



Source: Library of Congress

## Convention in August 1964

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In 1962, Fannie Lou Hamer worked for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee attempting to register Black voters. By 1964, she helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). Representing this group, Hamer spoke during the Democratic National Convention about her experiences facing racism, voter suppression, and economic injustice.

During her testimony, Hamer described the brutal beating she endured at the hands of police officers for attempting to register to vote. Her speech called attention to the systemic racism and discrimination present in the South at that time. She criticized the all-white Mississippi delegation at the convention and challenged the legitimacy of their representation, advocating instead for the inclusion of the multi-racial MFDP members as the true voice of the state's disenfranchised Black population.

Hamer served as a member of Mississippi's first racially integrated delegation at the 1968 National Democratic Convention.

Look for modern examples of individuals addressing members of Congress or other legislative bodies to bring awareness about their cause. What topics are they concerned about? Select one. Research that topic and track how long people have been working to fight for change.

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