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The Power of the One-Party South in National Politics

Segregation in the Career of J. William Fulbright

Neal Allen

As Senator J. William Fulbright was joining the segregationist filibuster to block open housing legislation in March 1968, he received a letter from an admiring Staten Island, New York, resident who found his positions on foreign and domestic issues inconsistent: "I and so many of my friends have been tremendously impressed over the years with your visions on foreign policy. Your 'Arrogance of Power' was especially influential. We are beginning to feel very disturbed by your civil rights record. We cannot understand one face to the world and one face to your fellow Americans."¹ This discordance that Fulbright's liberal, usually out-of-state, admiring correspondents noted was at the core of his power and influence. Fulbright could occupy the chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and use that position to criticize President Johnson's Vietnam policy only because he was a consistent supporter of segregation. In the one-party South, his only vulnerability was on the issue of race. Arkansas voters appreciated his relative moderation on domestic issues and consistently supported him and his Senate colleague John McClellan in bringing federal spending to Arkansas. Even if he had endorsed federal government action to support racial equality, his room to maneuver on racial issues would have been sharply limited. The political history of Arkansas, as his correspondence on civil rights shows, was one of his main sources of strength in maintaining his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The alternative was a different segregationist senator from Arkansas and a different committee chair.²

Fulbright's tenure as chairman encompassed much of the Cold War, and his opposition to the escalation of the Vietnam War added an establishment voice to the national peace movement. This cosmopolitan agenda, however, existed alongside his support for southern regional inegalitarianism on matters of race. Throughout the popular campaign for civil rights, Fulbright remained a loyal son of the white South and an integral part of the opposition to nondiscrimination legislation. These two incongruous commitments—to a balanced and vigorous American engagement abroad and to the continued subjugation of African Americans at home—worked together to produce the unique and consequential Fulbright legacy.

Fulbright served alongside nonsouthern senators, but he was the product of a political system fundamentally different from the modern two-party competition that characterized national and nonsouthern regional politics. He never faced significant general election opposition as the Republican Party was a nonentity in Arkansas during most of his career. The southern Democratic Party that supported Fulbright encompassed a wide variety of issue positions and representative types, as long as all its members supported and protected the system of racial exclusion in the region. Membership in this reactionary faction of the Democratic Party allowed for the accumulation of seniority and power. Elected Democrats like Fulbright were only potentially vulnerable in the Democratic primary. Until the post-civil rights movement transformation that occurred at the end of Fulbright's time in the Senate, such a challenge could come only from segregationists like Governor Orval Faubus and the grassroots populace that supported him. These local forces worked against his relative moderation and posed the most serious threat to his political career. His seminal contribution to international politics therefore emerged from this highly localized politics of race.

J. William Fulbright maintained a perfect anti-integration voting record in Congress from his first election to the House in 1942 until 1970, when he first deviated from the segregationist line with his vote to extend the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Prior to that moment of personal history, he had voted against the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, and 1968 and against the 1965 VRA. He was an active participant in various filibusters of nondiscrimination legislation between 1948 and 1964 and signed the Southern Manifesto of 1956. His only betrayal of the segregationist position was when he declined to join the doomed filibuster of the

1965 VRA, even though he voted against it on final passage. When the VRA came up for reauthorization in 1970 and for the first time he confronted an electorate with large numbers of black voters, he cast his only pro-civil rights vote in over three decades of public service. Otherwise, he stood with staunch segregationists such as James Eastland of Mississippi and Richard Russell of Georgia.

This essay analyzes the role of southern racial politics in the career and work of J. William Fulbright. The politics of the one-party Democratic South both empowered and limited his work as a liberal internationalist policy actor on the world stage. His adherence to segregationist politics and his support for the anti-integrationist project enhanced his influence within Congress. It even enabled him to rise to a position of national and international influence and maintain that position for a record period of time.

The Regional Foundations of National Power

The Arkansas that launched Fulbright onto the national stage in the 1940s was firmly a part of the one-party Democratic South. Republicans were not competitive in congressional or statewide elections. Even when the other states in the peripheral South—Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia—voted for the Republican Herbert Hoover, Arkansas stayed Democratic. In his classic 1949 study *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, V. O. Key argued that the state was an example of “pure one-party politics,” with the pivotal Democratic primary organized around shifting factional alignments and the personal votaries of prominent politicians.³

While this Democratic dominance traced its lineage to post-Civil War white supremacist politics and continued to protect legal and customary segregation, Arkansas politics seemed to lack the stridency and racial demagoguery that characterized the politics of other states. Key found that “Arkansas—a state with relatively few Negroes, about one person in four—has no inexorable law that drives many of its political leaders to cap their careers by hysteria on the race question.”⁴ Fulbright’s native northwest Arkansas was even further removed from militant segregationism, with the lowest black population in the state owing to its terrain, which was not conducive to plantation agriculture and thus did not host

large enslaved populations before the Civil War. Unlike the mountainous Appalachian regions of other southern states like Tennessee or Virginia, however, the Ozarks of Arkansas did not support a Republican political tradition. Thus, when Fulbright won the 1942 Democratic primary for the US House on the strength of his mother's political influence and notoriety as a former president of the University of Arkansas, he could look forward to continued easy general election victories.

Fulbright's rather urbane segregationism would be tested in his first run for the US Senate. His adherence to segregation and white supremacy was challenged as he was portrayed as a supporter of integration. As the candidate of the relatively progressive faction led by former governor Carl Bailey, his chief rival was then governor Homer Adkins, who attacked Fulbright as a "nigger lover," and whose campaign distributed literature linking him to African Americans accused of being Communists.⁵ The congressman responded by affirming his support for white-only political institutions and black inferiority, stating, during an election tour in the Delta region of eastern Arkansas: "I am not for Negro participation in our primary elections, and I do not approve of social equality." This rhetorical support for segregation, linked with an attempt to focus on foreign policy, was a persistent pattern in Fulbright's political career.

In the years before *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the 1957 Little Rock integration crisis, this subtle strategy was a common means to gain statewide office. The same can be said about the initial victories of another midcentury Arkansan of national political stature, Governor Orval Faubus. Faubus also hailed from northwest Arkansas, although from a poverty-stricken rural area instead of the college town of Fayetteville. Rather than foreign policy, he focused on economic populism to defeat the business-friendly Governor Frank Cherry in 1954. This populist slant, combined with the required rhetorical fealty to segregation, remained a consistently successful strategy across the region.⁶ Faubus was a relative moderate on racial issues, appointing black citizens to the Democratic Party state committee and even giving an "Arkansas Traveler" award to Daisy Bates, the state chair of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The militant segregationist state senator Jim Johnson unsuccessfully challenged Faubus's reelection in 1956. Faubus secured a victory thanks to huge majorities in his relatively moderate northwest Arkansas home district. As the political success of

Faubus and Fulbright both showed, moderate segregationism proved to be a winning strategy in Arkansas.

The racial politics of the region soon changed. When, in 1957, the federal district court ordered that the public Little Rock Central High School must admit black students, both Faubus and Fulbright gained new political incentives.⁷ Faubus would transform himself from an economic populist and racial moderate into the most prominent national defender of segregation. By calling out the Arkansas National Guard to prevent integration, he made himself invulnerable to segregationist challenge and dominated state politics for a decade. The popular governor, who served until 1966, considered running against Fulbright in 1962, causing Attorney General Robert Kennedy and the powerful Democratic Oklahoma senator Robert Kerr to intervene personally to persuade Faubus to forgo the challenge and accept reelection as governor instead.⁸ In 1967, Faubus continued to play maverick in national Democratic Party politics as he made his intention of running against Fulbright in 1968 public, criticizing the senator as a supporter of North Vietnam.⁹ Throughout the 1960s, he served as a kind of demagogic segregationist challenger-in-waiting, a lurking threat to Fulbright's legislative power.

Fulbright took a different tack. While he was always a dependable vote against antilynching bills and the Federal Employment Protection Commission, he nevertheless exposed Arkansas to the nation as much as Faubus did, thanks to his rise to prominence in the Senate in 1956 and 1957. First, the Southern Manifesto of 1956 forced southern congressmen and senators either to sign a document arguing for a state's right under the federal constitution to segregate or to refuse to sign and risk electoral defeat. While initially uneasy with the stridency of the manifesto, Fulbright nevertheless dutifully signed the document after securing mainly cosmetic changes. Anthony Badger argues that, unlike several southern House members and Tennessee senator Albert Gore, Fulbright was following his electoral incentives even when they were discordant with his national and international progressive reputation:

The news that Fulbright had signed the Manifesto disappointed many of those in the North and outside the US who admired his internationalist politics and his courageous stand against Joe McCarthy. His explanation, which he never disavowed, was: first,

that he had signed reluctantly and only after securing changes to the Manifesto that toned down the initial intemperate drafts; second, that he had no political alternative but to sign, otherwise he would have faced certain defeat; and third, that he was no racist and that the Manifesto was consistent with his doctrine of gradualism, promoting change in race relations through gradual economic and educational change rather than through legislative or judicial fiat.¹⁰

Faubus, still in the initial stages of his shift toward militant segregationism, came to Washington to lobby (ultimately successfully) the two more racially moderate members of Arkansas's House delegation, Brooks Hays and James Trimble, to sign the manifesto. Standing alone as a nonsigner would have left Fulbright running for reelection in 1958 as a symbol of capitulation to an unpopular Supreme Court.

When the Little Rock crisis thrust Arkansas into the international limelight in September 1957, Fulbright declined to play an active role in defusing racial tensions. He was in Europe when white mobs were preventing black children from attending Central High School. On his return, he did call for a return to social order, but he did not explicitly call for obeying the district court order to integrate. Only after he bested the segregationist James Johnson in the 1958 Democratic primary did he enter the Little Rock debate and only as a lawyer filing an *amicus curiae* brief with the Supreme Court in the *Cooper v. Aaron* (1958) case, in which the state of Arkansas challenged the decision of a federal appeals court that Central High School must proceed with desegregation immediately. He argued that the Court should reinstate a lower court ruling giving the state three years to prepare for integration, on the grounds that such a cooling-off period could lead to a reduction in tensions and peaceful compliance. The Court rejected the arguments of Arkansas and its senator, ruling that integration must proceed immediately. Fulbright's hope for gradual voluntary integration was not borne out by the next few years in the South, with significant public school integration occurring only after the 1964 Civil Rights Act empowered the federal government to intervene directly in school desegregation litigation.

Fulbright found further validation of his continued support of segregation in the defeat of the Democratic congressman Brooks Hays in 1958.

A reluctant signer of the Southern Manifesto, Hays was a consistent supporter of national Democratic priorities on nonracial issues. Representing Little Rock, he attempted to mediate a resolution to the 1957 integration crisis by arranging a meeting between Faubus and President Eisenhower. His apparent moderation triggered a backlash in the increasingly acrimonious racialized politics of the region after *Brown*. Thomas Alford waged an explicitly segregationist write-in campaign against Hays, connecting him to Eisenhower's use of federal troops to support judicial integration orders, and criticized his chairmanship of the national Southern Baptist Convention for the group's support of black rights. The highly unusual write-in defeat of an incumbent congressman put others like Fulbright on notice. Segregationist credibility was a necessary condition to continued incumbency.¹¹

Acquiring and Maintaining Influence over Foreign Policy

Having emerged electorally unscathed from the Little Rock crisis, Fulbright rose at the age of fifty-four to the chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1959. The Democrats had just gained sixteen seats, giving them a sizable majority. Their party had now won a majority of nonsouthern Senate seats, but their overall majority was unassailable because of their advantage of twenty-two to none in the South. Since at that time the Senate granted committee chairmanships reflexively to the member of the committee from the majority party with the most years of continuous committee service, as long as Fulbright remained the Democratic nominee for his seat, his position was assured. He would serve as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for sixteen years, from 1959 to 1975, encompassing eight congresses. Until his Democratic primary loss to Dale Bumpers in 1974, he avoided the variability and broader accountability of partisan elections. As long as he could avoid a segregationist challenge in the primary, he would remain the senior Democrat on Foreign Relations.

The one-party electoral system of the South protected Fulbright and other southern committee barons like Richard Russell, James Eastland, and Harry Byrd from ever losing an election and thus their position of national influence. The workings of competitive elections outside this

regional zone of noncompetitiveness increased the power of conservative southerners, eliminating those who might have ranked ahead in seniority. Table 1 lists nonsouthern Democrats who lost reelection prior to 1958 and were under eighty years old when Fulbright took the gavel. This sorting yields seven possible chairs in 1959. Six were defeated by Republicans, and Claude Pepper was defeated in a primary by the more conservative George Smathers. Four (Lee, Pepper, Lucas, and Duffy) would also have been likely chairs in 1967 when Fulbright began to oppose President Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War publicly.

Having been elected to the Senate in 1944, Fulbright was thus immune to the Republican electoral landslides of 1946, 1950, and 1966. He benefited from the prior Republican landslide of 1938, which eliminated two potential chairs. His adherence to segregation and to conservative regional norms also protected him from the kind of right-wing primary challenge that defeated Pepper in 1950. To borrow categories from Great Britain, it was as if his seat was in the House of Lords but his rivals had to rise through the House of Commons. But, in the civil rights-era United States, the House of Lords equivalent was open only to segregationist southerners.

The work of Fulbright on Foreign Relations—especially his criticism of Vietnam policy—is the rare example of a liberal and progressive policy benefiting from the South's dominance of committee chairs. On domestic

Table 1. Defeated Democratic Members of Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) Pre-1959

Name	On SFRC	Defeated	Born	Died	Age, January 1959	Age, January 1967
Lee (OK)	1941	1942	1892	1967	68	74
Tydings (MD)	1949	1950	1890	1961	66	Dead
Pepper (FL)	1937	1950	1900	1989	58	66
Lucas (IL)	1945	1950	1892	1968	66	74
Gillette (IA)	1939	1944, 1954	1879	1973	79	87
Duffy (WI)	1933	1938	1892	1979	66	74
Bulkley (OH)	1933	1938	1880	1965	78	Dead

policy, the growth of the welfare state and civil rights legislation were stymied by conservative Democrats like Senator James Eastland of Mississippi on Judiciary and Representatives Howard Smith of Virginia on Rules and Fulbright's fellow Arkansan Wilbur Mills on Ways and Means. It was only through creative legislative maneuvering by House speaker Sam Rayburn and President Lyndon Johnson, combined with the landslide of new nonsouthern liberal Democrats in 1964, that made possible Great Society legislation. On Foreign Affairs, the opposite effect occurred: Fulbright was protected from right-wing defeat by his good standing as a southern segregationist Democrat. While fellow Vietnam War critics Earnest Gruening (D-AK) and Wayne Morse (D-OR) were going down to defeat in 1968, Fulbright won his primary by 19 percent and his general election by 18 percent. The power of the Arkansas Democratic Party, with Fulbright as a member in good standing, was evident in his 59 percent vote total in the general election, nearly equaling the combined 61 percent of the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates in 1968. The most hawkish region would still support "Dixie's Dove."

While support for southern segregation empowered Fulbright in Congress, it also complicated his movement into the executive branch. With the election of fellow Democratic senator John F. Kennedy to the presidency in 1960, Fulbright appeared a perfect candidate for secretary of state. His record of academic achievement paralleled that of the new president, and his established credibility as part of the foreign policy elite would balance Kennedy's youth and relative inexperience. He had the advantage over former Illinois governor and presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson because he had not run a campaign against Kennedy for the nomination. He also had the international status that career diplomats like Chester Bowles and the eventual choice, Dean Rusk, did not possess. But, while the liberal elements of the Democratic Party could stomach the choice of Lyndon Johnson as the vice presidential candidate to hold the South in the general election, a signer of the Southern Manifesto like Fulbright as secretary of state was a bridge too far after the election was over.

In his biography of Fulbright, Randall Woods details how the Arkansas senator emerged as the leading contender for secretary of state but was blocked by critics of his civil rights record.¹² Outside pressure came from NAACP leaders as well as United Auto Workers chief Walter Reuther. Within the Kennedy inner circle, Robert Kennedy argued that Fulbright

would complicate efforts to retain the support of black voters who had swung the election to the Democrats. National liberals could not prevent the rise of segregationists like Fulbright or even of rabid race-baiters like James Eastland or Richard Russell to positions of power in Congress. Power in the Capitol flowed from seniority and state politics and was protected (at least until the onslaught of Johnson's Great Society) from the liberalism that was on the march in the national Democratic Party. But executive power could be denied to an otherwise eminently qualified and appropriate candidate like Fulbright.

While Fulbright, remaining in his chairmanship in the Senate, supported most of the Kennedy administration's agenda, he continued to part company with the Massachusetts liberal on civil rights. This split between parts of the Democratic coalition took on increased importance after the Birmingham demonstrations of 1963. Kennedy's impassioned televised address after the violent suppression of peaceful protest there and promotion of a strong civil rights bill to the top of his list of legislative priorities threatened continued southern regional autonomy on race. Fulbright continued to support filibusters of nondiscrimination legislation, as southern senators led by Richard Russell of Georgia attempted to block consideration of the bill that would become the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Fulbright would continue his opposition to nondiscrimination legislation when debate turned to housing, joining a successful filibuster of a strong open housing bill in 1966 and an unsuccessful filibuster of the weaker alternative that passed in 1968.

Fulbright and Citizen Opposition to Civil Rights

Fulbright's anti-civil rights legislative record was consistent with the opinions of his Arkansas constituents. While state-level polling was rare at the time, incoming correspondence from constituents reveals the force of state-wide opinion. These letters show the increasingly vituperative perspectives that were driving citizen opinion on matters of race. Letters were also a readily available gauge of constituent opinion for legislators and their staff.¹³ The public made it clear that the senator's popularity needed to rely on reactionary opinion in the state. As an Eldorado respondent put it, Fulbright needed to use his Senate leverage to "please stop that dangerous bill." "It would be the beginning of the end of the world," the letter concluded.¹⁴

In an interview with Randall Woods long after his departure from the Senate, Fulbright cast his record on racial issues as, in Woods's words, "a matter of political expediency." Focusing on his potential weakness outside his native northwest Arkansas, the retired senator argued that he lacked the opportunity to support integration and be reelected: "There's no mystery why the people from Georgia, Mississippi, and so on have been what they call bigots. They inherited an historical situation. You couldn't be elected if you didn't have that view. People in eastern Arkansas . . . couldn't see their daughter going to school with a black. They always imagined the black would rape their daughter. This was the worst possible thing. They were scared of them actually."¹⁵ While Arkansans who wrote Fulbright usually did not put such fears of sexual violence in words, they validated his understanding of his electoral incentives. Of the 1,102 letters received by Fulbright concerning nondiscrimination legislation between 1963 and 1968, 976 (89 percent) opposed civil rights.¹⁶ Not only did Fulbright's constituents overwhelmingly oppose nondiscrimination legislation; they did so on the basis of the belief that civil rights was a threat to fundamental American values.

Most letters connected opposition to nondiscrimination legislation to fundamental American values. Property and economic rights were prevalent as Fulbright's constituents focused on how the bill that would become the 1964 Civil Rights Act limited the rights of business owners and employers. One Little Rock resident asserted his opposition to the bill using a curious twist of the rhetoric on universal human rights: "Man should have the right to admit whomever *he wants* to his motel, restaurant, etc., even if he does lose the business because of this. It is a God-given right to refuse to serve somebody. Our constitution even protects us from it: the Thirteenth Amendment forbids 'slavery' and 'involuntary servitude.' If a person is forced to do something against his will, that is involuntary servitude."¹⁷ The linkage of property rights to the Constitution was quite common. While not grounding his argument in specific constitutional language, a North Little Rock writer claimed that restrictions on business freedom infringed on constitutional rights: "We realize that a bill of this kind is unconstitutional and would destroy free enterprise—the one ingredient that has made this Country great. This Bill, if passed, instead of giving 'rights,' would take away personal liberty from all people."¹⁸ The freedom of the business owner to choose his or her customers

and to refuse to hire particular individuals is cast as a fundamental American liberty. If Fulbright wavered in his opposition to civil rights, his constituents would reevaluate his commitment to other values they found fundamental to American democracy.

The opposition to civil rights that motivated letter writers was not just an expression of issue positions. Constituents connected the fight over nondiscrimination legislation to Fulbright's position of influence in the Senate. The North Little Rock resident wrote: "With your seniority in Washington and the respect and influence that you command, we know that you can exert an unlimited force to defeat this Civil Rights Bill."¹⁹ Fulbright's national role created an expectation that he could, and would, protect Arkansans from the threat posed by national prointegration legislation.

Letter writers also connected the civil rights bill to communism.²⁰ One McCrory resident argued: "If this Bill passes, we all will be like Russia and Cuba, then will be the beginning of tribulation our Bible tells about."²¹ Not only would nondiscrimination legislation weaken America's opposition to communism; it would lead to the apocalyptic reckoning described in Revelation. An Eldorado resident concurred, imploring the senator: "Please stop that dangerous bill. It would be the beginning of the end of the world."²²

While explicitly racist or white supremacist arguments were relatively rare in letters sent to Fulbright, a small fraction of writers who expressly discussed racial differences connected the opposition to nondiscrimination legislation to the segregationist backlash around the Little Rock school integrationist crisis of 1957. A Mt. Holly resident viewed the proposed legislation through the lenses of southern history and religiously derived racism: "This so called Civil Rights Bill is gradually to change into Civil War. Negroes aren't supposed to mix up with the white, the bible states so. Anyone knows this for a fact."²³ Such an expression of constituent opinion alerted Fulbright to the tenuousness of his electoral position if he departed from segregationist orthodoxy.

This virulent racism was expressed as unassailable truth. A writer from Osceola contended that civil rights action "will not make the Negro's skin white or make his hair straight or make him an A-1 citizen."²⁴ Another writer, from Mena, endorsed this apocalyptic biological determinism: "We must organize in force and fight to save our people from

forced integration, mongrelization, degradation, sin and shame and to keep our beloved America from becoming a degraded mongrelized nation ruled by a communist dictator. I hope and pray that you and other good Senators will filibuster that rotten race mixing bill to death. We are counting on you Senator Fulbright, please don't let us down."²⁵

Fulbright's seniority and the committee chairmanship that made him a power in world affairs were dependent on not letting down the white supporters of segregation who dominated the midcentury Arkansas electorate. If J. William Fulbright deserves credit for achievements like the scholar program that bears his name or his enlightened criticism of the escalation in Vietnam and other US misadventures around the globe, the southern segregationist one-party system must share in that credit as well. Fulbright emerged from a kind of Whiggish aristocracy, mostly protected from the threat of election defeat. A Republican could never beat him, and a Democrat could beat him only if he was seen as an opponent of segregation. Fulbright lost a race for reelection only after the emergence of New South politicians: Dale Bumpers would end the long career of the seasoned senator in 1974. For thirty years, Arkansas provided the foremost liberal internationalist in Congress. His power and stature, however, were built on the illiberal foundation of white supremacy.

Notes

1. Letter, March 8, 1968, Civil Rights Files, J. William Fulbright Papers, University of Arkansas Special Collections.

2. If Fulbright had been defeated for reelection in 1956, 1962, or 1968, the committee would have been headed by John Sparkman of Alabama, a strong proponent of the escalation of military action in Vietnam.

3. V. O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1949).

4. *Ibid.*, 183.

5. Randall Bennett Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 94.

6. See Earl Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

7. Anthony Badger, "The Forerunner of Our Opposition: Arkansas and the Southern Manifesto of 1956," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 353–60, 358.

8. Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography*, 299–300.

9. "Faubus Says Fulbright Vulnerable," *Arkansas Democrat* (Little Rock), April 27, 1967.

10. Anthony Badger, "Southerners Who Refused to Sign the Southern Manifesto," *Historical Journal* 42, no. 2 (June 1999): 517–34.

11. See John Kyle Day, "The Fall of a Southern Moderate: Congressman Brooks Hays and the Election of 1958," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 241–64.

12. Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography*, 255–59.

13. Letter writers are clearly not a representative group, those with strong opinions likely being overrepresented. They do, however, provide evidence of the content and relative strength of issue positions. Research on congressional behavior finds that members of Congress and their staffs believe that incoming correspondence reflects public opinion, irrespective of its inherent selection bias. See Douglas Harris and Amy Fried, "Governing with the Polls," *The Historian* 72, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 321–53.

14. Letter, May 16, 1963, Civil Rights Files, Fulbright Papers.

15. Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography*, 115.

16. This percentage is consistent with letters found in other southern collections of the period from the neighboring states of Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. The percentage is consistent across the period as debate moved from employment and public accommodations in 1963–1964 to open housing in 1966–1968.

17. Letter, May 13, 1964, Civil Rights File, Fulbright Papers.

18. Letter, March 20, 1964, Civil Rights File, Fulbright Papers.

19. *Ibid.*

20. For a discussion of how the link between support for integration and communism was a regionwide concern for citizens, elites, and state governments, see Jeff R. Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948–1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).

21. Letter, March 4, 1964, Civil Right File, Fulbright Papers.

22. Letter, May 16, 1963, Civil Right File, Fulbright Papers.

23. Letter, December 2, 1963, Civil Right File, Fulbright Papers.

24. Letter, March 20, 1964, Civil Right File, Fulbright Papers.

25. Letter, February 10, 1964, Civil Right File, Fulbright Papers.