



LYNDON B. JOHNSON
SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

Roosevelt

August 12, 1957

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I was very much disappointed by your column last Saturday. I had always thought of you as a fair-minded person who would always insist on knowing all the facts before coming to a conclusion on the motives of men.

If I am "trying to fool the people", I have a large company with me. Take, for example, Ben Cohen, who worked day and night to try to produce a jury trial amendment because he knew that without it the Bill could not be passed, and with the wrong amendment the Bill would be ineffective. I am enclosing for you a Photostat of a letter that he wrote to me giving his impressions of the results.

Other men who worked on the Bill -- for no other reason than their devotion to the cause of Civil Rights -- include Dean Acheson, Jim Rowe, and Joe O'Mahoney. It is a heavy blow to all of us to have you dismiss our work as mere fakery.

I am enclosing for you a copy of a speech that I made the night the Senate approved the Bill. It expresses my honest convictions as to what is in the measure. But I am not asking for approval or commendation. I am only asking that you study the question with an open mind, because the alternative is to join the Republicans in killing the only significant step that has been taken in the field of Civil Rights in 82 years.

Sincerely,

Lyndon B. Johnson

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Dal-Kill Cottage
Hyde Park
Dutchess County, New York

JOHNSON
(L.R.)

August 17, 1967

Dear Senator Johnson:

I am sorry that you are disappointed in my support but you must realize that I understand very well your extremely clever strategy on the Civil Rights Bill. You may not have been "trying to fool the people" but you chose the one point on which good people might have some qualms and you built on that and that is why you have a goodly company of people with you. The end result, however, is that the Bill with this amendment will do very little since the "qualified voter" still has to qualify according to the law of the states and none of you have touched on that particular point at any time. I have said that it is better to accept this bill than to have nothing and even the NAACP agrees on that but it would be fooling the people to have them think that this was a real vital step towards giving all our people the right to vote or any other civil rights.

I doubt if the Republicans ever really intended to do anything along this line but I can't say that I really believe the Democrats have intended to do much either, particularly

those of you who come from Southern states or
borderline states as Texas is.

I admire your ability as a leader. You have
certainly done a remarkable piece of work and I
know how persuasive you are but it is easier to
look at actual results when you sit at a distance
and are not really affected by what happens one
way or another, and that is what I have been doing.
I hope you pass the Bill and I shall say that it
is better because it will at least show the world
that we have moved a little but it will be a very
little towards that fundamental right of every
citizen - the right to vote.

Now may I add that I have pointed out in a
column which will come out on Tuesday that I fully
expect that as Senate Leader you will cooperate
with Senator Knowland and put back many of the
foreign aid cuts, if not all. If the House Bill
were approved there would be real harm done to the
UN programs and foreign aid all the way down the
line would suffer. I have said in this column
that you and Senator Mansfield are too statesman-
like to allow this to happen though it is a per-
fectly natural desire to want to show up the
Republicans in their leadership. You would not

allow this desire to influence you in your decision
as to the real good of the country.

I hope I am correct in believing this and
I am sorry to have caused you disappo intment for,
like everyone else, I find you a delightful and
persuasive person and I have a great admiration
for your ability, but on the Civil Rights issue I
am afraid I must hold to my opinion.

Very cordially yours,