

Honorable James G. Fulton
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

JUL 29 1964

Dear Congressman Fulton:

This is in reply to your communication of July 17, 1964, forwarding correspondence from Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Vail which was addressed to Congressman William Minshall, and subsequently referred to you, together with your reply thereto, requesting protection for their daughter, students and others who are working on civil rights problems in the South this summer.

This Department shares the concern that these workers not be subjected to unlawful harassment or violence. However, the enforcement of state and local laws is the responsibility of state and local officials. The Federal Government has no authority to provide ordinary police protection.

Recently, the Department of Justice increased its investigation of terrorist activities in the State of Mississippi. At the same time the number of attorneys assigned to civil rights matters in that region was increased. These steps were taken at the direct request of the President, acting upon the recommendation of the Attorney General. Not long ago, a number of individuals was arrested for violation of federal law in connection with the intimidation and harassment of civil rights workers.

The primary responsibility for law enforcement rests, of course, with the State of Mississippi. The Federal Government has no authority to provide ordinary police protection. Whatever federal law enforcement personnel are used should supplement and assist the local authorities, not substitute for them.

Sincerely,

BURKE MARSHALL
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division