

Ldna

Everett McKinley Dirksen  
Illinois

United States Senate  
Minority Leader

CIVIL RIGHTS

February 20, 1964

Dear :

From the day I first voted for a bill in the House of Representatives to outlaw the imposition of poll taxes as a requirement for voting — more than twenty-five years ago — the civil rights problem has been a challenging matter in the Congress, as well as the country. Today it is before us again in the form of an overall administration proposal, together with alternative measures such as I have introduced.

The House version of the Civil Rights Bill has at long last been messaged to the Senate and is ready for consideration whenever the Majority Leader of the Senate is prepared to call it up for consideration.

The new version contains many modifications from the proposals first submitted and many of its provisions are far more satisfactory than those contained in the original version.

Title II, dealing with public facilities and accommodations, and that Title dealing with Fair Employment Practices are, of course, quite controversial and I am certain that these and, in fact every other title of the bill will have thoroughgoing and unihibited consideration by the Senate.

I propose to reserve ultimate judgment until the bill is in final form for approval or disapproval by the Senate.

You can be assured it will have most earnest consideration.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen

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Illinois

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United States Senate  
Minority Leader

CLOTURE

May 20, 1964

Dear :

The Senate Rule on cloture provides that sixteen members can sign a petition asking for a termination of debate on a pending measure. After one intervening day after the petition is filed, it becomes mandatory for the President of the Senate to lay it before the membership for a record vote. It requires two-thirds of the members present and voting in order to effectuate cloture.

If the Senate so determines, each member may have one hour and no more for debate and for consideration of any qualified amendments which he may have offered and at the end of that time the measure before the Senate is then disposed.

This is a Senate rule and has been liberalized somewhat over the years so that as a legislative body it is not completely immobilized. If and when it appears that no other course is open to secure a disposition of the pending civil rights legislation, it would appear imperative to me that the Senate adopt cloture in order to go forward with the nation's business.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen