

Francis Myers to J. Howard McGrath, with attachment, May 1948.  
Democratic National Committee Records, J. Howard McGrath  
Papers.

J. HOWARD McGRATH

*Memorandum*

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Mr. [unclear]

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Mr. [unclear]

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or via structure  
Call him to see if

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[unclear]

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JOSEPH LAWRENCE

*File these  
Colored  
Voters*

May 18, 1948

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Senator:

Fully agree with your colleague, Senator Myers, that Alexander's suggestions here re Colored Vote are worth while. In fact, I think Alexander's letter is important enough for you to read from beginning to end. The direction of this vote to the ballot box on November 2nd is, as we know, terribly important this year; and I think that some sort of indirect liaison with this powerful minority toward this end should be established at an early date. The Republicans are doubtlessly bending every effort to lure these people back into the fold. Of course, they made their greatest progress under us and should be grateful; but you know, and I know, how easily they are swayed. Alexander appears to have wide and influential connections among this group throughout the country and might help to keep them in line. Bill Houston, Sr., Washington lawyer, who used to work for me at Justice, did some such work here at the Committee in 1942 or 1944. We might get some ideas from him also. In any event, I think this matter should be diligently pursued.

*ae*



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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

*fjm*  
*h*

Honorable J. Howard McGrath,  
Democratic National Committee,  
The Ring Building,  
1200 18th Street, N. W.,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Howard:

The enclosed letter was written by Raymond Pace Alexander, who is a fine gentleman and an outstanding lawyer. He makes several suggestions on Pages 3, 4 and 5 which I believe are worthwhile and I would, therefore, ask that you give them your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely yours,

*Francis J. Myers*  
Francis J. Myers

fjm/esk

enclosure.

LAW OFFICES  
RAYMOND PACE ALEXANDER

40 South Nineteenth Street  
Philadelphia 3, Pa.

May 11, 1948

Honorable Frank Myers  
U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Frank:

Convention time is not too far away for us to begin to lay plans on a national scale to interest the Negro voters in - and to hold his support for the democratic ticket this fall.

There have been all sorts of methods used by the republican party leaders, both colored and white, in various sections of the country to make friends with and to influence the Negro voters, many of whom have definitely allied themselves with the republican party, although they were with us during the last four presidential elections. Their methods and strategy differed in various sections of the country, but only in degree, the main purpose being the same, to wean away from the democratic party the almost overwhelming support given our party by the Negroes during the last four presidential elections. The results, I am very frank to say, have shown that the republicans have made some real progress and it appears at this writing that in many respects we have permitted them to carry the ball and take the play completely away from us, to our very severe loss. The loss, however, is not irretrievable, but we must act at once and take steps to mitigate this loss and begin an offensive on our own part.

Several weeks ago I was in consultation with our mutual friend, Bill Batt, Jr., Director of Research for the Democratic National Committee, at his Washington office and since then I have been in communication with him on several occasions. At his request I sent certain suggestions

of campaign strategy that I thought would be of importance and real interest in obtaining the support of the Negro voters. I assume these are now being studied by the planning division of the DN Committee. At least I hope so because so much is being reported in the Republican Daily Press and particularly in the Negro press of the so-called "support" that the republican members of Congress are giving to the Negro's pleas for implementing the excellent report of President Truman's Committee that I am afraid the country at large, and the Negro in particular, will lose sight of the fact that it

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was President Truman, himself, who first recognized that such a study should be made, and it was the President who appointed this committee and it was again President Truman who urged Congress at his own great sacrifice and, as it appears more recently, his almost losing the support of many fractions of his party, to pass these laws.

We must set up some kind of a national committee of outstanding Negroes, men and women, whose purpose is to stand by our President and let the world know the person responsible for awakening America to the need of the study of the basic and fundamental civil rights of all people and particularly to our minorities. It makes me utterly mad to see our President attacked by demagogues in each party for his courageous stand, and it makes me worse than mad to see the republicans capitalized on this remarkably unselfish act on the part of our President.

May I comment on one or two matters from a purely constructive point of view and make a few suggestions - more or less summarizing briefly a few points which I earlier passed on to Bill Batt.

First let me say I attended the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in Philadelphia on April 12. I was very glad to see you there and I want to say very positively that Senator Barkley made one of the most brilliant addresses that I have ever heard. He is truly a remarkable man and a real liberal, and I am glad to say this for a southerner. He is a very great man. I was, however, very disappointed at the small turn out of colored workers at this dinner. You know there are now 320 thousand Negro people in the very city of Philadelphia alone, and about 50 thousand in the various counties around Philadelphia, not including Bucks County, but in Delaware, Montgomery and Chester. There are now 500 thousand Negroes in Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia alone, according to the last registration, there are 156 thousand Negro registered voters. This sum is growing yearly. There are about 300 thousand registered Negroes voting in Pennsylvania, an astounding figure. We controlled (the democrats) and have the support of 75% of the Negroes in '32 and '36, and

and have the support of 75% of the Negroes in '32 and '33, and perhaps as much as 70% in 1940, and perhaps a little less in 1944. Today it is going down rapidly. I was surprised not to see at this dinner a prominent Negro democrat, for example, at the guest table. I fear that this is a very great error. The republicans play up this question of social equality and the recognition of the Negro republican worker for all it is worth, and they go about it in a great big way. I know because I have attended hundreds of their dinners. And whether they mean it or not, it goes over big with the average Negro. They would not have a dinner of any size, not a ward dinner,

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a district dinner, or a city dinner, and not even a state-wide dinner of Pennsylvania without having, for example, Hobson Reynolds, Herbert Millen (now judge), Daddy Wright - you know all that crowd - at the speakers' table. The speakers' table might contain twenty people and there would be two Negroes there. If it contained more, there would possibly be three. Perhaps you would find Assistant Director of Public Safety, Bob Nelson, among the prominent guests. At the national Lincoln Day dinner in 1944 in Washington at one of your leading hotels, the National Republican Committee had as a guest speaker who made the second most important speech, Harold Payne of Chicago, son-in-law of Emmett Scott, who was World War I special assistant to the Secretary of War, a very close friend of mine. Last year at the Lincoln Day Dinner in Washington, the NR Committee had Judge Francis Ellis Rivers, a classmate of mine at Columbia Graduate School, make the second important principal speech. They go in for it, nationally, state-wide, city-wide and district-wide. I mentioned this to Austin Norris, I was sorry not to see him at the dinner and he said this is a very unfortunate thing, the local democratic party and the state democratic party in Pennsylvania have failed to recognize them for years and for that reason he does not attend the dinners any more. Rarely if ever do they have a colored man at the speakers' table. I think once they had Marshall Sheppard. I was surprised not to see Shep there. Usually they are ignored according to Norris, put at some side table way in the back, and usually together, which is a very bad policy. I think this ought to be passed on to our good friend and mutual friend, Jim Finnegan. I suggested this to Jim some weeks ago. This was before the dinner, but of course it is now too late. This is a mighty small price to pay, political, social recognition of all groups, Frank, for the support of a huge mass of voters who believe in traditionally, the liberality of the democratic party.

I was sorry I never got a chance to speak to you because of the lateness of the hour, nor did I meet Senator Barkley, or other persons at the speakers' table. Certainly some association of the outstanding Negroes in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania on the part of our leaders should

Philadelphia and Pennsylvania on the part of our leaders should have taken place. It was a wonderful opportunity, but we missed the train on that.

I should like to emphasize that the Negroes of Philadelphia, as well as New York and other large northern cities, such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis and Chicago, by a very large and impressive majority are more than favorable in national elections and even more favorable in state and local elections, (except for the interference of the machine's local graft, etc.) to

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the democratic party than the republican party. The Negro leans, as a matter of fact, traditionally, towards "the federal government" for protection. They believe in anything "federal" and in "federal" elections, few forces come in to play, even the corrupt political machines which exist in this city, to make the Negro vote other than democratic. But some effort must be made to emphasize the good virtues of the democratic party immediately. We believe in "federal government", "federal protection", "federal courts", etc., for instance, that favorable decision just enunciated by the Supreme Court a few days ago in the restrictive covenants cases and this very day as I dictate this letter to you, in the case involving the attempt on the part of a white church in Ohio to prevent the sale of this church to a Negro for use by a Negro congregation, emphasizes our belief in an allegiance to the federal government. Therefore, I always talk about the presidential campaigns and campaign speeches as a "federal" election, as a protection given to us by the "federal" courts, the "federal" government, etc. I think all of our speakers addressing Negro groups should emphasize the "federal" feature of this election. Now the republicans know this and as a result they are making heavy inroads in various divers ways.

May I make the following suggestions: (1) Some effort should be made to propagandize the annual convention now taking place in leading national Negro organizations. For example, two of the largest church organizations of America are now convening, one in Kansas City, Missouri, the Quadrennial Session of the A. M. E. Church. I am counsel for this church and the Board of Bishops. I leave tomorrow for Kansas City. (2) The A. M. E. Zions are now meeting in Louisville, Ky. (3) Scottish-right Masons are now meeting in Philadelphia. (4) The national Fraternal Council of churches meets in St. Louis May 26 and 27. (5) On June 4 to 11, the colored M.E. Quadrennial conference meets in Dayton, Ohio. (6) June 4 to 11, the Methodist Central jurisdiction convenes in Atlanta, Ga. (7) June 14 to 20, the National Baptist Convention of America, the Sunday School and BYPU Convention meet in Kansas City, Mo. (This is the largest church body in the world of 3 million members). (8) June 21 to 27, the National Baptist Sunday School and BYPU meet in Cleveland, Ohio.

Sunday School and BPU meet in Cleveland, Ohio. (9) June 22 to 25, the National Negro Insurance Association meets in New Orleans, La. (10) August 16 - 21, the Lot Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention meets in Columbus, Ohio. (11) Second week in September the National Bar Association meets in Atlanta, Ga. I am a former president of the National Bar and will be there in person to make the principal address and will do all I can to aid our causes at that time. (12) The third week in September the National Baptist Convention, Inc. meets in Texas. The third week in September the National Negro

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Bankers Assn. also meets; the place is yet undesignated. Some effort to have a representative of your committee, or a volunteer to speak in behalf of President Truman and our party should be present at these meetings, particularly to emphasize the great protection of the civil rights report, ~~only~~ originated and supported by President Truman, should be a "must;" and certainly no convention, particularly those of religious organizations, could turn down a speaker for such an occasion. I should be very glad to volunteer to assist and be present at any of these conventions wherever my services may be needed.

Why not some of the following strategy? a. A special Negro liaison man attached to the publicity section of the Democratic National Committee to handle all publicity, public relations, etc. during the campaign. b. Why not draft a summary of the civil rights report and have several hundred thousand, if necessary a million or more printed to pass out at the various conventions and to give to the various persons present at the various campaign meetings in the north so they may know first-hand and study the work done by the great committee appointed by our great president. Of course I do not think it ought to be under the imprint of the democratic National Committee because of the reflection against it in the south, but it could be done privately. c. Expose the records of such republicans as Taft and others who ganged up in the Labor Committee to kill FEPC in 1945, 1<sup>st</sup> Congress, after making a special promise and having a special plank in the 1944 presidential platform promising to make this a "must" bill. d. Expose how the republicans killed housing and health bills, largely because of pressure from reactionary groups claiming that too much would go to the Negro veteran and to the Negro citizens. e. Why not urge immediately the appointment of some qualified outstanding Negroes, men and women, to high government positions. It is not too much to ask this, especially a Negro U. S. District Court Judge. We have 200 or more federal judges from the U. S. Supreme Court down to the District Court and not one Negro judge. Of course we have a judge in the Virgin Islands, but he is not a federal U. S. District judge, it is only for a term of 4 years. We have also a customs judge, but you know his status. A U. S. District Court Judge in Philadelphia, or some other large city

District Court Judge in Philadelphia, or some other large city, is needed. It is long overdue and it is a small price to pay for the support of the millions of Negro people and as a fair, honest, proper recognition of the Negro citizens, now 15 million strong in a country in which he makes up 10 % of the population. I am certain the white bar of Philadelphia would be delighted and pleased, although of course the republicans would not rejoice and I would not expect them to; they never rejoice at any of the democratic appointments. I believe there is a vacancy, or there

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is going to be a vacancy if one of our judges goes to the Court of Patents and Custom Appeals, which is likely, and also if the sixth judgeship is allowed and passed by our Congress during the coming year. There are other federal appointments that should be given in the higher bracket to the Negro citizens. For example, Federal Power Commission, Interstate Commerce Commission, Civil Aeronautics Authority (there were 2 vacancies that went vacant for a long while.) A Negro would be glad to accept such. There is the Federal Reserve Board, Farm Loan Board, Import-Export Bank, Tariff Commission, etc. and an appointment to an ambassadorship, for example, to the Republic of Haiti which I now represent, where Haitians of colore are now in the high office of president, they have departed from that creole caste-rule policy in Haiti, as you know, and dark skinned people are in power. They would welcome a Negro from American as its ambassador.

Now this letter I fear has been much too long. I think of how much there is to be done and I see the other fellow working every day, day in and day out. I see committee after committee set up by them and inroads being made into our own democratic strong-hold in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the north, in the east. I feel therefore as though it might be some source of satisfaction to you if you knew that one of your old friends back in Philadelphia who admires you greatly and who follows your progress and success with real interest, was interested to the extent of passing one to you and your committee my thoughts, my suggestions and recommendations.

I am sending two carbon copies of this to you which you may want to pass on to the appropriate department. Perhaps one might be sent to Jim Finnegan, but I leave this to you for your judgment alone.

I close always with very best of wishes to you and my prayers for a long life of happiness and good health to you and your family. I have the honor to remain,

Faithfully yours,

RPA:P

RAYMOND PAGE ALEXANDER