WE URGE ALL AMERICANS WHO BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY TO SIGN
THIS PETITION WHICH WE HAVE SIGNED

Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy       A. Philip Randolph
Ralph Bunche                   Jackie Robinson
Harry Belafonte                 Eleanor Roosevelt
Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.    Walter Reuther
Father John LaFarge, S. J.      Clarence Pickett
George Meany                    Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth
Hon. Herbert Lehmann           Lillian Smith
Bishop James Pike               Wyatt Tee Walker

Roy Wilkins

A PETITION For an Executive Order Outlawing Segregation
in American Life

To the Honorable JOHN F. KENNEDY
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Equal rights for all is the central moral issue of our times. Fourscore and nineteen years ago, Abraham Lincoln issued an executive order, known as the Emancipation Proclamation, that ended the slave system in America. That executive order, as precedent shattering as it was, only freed the Negro physically. The past 99 years in the life of the Negro community have been a bitter catalogue of wasted human potential and uncalculated frustration imposed by the psychological slavery of segregation and discrimination. Though much of the overt results of this quasi-freedom are concentrated in the South, segregation and discrimination in American Life are our sorest domestic issues.

With or without the world crisis, we must improve race relations in our nation immediately to preserve our moral integrity. Therefore we the undersigned, petition you as our Chief Executive to issue an executive order on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, outlawing all forms of segregation throughout the fifty states of our great nation.