Red leadership and the other organizations of hate and discord, and directed the Senate’s attention to the Communist party goal of racial strife and turmoil. I approached Senators in private in an effort to persuade them to put principle above political expediency. Some did help us to eliminate several of the most extreme provisions. As a final effort, I spoke continuously for more than 24 hours in the final days of the session in a last-ditch effort to stop the bill--to the apparent displeasure of some of my colleagues. Although many of the most vicious proposals were defeated, political expediency prevailed and the bill passed.

In 1959, as a presidential election year approached, pressures for so-called "civil rights" legislation reached a high pitch. Our delaying tactics prevented its consideration until late in the session when threat of extended debate prevented its passage. The pressure was so high and competition between the political
parties for the minority bloc vote so keen, that the legislation was scheduled for consideration by the Senate for February of this year. We, the 18 Southern Senators, this time conducted an organized filibuster against the bill. Every conceivable argument against the legislation was delivered fully and repeatedly day in and day out, 24 hours a day. Legal and practical arguments were expounded for hours, days and weeks. On the whole, they were effective. For instance, a proposal that Congress indorse the school desegregation decision and impose a duty on the school districts to desegregate, was defeated by a vote of 61 to 30. On this point, I personally spoke at considerable length and reviewed the Constitutional, legal, and practical aspects of the decision in minute detail.

We spoke on the necessity for the Negro race to earn its place in society, and pointed out crime and illegitimacy statistics which illustrate so clearly its failure to do so.

We discussed the background of the race question from Reconstruction days to the present to show that race relations are best handled at the local level.

We called attention to the fact that the voting discrimination issue was for the most part fictitious—completely so in South Carolina—and that sufficient laws existed for any and every remedy which could be desired.

I again pointed to the political inspiration of the legislation and discussed bluntly and frankly the sordid and harsh treatment of the Negro in Northern States, contrasting the Northern and Southern styles of segregation.

More time was consumed in argument and discussion of this bill than of any other bill in the history of the Senate. When
forced to stay in session 24 hours a day, day in and day out, we continued to speak and all continuous session records were broken, and in fact were more than doubled. We did not rely solely on speaking and delay, but used every means at hand, including parliamentary maneuvers and repeated quorum calls in the wee hours of the morning. Our efforts were not entirely unrewarded.

Judging from the tenor and number of extreme, punitive and vicious proposals offered, and the determination and tenacity with which they were pushed, it is obvious that the ultimate goal was to reimpose Reconstruction on the South. In this they failed.

I have already mentioned the two-to-one defeat of the proposed indorsement of the Supreme Court desegregation decision and the effort to go further and impose a duty on all school districts to integrate forthwith.

Most wanted by the NAACP and its advocates in Congress was a proposal commonly referred to as "Part III", which was stricken from the 1957 "civil rights" bill. This proposal would allow the U. S. Attorney General to bring suits at the expense of and in the name of the U. S., for anyone who claimed his "civil rights" had been denied, thereby saving the NAACP the expense it incurs from agitating in the courts. Released from this financial limitation, the NAACP could multiply its agitation. This proposal, and slight variations of it, were vigorously pushed time and again and each time defeated.

A program of grants by the National Government to school districts, which would mix the races in the schools was also repulsed. This "bribe" section was tried twice and defeated twice.

Both the Senate and House bills contained a section which would authorize the U. S. Commissioner of Education to seize schools
which were closed to prevent race mixing if they had received funds from certain federal aid programs. This provision was stricken from both bills in the Senate.

An "FEPC" proposal, which would have established a commission to force government contractors to hire without regard to race, was another example of the radicals' all-out attempt and failure.

The Civil Rights Commission's plan for the appointment of Federal voting registrars—and several variations of it—who would not only register voters, but would accompany them to the polls, supervise voting, and count the ballots, was also rejected on several occasions. This was an attempt to have the National Government completely take over the electoral process in the South, thereby making of the Southern States no more than "conquered provinces".

Nor were all of our successful efforts of a defensive nature. On the offensive side, a section which made a criminal offense of interfering with court orders in school desegregation cases was broadened to include interference with all court orders. Also—and this caused a real howl of panic from the radicals—a section which made a criminal offense of interstate flight to avoid prosecution for "bombing" religious or educational property was broadened to include "bombing" of any property. The Northern radicals may find these provisions extremely difficult to live with because of the racketeering in their midst.

In the final analysis, however, a so-called "civil rights" bill was passed. It was passed not because its proponents were unaware of its constitutional defects, its impracticalities, its persecution of the South, the lack of need for it, nor a belief in its merits—but because of the desire to obtain the favor of those who wield the balance of political power in populous, heavy electoral vote.
Eighteen votes of 18 Senators, and the best and most valid arguments in the world, no matter how well and convincingly stated, will not prevail against organized political power and the lure of it. Only a greater political power can prevail.

Not all of the efforts to grab the bloc vote of the Negro in non-Southern States by legislation is embodied in bills labeled "civil rights" and out in the open for all to see. Every bill must be examined carefully, and each amendment scrutinized. I have endeavored to check all legislation thoroughly, and it has paid off. For instance, in 1958, the Omnibus Housing Bill contained a provision which would have imposed racial integration in housing by a process of "scatteration". By establishing a policy of converting public housing from large institutional dwellings to individual units in existing and new residential areas, and enforcing the existing policy of integration in public housing, the integrationist goal would have been accomplished. The purpose and effect was couched in such innocent language that no one detected it in committee. I discovered the surreptitious attempt and alerted all Southern Senators by letter. When the bill came up on the Senate floor, I offered an amendment and this objectionable feature was removed from the bill.

I recognize my duty to use the other forums available to a Senator, in addition to the Senate floor, to further the South's cause. I have, therefore, taken every opportunity to reach the people of the country with our viewpoint. I have presented the South's viewpoint to the nation by every news media I could, including appearances on such nation-wide television programs as Dave Garroway's program, "Today", "Face the Nation", and "American Forum of the Air", and such radio programs as "Manion Forum" and others. I have
accepted speaking engagements all over the country. I have even spoken at Harvard, a school which produces so many of those who lead our opponents. I have missed no opportunity to secure space for our cause in the press and periodicals. It is my intention to continue this course of action. I have accepted an engagement for the latter part of June to speak in Chicago on the Supreme Court's decisions.

I have had numerous articles and editorials from newspapers reprinted in the Congressional Record for nation-wide distribution. I have cooperated with Southern authors in attempting to obtain specialized and wide circulation of their works to promote better understanding of the South's viewpoint. Only recently, during the extended fight on "civil rights", I distributed to each Senator in the Senate personally a copy of Colonel W. D. Workman's Case for the South, one of the best statements of the South's position that has been published. I have also endeavored to alert the Southern people to the danger, to encourage continued resistance to integration efforts, and to promote the unity of political effort essential to the resolution of our dilemma. For example, I spoke to the Virginia Bar Association urging the lawyers to lead the fight to resist the integrationists. I have encouraged the use of private schools to avoid integration. I gave the principal address at the dedication of the building at Front Royal, Virginia, in which a private school was established when public schools had to be closed to avoid integration under court order.

At all times I have used every method at my disposal to keep you informed of the actions I took and my reasons for taking them. I have spoken regularly in the State, and to the greatest extent
possible, in every part of the State. I have prepared radio tapes weekly and television filmclips regularly and sent them to the radio and television stations in the State. I prepare a weekly report which appears in almost all weekly and some daily newspapers in the State. I have made a practice of frankly and candidly discussing my position and activities with news reporters.

This is a summary of the record of my stewardship on the so-called "civil rights" issue. On this record, and my record on the many other issues before the Congress on which I shall attempt to discuss in South Carolina later, I base my bid for nomination in the South Carolina Democratic primary for re-election to the Senate. If I am nominated and thereafter re-elected, I shall continue to work diligently in the interest of Constitutional Government, local self-government and individual self-determination. I desire to continue service in the Senate not only because of the deep satisfaction that comes from representing the people of South Carolina, who are the soundest-thinking people in our country, but also because I believe deeply in the principles of government which are dear to South Carolinians, and I derive a personal satisfaction from giving my all to the fight.

If I merit your confidence, I would appreciate your support and your vote in the primary on June 14.

-THE END-