

Law Offices of

MAR 19 1965

March 16, 1965

DIBOLL, TEXAS

The Honorable John Dowdy  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Dear John:

The speech of President Lyndon Johnson to the Joint Session of Congress on Monday night, March 15, was a masterful presentation of one of the overriding problems of our day, together with proposed Legislation to remedy the most glaring defects, and I wanted you to know that I join with the President in urging the passage of Legislation guaranteeing the right to vote to every American citizen. This problem is not as acute in Texas as in other places, for which we can be thankful, but the right to vote is basic, it is guaranteed by our Constitution of the United States and I believe it should be made certain for every citizen.

I realize there will be those who think this is a matter for State regulation, but as the President pointed out, the States have had one hundred years to solve this problem and in default of effective action, I believe the national government would be derelict in its duty to all citizens if the right to vote was not made certain.

Yours very truly,

WRB:mp

Legis. - Voting Rts. - [REDACTED]  
favors Johnson voting rts. bill

April 14, 1965

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Diboll, Texas

Frst [REDACTED]

I have your letter of March 16th, and I am sorry I haven't answered it until now. I have been moving my office and I am somewhat in arrears in answering my mail.

Regarding the voting rights proposal, some serious constitutional questions have arisen regarding this measure. Even those supporting it, along with the liberal newspapers and periodicals which militantly favor it, are calling for some revisions of the original proposal. Personally, I believe it is very discriminatory in that it seeks to punish 15% of our people who have never been proven guilty of anything by the appointment of Federal Registrars to "oversee" their voting at the behest of as few as 20 people. In addition, any election can be held up indefinitely if the present proposal is approved. Not only does it violate the Constitution, but there is absolutely no reason for it since the approval of the Civil Rights Bill.

Even if the system fails in a given instance, which I do not here say that it does, I cannot see any advantage to scrapping the entire system. This is what the ultimate effect of the so-called voting rights proposal would be. In taking this position, I know I may be considered by many as a "sinner in the congregation of the righteous", but be that as it may, this is my conviction. I support voting rights for all regardless of race, religion, national origin, or other like-qualifications, but I cannot see any advantage to our system through the present proposal.

Thanks again for writing, and when I may be of service, let me know.

With best wishes and warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

John Dowdy, M. C.