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# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A study of the participation by Negroes in the electoral and political processes in 10 Southern States since passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

United States Commission on Civil Rights

Washington, D.C.

May 1968

# Letter of Transmittal

THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS  
Washington, D.C., May 1968

THE PRESIDENT

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIRS:

The Commission on Civil Rights presents to you this report pursuant to Public Law 85-315, as amended.

This report deals with political participation by Negroes since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The information in the report was obtained by the Commission primarily from field investigations and analysis of the files of the U.S. Department of Justice. The Commission has found that the Voting Rights Act has resulted in a great upsurge in voter registration, voting, and other forms of political participation by Negroes in the South. In many areas, there has been voluntary compliance.

Nevertheless, many new barriers to full and equal political participation have arisen, including measures or practices diluting the votes of Negroes, preventing Negroes from becoming candidates, discriminating against Negro registrants and poll watchers, and discriminating against Negroes in the appointment of election officials. Intimidation and economic dependence in many areas of the South continue to prevent Negroes from exercising their franchise or running for office fully and freely. Negroes still are excluded from the affairs of many State and local party organizations or feel unwelcome. Neither the Democratic nor the Republican national party organization has taken adequate steps to deal with this problem.

We urge your consideration of the facts presented and the recommendations for corrective action.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN A. HANNAH, *Chairman*  
EUGENE PATTERSON, *Vice Chairman*  
FRANKIE M. FREEMAN  
REV. THEODORE M. HESBURGH, C.S.C.  
ROBERT S. RANKIN

WILLIAM L. TAYLOR, *Staff Director*

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