

2648 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

Leonard Smith, who held the position of Citizenship Educator, at the CAF Regional Office, Delray Beach, categorically denied that he had attempted to influence the party affiliation of persons whom he registered. Mr. Smith said that, when the migrants asked a question about the differences in the parties, he told them "Johnson is a Democrat, Kennedy was a Democrat, Goldwater is a Republican, and Eisenhower is a Republican." He noted that by his reference to Goldwater as a Republican "the deck may be stacked" in favor of the Democrats, but that in his opinion his explanation of the differences in the parties was not contrary to the law.

Mrs. Walker, employed by CAF as a Community Development Aide, told us that she had been appointed as a deputy voting registrar and that she had registered voters in the Belle Glade area, but denied that she had attempted to influence the party choice of those whom she registered. She said further that most of the registrants knew the party with which they wished to register, but when she was asked to explain the differences in the parties she did so by stating that Johnson is a Democrat and Goldwater is a Republican.

Horace Beasley expressed the opinion that it was proper for a voting registrar to use the names of individuals such as President Johnson and Mr. Goldwater for party identification, so long as the registrar did not attempt to tell the applicant how to register or how to vote. Mr. Beasley remarked that he cautioned all deputy registrars not to direct registrants to either party and that he had no knowledge that Leonard Smith had attempted to do so.

Miss Margaret Taylor, CAF Regional Director, Delray Beach, said that she had assisted Leonard Smith in registering voters in the Delray Beach area and that she had no knowledge that any member of her staff had attempted to influence the party affiliation of registrants. She said that she thought the newspaper allegations of improper influence of registrants came about as the result of comments made in jest in a conversation she and Leonard Smith had had with "Red" Simon and Tom Easterling of the Florida State Employment Service.

Concerning the number of voters registered by Leonard Smith and Myrtle Walker, our examination of records maintained by Mr. Beasley showed that Mr. Smith had registered 491 voters and that Mrs. Walker had registered 195 voters. Mr. Beasley explained the difference between the numbers and the 1,700 registrations attributed in the newspapers to Leonard Smith by saying that district registration offices are prone to exaggeration and that many of the reported registrations represented persons who were already registered.

Concerning the ratio of Democrats to Republicans among the persons registered by Leonard Smith, Mr. Beasley said that the registration in Palm Beach County is predominantly Democrat. Leonard Smith gave us two reports issued by Mr. Beasley which showed the following information concerning the party affiliation of registered Negro voters in the county.

Registration as of—	Number of registered—		Ratio
	Democrats	Republicans	
Apr. 2, 1966.....	15,583	1,225	12.7 to 1.
Oct. 8, 1966.....	17,332	1,227	14.1 to 1.

Mr. Smith expressed the opinion that these figures show that CAF's voter registration activities did not result in any significant change in the proportion of Democrat to Republican registration in the Negro population of the county.

Our examination of registration records in Palm Beach County showed that, of the 686 voters registered by Leonard Smith and Myrtle Walker, 1 registered Independent, 5 registered Republican, and 680 registered Democrat.

CAF employees transported voters to the polls

Mr. Van Smith stated to us that he had been told by Leonard Smith of CAF that on November 8, 1966, he and other CAF employees and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) had driven between 700 and 800 migrants to the polls. According to Howard Van Smith this transportation was accomplished through use of both Government-owned automobiles and privately owned vehicles, the owners of which were reimbursed from Federal funds. Mr. Van Smith suggested that we contact Mr. Tom Easterling of the Florida State Employment Service in Delray Beach for information concerning CAF's use of Government automobiles for political purposes.