AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION
1740 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C., Executive 0160

July 22, 1946

Honorable Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
The White House
Washington 2, D.C.

By Special Permission

Americans for Democratic Action respectfully urge you to
issue an Executive Order providing for the abolition of
segregation and discrimination in the armed forces of the United States.

The platform adopted by the Republican Party in Philadelphia
last month stated that “we are opposed to the idea of racial
segregation in the armed services of the United States.”

The platform adopted by the Democratic Party in Philadelphia
last week reads in part as follows:

“We highly commend President Harry Truman
for his courageous stand on the issue of
civil rights.

We call upon the Congress to support our
President in guaranteeing these basic and
fundamental rights.

* * *

“(4) And the right of equal treatment in
the services in defense of our Nation.”

These constructive actions of both major parties are a call
upon the Chief Executive for leadership at this crucial time in
our history. We recognize that segregation and discrimina-
tion in the armed forces cannot be wiped out overnight.
But we also recognize that they will never be wiped out
unless constructive steps are taken at this very hour when
the demand and the need for action stand out with unstead-
able clarity.

Today the Nation is about to undertake a new draft of its
young men. We must assure the young men conscripted
into the armed services that they will receive fair treatment

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from the Nation they are undertaking to defend. Only action by you at this time can give them that assurance. We urge you to issue an Executive Order declaring it our national policy that there shall be no segregation or discrimination in the armed forces and creating a Commission of outstanding Americans respected by whites and Negro allies whose task it will be to advise the services with respect to the experimentation, training and educational programs necessary to wipe out all segregation and discrimination in the shortest time possible.

In the world battle of ideas, the weaknesses in our way of life can no longer be afforded. The armed forces are completely under your control as Commander-in-Chief. We urge you to lead the way so that the armed forces of the world's greatest democracy may become in truth the world's most democratic armed forces.

Sincerely yours,

Leon Henderson
National Chairman