The voting rights bill is now on the Senate Floor after being reported from the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which I am a member, by a margin of 12 to 4. I am quite sure that when we have finished action on this proposal it will be fair, workable, constitutional, and will go to the heart of the discrimination issue where it really exists.

The enclosed copy of my opening remarks on the Senate Floor with regard to this proposal may be of interest to you in the meantime.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen

Enclosure
Dear ...:

The Senate Judiciary Committee of which I am a member, has reported the voting rights bill to the Senate and debate is scheduled to begin April 21st on the Senate floor. The Committee considered the bill very carefully and after making revisions and improvements in the original language we reported it to the Senate by a margin of 12 to 4.

I am quite sure that when the Senate has completed action on this proposal it will be fair, workable, constitutional and will go to the heart of the discrimination issue where it really exists.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
United States Senate

Voting Rights Act 1965

March 22, 1965

Dear:

I have your recent communication regarding the "Voting Rights Act of 1965" which is now before the Judiciary Committee of the Senate. The Committee is under instructions to report this bill back to the Senate by April 9th. A companion bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

These bills represent an effort by Congress to implement the provisions of the Fifteenth Article of Amendment to the Constitution. The amendment provides in Section 1 that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Section 2 provides that "The Congress shall have power to enforce this Article by appropriate legislation." The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is an exercise of this power.

Undoubtedly many amendments will be offered to this bill. Some will be designed to strengthen it and broaden its coverage, others will be offered to weaken it. After proper consideration I am certain a bill will be contrived to carry out the guarantee of the Fifteenth Amendment.

I do appreciate your thoughtfulness in making your views on this measure available to me.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
United States Senate

voting rights bill

May 18, 1946

Dear:

First of all, let me apologize for the excessive delay in responding to your letter. I have been literally covered up with correspondence and I am finding some difficulty in keeping current while at the same time performing my duties as well as the chores of the minority leadership. I hope you have not been inconvenienced.

I am well understand your interest in the voting rights bill and I think it is essential to point out what it does and what it does not do. It does not abolish literacy tests and it does not abolish poll taxes. It does prohibit a state or subdivision from using either literacy tests or poll taxes as a means whereby the rights of citizens to vote are abridged or denied because of race or color. This is precisely the right secured by the Fifteenth Amendment.

To deal with a national problem and to handle the matter of insuring domestic tranquility and equality and fair treatment for a large segment of our people, it may be that the problem was ignored but it can be ignored no longer and there must be a decent, reasonable and equitable solution.

This is not a case of merely going along with the tide but instead is a question of facing up to the realities of the present day world as evidenced by a considerable volume of testimony and facts indicating discrimination in certain states with respect to voting rights.

The chief law offices of this nation should not be compelled to involve this problem's case at a time and after purely selfish and discriminatory incidents and that applies true to those years through 1940, to have to work even so many years to get to the point that this nation can apply at least an equitable and fair treatment of these laws, much more than any movement to see a solution of the problem.

The enclosed statement may be of interest to you.

With every good wish,

[Signature]

[Name]