

Lesson can be used for AP Government, Honors Government, Regular Government. Please adapt as you see fit. This is generally a two day lesson. This lesson has been preceded with lessons that have covered the “road to the White House”.

Homework Assigned the evening before: Read pages from text/internet and take notes in outline form on the Credential Committee’s role in the nominating process.

Aim: To what extent is the process of seating delegates at the national nominating convention?  
Democratic?

- IO: 1. Students will understand and evaluate the role of the Credential Committee at  
A presidential national nominating convention.
2. Students will appreciate the contribution of Fannie Lou Hamer to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.
  3. Students will discuss the importance of participation in the political process.

Material: Eyes on the Prize, Volume 5, Mississippi: Is This America (Section on MFDP – 23 minutes)  
(Certain segments of the MFDP delegate issue) can also be found on YouTube.)  
Reading for Background: The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party  
<http://www.cresswellslist.com/ballots2/mfdp.htm>  
Reading: The Most Southern Place on Earth by James C. Cobb pages 234-235

Motivation: Teacher will ask class: Would anyone like to tell us of a belief that you feel so strongly  
passionate about?  
...Would you compromise on that? Why or why not?  
(Brief discussion will ensue.)

#### Procedure

Based on last night’s homework,

1. What is the role of Credential Committee?
2. Who are the people that make up a credential committee?
3. Teacher will introduce Fanny Lou Hamer with a brief biography,  
e.g. She was a sharecropper, counter for the plantation ....42 years old and did not  
know she had the right to vote. She did not know Mississippi had  
a Constitution, etc.
4. Students will give a background piece titled The Mississippi Freedom

Democratic Party. Students will be asked to read and highlight it in Class. (Teachers must be sure to edit the reading so that outcome of the Decision to accept or reject the compromise is omitted.)

5. Students will be given two pages from the Most Southern Place on Earth enriching what they have already read from the background sheet. Once again they are to read and highlight. (Teachers must be sure to edit the reading so that the outcome of the decision to accept or reject the compromise is omitted.)
6. Teacher will start video of Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Teacher will stop when Credential Committee offers the MFDP a compromise that allows them to have two at large delegates to the convention and then promises them they will have an integrated delegation in 1968.

Ask the class, if you could whisper in Fanny Lou Hamer's ear would you advise her to accept or reject the compromise offer? Justify your answer. (Pro and con class discussion will ensue.)

7. After discussion, teacher will continue the video so students can learn of the actual outcome.

Medial Summary: Did the MFDP make the right decision? Why or why not?

As a result of their rejection of the compromise, the MFDP were not delegates. Therefore were they losers or winners? (Possible answer could be: They lost the battle but won the war.)

Teacher will reinforce the lesson on the importance of Credential Committees. She/He will explain to students that at the 1952 Republican National Convention, the Credential Committee determined who the Republican nominee would be between Robert Taft and Dwight Eisenhower. They denied the Taft delegates and recognized the Eisenhower Delegates.

Summary: Return to Aim (To what extent is seating of delegates at the National Nominating Convention Democratic?)

Application: It's 2009 and already the Republicans are jockeying for the prime position in 2012.

Do you think the operations of the Credential Committee needs to be revised?