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August 18, 1948

Dear Mr. Berle:

Your letter of August 9 to the President asking that a statement be issued with reference to the policy of the United States Government regarding the elimination of segregation in the Armed Forces has been referred to the writer for attention. The President appreciates your interest in this important subject. #

The President's position has already been made clear and it is felt that a formal statement is not needed. I should like to call your attention to paragraph 1 in the President's Executive Order of July 26, 1948, which contains the following declaration of policy by the President:

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale."

Your attention is also directed to a public statement made by the President at a weekly Press Conference on July 29, 1948. At that time, the President, in answer to a question, stated in effect that his advocacy of equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Forces envisioned eventually the end of segregation in such forces. x36

I join with the President in expressing best personal wishes.

Very sincerely yours,

CLARK M. CLIFFORD
Special Counsel to the President

Mr. Adolf A. Berle, Jr. x606
State Chairman
Liberal Party of New York State
160 West 44th Street
New York 18, N. Y.

x1285-Office
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LIBERAL PARTY

OF NEW YORK STATE



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August 9th, 1948

President Harry S. Truman
White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Truman:-

At the request of the ~~Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service and Training~~, the Liberal Party of New York State wishes to join with that Committee in asking you, Mr. President, to issue a statement that it will be the policy of the United States Government to work for the elimination of segregation in the Armed Forces of our country. We believe such a statement by you, following your excellent Executive Order abolishing discrimination in the Armed Services, would have an inspiring effect both at home and abroad, and would strengthen American democracy immeasurably.

May we also ask that you set forth in definite terms, the authority and responsibility of the special committee for the elimination of discrimination in the Armed Forces, just as was done in connection with the elimination of discrimination in the civil service of our federal government.

Your executive orders meant much to all who treasure democracy. We believe that affirmative action on our suggestions will increase confidence in our democracy and strengthen our national defense, both morally and physically.

Respectfully yours,

Mary Lewis

MARY LEWIS, Chairman
National Legislative Committee

Adolf A. Berle Jr.

ADOLF A. BERLE, Jr.,
State Chairman

Benjamin F. McLaurin

BENJAMIN F. McLAURIN,
Member, State Executive Committee

Ben Davidson

BEN DAVIDSON
Executive Director

x 1285-0

JULY 26, 1948

EXECUTIVE ORDER

ESTABLISHING THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON
EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN
THE ARMED SERVICES

WHEREAS it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.

3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the armed services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and advise with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgment of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.

4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performance of its duties.

5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for the use of the Committee such documents and other information as the Committee may require.

6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive order.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

THE WHITE HOUSE

July 26, 1948