AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

1740 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. EXecutive 8-7700

July 22, 1948

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

By Special Message

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 esteem 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 for action stands out with unmistakable clarity.

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

X 93

X 93
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

white and Negro alike 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 own 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.


Honorable yours,

Leon Henderson
National Chairman