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Strom Thurmond

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COLUMBIA, S. C., May 6--Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) tonight presented his record of defending States' Rights and constitutional government from 1948 through the recent congressional fight over "civil rights" in making his first speech for renomination to the U.S. Senate.

The speech, which was also carried over six television stations, reviewed the Senator's overall record of service in the Senate, with particular emphasis on his vigorous fight against "civil rights" legislation.

He thanked the people for giving him the opportunity to serve in the "greatest deliberative body in the world" and pledged to continue an unrelenting fight "in the interest of constitutional government, local self-government, and individual self-determination" if re-elected.

"I desire to continue service in the Senate," he said, "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."

Thurmond said the issue of "civil rights" had caused him more concern than any of the many others he has encountered in his term of Senate service. He called the issue "politically inspired" by minority bloc voting in non-South metropolitan areas and the indifference of non-South voters who are content with their own segregation of the much smaller proportion of Negroes in their areas.

The solution to the problem caused by "civil rights" agitation, he said, "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."

At this point he referred to his 1948 race for President on the States' Rights Democratic ticket, stating that he was convinced even that long ago of the necessity of bringing to bear the "full potential of the South's political power against the 'civil rights' forces in both major political parties." He pointed out how close the movement came to throwing the election into the House of Representatives, where the South would have been in a powerful bargaining position.

The Senator suggested several possible courses for consideration in applying the South's political power with these words:

"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 reviewing his record against integration efforts, Thurmond cited these facts: (1) his authorship of the original of the Southern Manifesto which was signed by 101 Members of Congress and which put the South on the offensive against the desegregation decision; (2) his testimony and speeches against the 1957 "civil rights" bill, including his record-breaking speech of more than 24 hours against final passage; (3) his work in winning 34 co-sponsors for the States' Rights bill, which lost in the Senate by one vote; (4) his discovery and elimination from a housing bill of a provision which would have permitted integration of housing by a method of "scatteration" of individually integrated public housing units in neighborhoods; and (5) the successful efforts of the 18 Southern Senators to defeat the most vicious proposals in the 1960 "civil rights" bill by an organized filibuster and other parliamentary tactics.

The Senator also cited his efforts to report to the people at home and also behind the "paper curtain" on the South's case through use of the Congressional Record, nation-wide radio and TV appearances, speaking engagements at home and outside the South, and by writing articles for various periodicals.

Also discussed in the speech were the Senator's record on these points: (1) in perfect attendance for votes and quorum calls; (2) standing first among Senate Democrats in voting for economy in government spending; (3) advocacy of a strong and ready national defense force; (4) his fight against socialistic and non-essential government programs; (5) his stand in favor of an effective labor reform bill to protect the interest of the working people and the public against the abuses and corrupt practices of big labor bosses; and (6) his efforts to save the domestic textile and plywood industries and the jobs of employees from the flood of low-wage imports from foreign countries.

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