

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 1964

As a group of parents representing the mothers and fathers of nearly 1000 young people now actively engaged in the Mississippi Summer Project we wish to express our deepest gratitude to President Lyndon B. Johnson for his thorough and untiring efforts in behalf of James Cheney, Andrey Goodman and Michael Schwerner immediately following their tragic disappearance in Philadelphia, Mississippi. It is our most fervent hope that in order to prevent further tragedy befalling any of the people of Mississippi or the brave students helping in the struggle for freedom, the President will do everything in his power immediately to provide every measure of federal protection, particularly the assignment to that troubled area of federal marshals in a number sufficient to deter further lawlessness.

We were shocked by the statement (made yesterday by Attorney General Robert Kennedy), as reported in The New York Times, that the federal government could not take "preventive" police action. The hesitant position of the Justice Department is directly challenged by some of the most eminent legal and historical authorities in the country, including Professor Mark DeWolfe Howe of Harvard Law School; the Reverend Robert F. Drinan, Dean of Boston University Law School and Professor Leonard Levy, Dean of Faculty, Brandeis University. We concur with the position of these authorities and it is our firm opinion that more than sufficiently strong powers rest within the government to enable it to provide exactly the protection for which we ask. The attached letter to the President, outlining this position was personally delivered to the White House on June ninth, and copy sent to Mr. Kennedy.

We have come to Washington to plead for the oppressed people of Mississippi and for our sons and daughters, young people of forty states who care so deeply for our democratic ideals that they have put their very lives in jeopardy. Soon we will return to our homes, still standing firmly behind our children and supporting them in their efforts. We will continue our appeal to the federal government and will enlist in our communities across the nation the assistance of all who share the conviction that the moral fiber of our nation is at stake. We trust that it will not be necessary for us to go to Mississippi to defend the ideals of our Republic.