

From: Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer

Date: September 30, 1963

Ruleville, Mississippi

Here in the Delta part of Mississippi, I, Fannie Lou Hamer have just barely existed, not really lived because coming from a farming family, I can tell you what it is like to suffer for things that are essential in order for one to survive throughout these economical and social changes.

So many times as a child, I have gone hungry and now as an adult, I'm still hungry. It was one of the greatest things that ever happened in the state of Mississippi when the Voter Registration Crusade began. I went down to the County Courthouse in Indianola on the 31st of August 1962 to try to register. The results of my trying to register was: (1) I was fired from my job, and (2) forced to leave my home.

My family and I have suffered greatly since I started working with the movement. Although we've suffered greatly, I feel that we have not suffered in vain. I am determined to become a first class citizen. Some people will say that we are satisfied with the way in which we are living, but I am not. I've never been satisfied because we've always worked hard for little of nothing.

So if registering to vote means becoming a first class citizen and changing the structure of our States Government, I am determined to get every Negro in the State of Mississippi registered. By doing this, we can get the things we've always been denied the rights to.

I can say this, we need a change in Mississippi, I'm sick of being hungry, naked and looking at my children and so many other children crying for bread. I have so many times been in jail and beaten by so called law enforcement officers just because I tried to exercise my rights. I was beaten not as a human being but as a beast out of the jungle. I feel that one day we shall overcome and when this day come, the whole world will feel it also.

It takes a lot of things to keep an organization going. We don't have transportation, so we need cars, food, clothing, and most of all money; which will help greatly in our struggle for freedom. It is very important that we to get all of the people whenever necessary. I am married and have two daughters whose ages are 19 and 10. My work keeps me away from my family most of the time and transportation is needed greatly. If I had a car, I could get to more people and in a much shorter period.

Maybe some people don't know how it is living more in a rural areas than a closely populated one. There is so much territory to cover if one wants to get to all of the people and not some of them. You see, we have to reach all of them in order to be sure we have the people informed about whats happening around them.

Some of the people live (8) and ten (10) miles apart and cannot walk these distances in a short time. Whereas when transportation is provided we a lot of places over a short period of time. When we've reached these people and persuaded them to go to the Courthouse and register, then we need cars to carry them there. The Courthouse is 26 miles from where I live and farther away from the people who

live 10 and 20 miles away from my home. You can very well picture the distant this is and I'm sure you can understand why it is a such necessity for the organization and myself to have a sure way of transportation.

Please help us in our efforts to become First Class Citizen as due us.

Again I'm asking you for your support to help us in our struggle. Cars, food, clothing, and money is urgently needed in this area.

Yours in freedom,
ONE MAN—ONE VOTE—BY 1963

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer
Ruleville, Mississippi