

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 1, 2025 **Contact: info@sncclegacyproject.org**

SNCC LEGACY PROJECT
STATEMENT ON THE 65th
ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIT-IN
MOVEMENT, FEBRUARY 1, 2025

On this day, 65 years ago, February 1, 1960, the **sit-in movement** began, which led to the greatest civil rights movement in our country's history. We, t h e **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Legacy Project (SLP)**, are the inheritors of that movement and we are holding our Board of Directors meeting on this day in Washington, DC.

We are alarmed. Perhaps we are the best qualified to *be* alarmed. We organized and fought for civil rights in some of the most violently dangerous areas of the Black Belt South. Yet we live today in more dangerous times than we imagined our future would be 60-some-odd years ago.

The SLP was formed in 2010 on the 50th anniversary of the founding of SNCC in April 1960. Most of our lives have been spent in struggle for a better life for people of all races, ethnicities, religions, genders, and incomes here in the United States.

We are responding in this statement to those who want to know more than is covered (or not covered) in the civil rights literature. One of our primary purposes is to document the work and worldview of SNCC veterans and to share that knowledge with young people. We continue to be there for younger generations of organizers, just as older organizers were there for us, when we risked our lives working together in the 1960s. That is our reason for being. We think that there are lessons in what we struggled for, as well as what we struggled against, that are necessary to fully understand today.

Our own experiences as Civil Rights Movement veterans leave us without illusions about the capacity of tyranny to take root. Today we see a national government taking shape that is reminiscent of the white supremacist Citizens Councils in Mississippi and throughout the South. And we remember that their viciousness was not only directed at civil rights activists and organizers, but at all people who criticized or stood in dissent of their practices and programs.

Democracy is under serious assault with lies and disinformation leading the attack. The teaching of our nation's history and our movement -- and the critical issues that our movement addressed -- is being distorted or outright banned. And those who teach these truths are, themselves, under attack, as are librarians who guide our children to books that will enrich their lives. Civil rights and civil liberties, ranging from the voting rights we so vigorously fought for to freedom of speech and association, are being challenged by anti-democratic oligarchies. Official state violence has been increasing as has violent intimidation of those who oppose the powerful. The insidious influence of billionaires grows, as does the gap between the haves and the have-nots. In this land of enormous wealth, the poor are getting poorer.

We are no longer young people just starting out in life. Today, with greater intensity we worry about what the future may hold for our children and grandchildren. We are angry as we see, each day, that the freedoms we fought for and have come to expect are under assault at every level.

Thus, we are compelled to speak; to ring an alarm bell if you will. After all, for all that we draw on from our past and carry with us today, we do not live in the past but for the future. It is what we have always done.

We will continue to work so that we do not lose the basic American rights we SNCC veterans – and so many others -- fought so hard and long for.

For more information on the SNCC Legacy Project, visit **www.sncclegacyproject.org**.

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