

# Lafferty Calls for U.S. Withdrawal

a statement by James Lafferty

James Lafferty

1966

The game is definitely played in someone else's ballpark! The rules are really quite simple: attend an endless stream of meetings attended only by other candidates; seek publicity, but avoid notoriety; have a platform, but don't say anything really controversial (substitute "honest"?) belong to as many organizations as possible, but list only the respectable ones on your literature; make the proper deals and alignments with a variety of political hacks; etc., etc.

Now, I want to do something different than plaster my face, (however partial to it though I may be), all over the 17<sup>th</sup> District. I want to talk to the people of the District with complete candor, about Vietnam, foreign policy in general, the problem of the black man and the white man, the poor and the rich, civil liberties, etc. More important, I want to talk about a democracy that involves the fourth branch of the government—the people—on days of the year other than election day.

Is this really "New Politics," or is it the oldest politics (of a democracy) of all? It is, I think, old politics...forgotten. It has been sacrificed for the expediency in getting elected. It has been deemed old-fashioned in a supposedly sophisticated society that has no time for individual persuasion and individual decision making.

The politician says today elect me because I am a good guy who has attitudes about some generally stated issues. Then, or so the argument goes, after I am elected, I will do all the things I was afraid to say I would do when I was running for office". My answer to that argument? Well, to put it in the simplest and least obscene way—Bull!!

Now, although the editor, (before reading this article), hinted that I would have other opportunities to ramble on these pages, let me set forth now and per necessity, very cryptically, my "platform".

I am for withdrawal from Vietnam. More important, I am for a new foreign policy that allows other nations to determine their own destinies free of our interference.

Civil Rights? Certainly I would have voted for the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. I would have supported the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenge (I was one of the many attorneys who went to Mississippi to take depositions for it). But more than that I want to see a realignment of power which more justly reflects the right of the black man to participate in the decisions which affect his life.

Civil liberties? Let me just say I would work to abolish HUAC and all other restraints on civil liberties.

A final note—I believe all of these issues are interrelated and if we are really to progress as a nation we must begin to challenge the basic assumptions held by the majority of Americans about the country we live in.

# fifth Estate

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