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Title: Letter from Roy Wilkins to John Bailey

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**LEADERSHIP
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*Copy to L.M.
Gov. H.
W. G.*

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JOSEPH L. RAUH, JR., Counsel
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May 16, 1968

*G.M.B.
Held*

Mr. John M. Bailey, Chairman
Democratic National Committee
Watergate Office Bldg.
2600 Virginia Av., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights has over the years supported the various efforts inside the Democratic Party to integrate delegations from the Southern states to the National Democratic Conventions.

Most recently the Leadership Conference supported the challenge of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention and these efforts were crowned with considerable success. The lily-white delegation from Mississippi was ousted from the convention. Recognition through token seating was offered to the Mississippi Freedom Party. And equally important, the National Democratic Party, both through convention action and the repeated statements of its leaders, assured the nation and the civil rights movement in particular that unrepresentative and discriminatory delegations would never again be seated at a national convention of the Democratic Party.

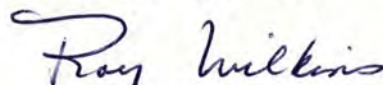
We call upon the Democratic Party to live up to its 1964 commitment. The Special Equal Rights Committee of the Party, appointed pursuant to the 1964 convention mandate, has made some progress in this direction. It has determined, with the approval of the Democratic National Committee, that all delegations to the 1968 Democratic National Convention must be "broadly representative of the Democrats of the state," and that wherever proposed delegations to the convention are not broadly representative, the Credentials Committee would "declare the seats to be vacant and fill those seats with a delegation broadly representative of the Democrats of that state."

We applaud the idea of requiring full representation for minorities and of substituting integrated delegations for any segregated delegations that present themselves to the Convention. But we are concerned that the good intentions of the 1964 Convention and of the Special Equal Rights Committee, as approved by the Democratic National Committee, may be subverted at the last minute in the interests of party harmony. Too often Democratic Party leaders have set forth principles in favor of integrated non-discriminatory delegations, and have turned around and seated vicious, bigoted racists in the supposed interests of party expediency.

I am writing to ask what you propose to do to implement the 1964 National Convention position and the report of the Special Equal Rights Committee. What do you plan to do if Governor John Bell Williams or Governor Lester Maddox or ex-Governor George Wallace send unrepresentative delegations to the convention? Specifically, what do you plan to do in a state in which twenty or thirty per cent of the Democrats are black, but only three or five per cent of the delegates are black and even those are handpicked unrepresentative Negroes? In a word, what do you plan to do to make your Party truly representative of all its members, including minority groups?

This is to put you on notice that the Leadership Conference intends to use every means at its command to insure integrated delegations to the Democratic National Convention of 1968. It is too late in the history of our country to continue the practice of letting racial bigots have a hand in choosing nominees for President and Vice President and in writing the platform of the party. It is too late in the day for any compromise with the principle of equality in the political life of our country.

Respectfully yours,



Roy Wilkins, Chairman
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

P. S. Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Chairman Bliss on this same subject.