

“Conserving the Controversy: A Look at the General File of Governor Spiro T. Agnew
held at the Maryland State Archives”

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“Cohesion is catching on in the Negro community in Baltimore and, I think it will spread to other parts of the State, including Cambridge and Prince George’s County which is pregnant with the potential for the kind of social unrest which we would deplore...” these were the words of Dr. Gilbert Ware, Program Executive of Human Relations for Governor Spiro T. Agnew, in a memo written on March 6, 1968 subject titled, “Your [Agnew’s] image in Negro Community.” Dr. Ware would go on to say:

Of the utmost importance is the Negro’s, especially the black militant’s, conceptualization of you as friend or foe. To this point, he has considered you to be his foe. Right or wrong, that is how it is, and we can expect hostility toward you to grow...¹

As the highest ranked black official in the state’s executive office, one of Ware’s roles was to advise and counsel the governor and executive committee on pertinent issues concerning the black community throughout the state. Yet, when Agnew’s Staff Steering committee met on March 21, they passed the following note along to the governor in response to Ware’s March 6 memo:

We have considered this and other communications sent to you by Gil. Together they raise doubt that Gil has any clear understanding of the extent to which you are willing to recognize or work with the Negro militants. As circumstances permit, we suggest that you follow up on the job description which Gil has sent you by discussing with him your expectations concerning his performance and permit him to get a clarification on your views.²

¹[Memo from Gilbert Ware to Spiro Agnew “Your Image in the Negro Community,” 6 March 1968, available online in the Maryland State Archives Documents for the Classroom, “Is Baltimore Burning Series, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

²[Memo from Steering Staff Committee to Spiro Agnew, “Dr. Ware’s Memo, Your Image in Negro Community,” March 20, 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

The committee saw Ware's note as more of an editorial, unfounded on any true evidence, and questioned his qualifications to even comment on such matters. But, Ware's imagery of a community pregnant with social unrest in the wake of recent student protests at Bowie State College in early March 1968 would ring true almost a month later, when the community in Baltimore City would eventually give life to that unrest through the labor pangs of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968.

These are the type of resources one will find at the Maryland State Archives. Researchers of the Maryland political career of Governor Spiro T. Agnew will find a wealth of records and collections presented by the Archives in a variety of online and documentary forms that enhance our understanding of Agnew's role as executive of the state from 1967-1969. As the official repository for all state government records, the State Archives' mission is to make those records available for public use. This includes certain paper records from the Governor, State Legislature, and other relevant state agencies that would provide context to the workings of the state while Agnew held office. The Special Collections Department of the Archives offers the administrative papers of Governor Agnew's Chief of Staff, Arthur Sohmers, MSA SC 4804, as one of the vital sources that present insight into Agnew's work in Annapolis. Yet beyond the physical walls, the State Archives oversees a number of research portals in an online archival environment through its homepage, www.msa.md.gov. Teaching American History in Maryland, teachingamericanhistorymd.net, caters to teachers in Maryland by providing online source materials for teachers to develop lesson plans on themes of American history, placing emphasis on Maryland's own narrative in those themes. Access to excerpts of Agnew's actions during the Baltimore riots are found in the, "Streets of Fire:

Governor Spiro Agnew and the Baltimore City Riots, April 1968,” link on this site. The *Archives of Maryland*, Biographical Series, MSA SC 3500-1486, contains in-depth information on Agnew’s personal and political life, photo images and government portraits, as well as a hyperlinked sources page that allows users to view research materials amassed by Archival staff. Volume 83 of the *Archives of Maryland Online*, aomol.net, features two scanned volumes of the *Address and Papers of Spiro T. Agnew, Governor of Maryland, 1967-1969* edited by Franklin L. Burdette. Also available online are the *Archives of Maryland Documents for the Classroom*. The document packet “Is Baltimore Burning?” is a series of relevant primary source materials compiled to provide context to the struggle for civil rights in Maryland. It contains information such as: a Morgan State College commencement speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1958, court records related to sit-ins in Baltimore City in 1960, the riots in Cambridge in 1967, and contemporary news clippings reflecting on the movement. All these documents aid in understanding the climate of social protest Agnew stepped into in 1967. Materials pertinent to Agnew study this series include excerpts from his state papers and streamed audio/video files of televised news footage of his comments on H. Rap Brown in 1967 as well as Agnew’s meeting with black leaders in 1968, which will be discussed at length in this paper. All of these holdings under the Archives’ stewardship combine to create a lasting and accessible reservoir of information on the legacy of Agnew.

This paper takes an in-depth look at another important record series at the Archives, the Governor’s General File. Agency Series MSA S1041-1713 contains over 3000 government documents from 1967-1968 concerning the most divisive events of Agnew’s brief tenure such as: the aforementioned protests at Bowie State, the riots in

Cambridge and Salisbury of 1967 and 1968, respectively, and the Baltimore Riots and their aftermath. Certainly books from a range of perspectives could be written on the governor's term in the midst of these difficulties with such rich documentation. However, this paper will focus on the aftermath of the Baltimore Riots of April 1968, specifically highlighting the reaction to Agnew's meeting with the moderate black leadership of Baltimore held on April 11, 1968. It was during this televised meeting that Agnew used deliberate, and at times, harsh words to speak to nearly 100 moderate leaders of the black community and address their failures in preventing the growth of the black militant voice. Agnew believed it was the militant movement among blacks, particularly among youth in the ghetto, which led to the outbreak of rioting across the city. While the speech in many ways elevated Agnew's public profile on the national stage, it was also polarizing and evoked a wide range of opinions that either supported or denigrated his deliberate straight talk. This paper does not propose to indict or take sides with either Agnew or the public; rather it endeavors to show the effectiveness of the General File in illuminating the active and sometimes intimate interaction on the part of detractors and supporters of the April 11 speech, between Governor Spiro Agnew, elected officials, and the citizens of Maryland.

When the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, the nation mourned the loss of America's great leader of civil and human rights. King was one of only a few great orators with the ability to speak to America's social conscious through his message of non-violence and interracial cooperative efforts; challenging America to make real the principles outlined in the country's founding documents that advocated life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

for all of its citizens. Regrettably, reaction to King's death did not honor the life of a man who stood for peace. Dozens of urban cities across America including, Washington, DC, Watts, and Chicago, became ground zero for violent riots in their respective African American communities. The city of Baltimore was one of the cities that saw an outbreak of property damage, fires, looting, assaults, and arrests. The actions were the very antithesis of all King stood for, yet it was reflective of the deep frustration and anger most blacks felt when they discovered that their champion had been innocently murdered. As the first fits of violence began on the evening of April 6 and continued for nearly five days, communication poured into the offices of Gov. Agnew, from persons of every walk of life, looking to the state's executive to provide action and answers.

“For gosh sakes show a little guts and act like a governor if you can't stop the riots you should resign.”³ Many who watched as their beloved Baltimore burned shared the sentiments from this telegram. As governor, Agnew carried the moniker of being, “My kind of man,” but over those five days he was constantly prodded to end the feeling of public fear and uncertainty associated with the riots. As the National Guard took to the streets to aid city police and state troopers, numerous messages were sent urging more forceful measures:

As a voter and taxpayer I am horrified to see looting continue. Why can't police or federal troops be authorized to fire a warning shot and then shoot to kill. Make an example of a few to save the rest.⁴

While these and so many other opinions came from the observers of the violence, it is apparent that the riots brought out the worst of human emotion in more than just the participants. Many citizens of Baltimore believed that Agnew should hold someone

³ [Telegram from Mr. Maurice Annenburg, Maran Plastics Co, Baltimore to Spiro Agnew, 9 April 1968 MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

⁴ [Telegram from Mr. Herbert A. Lowe Sr to Spiro Agnew, 8 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

accountable for the outburst in their city, and the majority was disinterested in causation or the deep-seeded pain within the black community. As the major acts of violence began to subside, Agnew drafted an invitation to a selected group of moderate black leaders to discuss the riots, and their role in bringing healing and dialogue on how to move forward.⁵

As roughly 100 leaders settled into their seats, including State Delegates, Dr. Aris T. Allen and Floyd B. Adams, State Senators, Verda F. Welcome and Clarence Mitchell III, activists Reverend Marion Bascomb and Juanita Jackson Mitchell, in the State Office Building in Baltimore on April 11, none of them were prepared for the words Agnew would speak to them that day. Agnew opened the meeting, by stating:

Hard on heels of tragedy, come the assignment of blame and the excuses. I did not invite you here for either purpose...Look around you and you may notice that every one here is a leader – and that each leader has worked his way to the top.”⁶

The compliments lobbed at the leaders would abruptly end there. He continued his speech by mentioning a reported secret meeting between some of the black leadership with Stokely Carmichael, former chairman of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Carmichael and his successor at SNCC, H. Rap Brown, were two of the most vocal leaders of the ever-growing militant sect of the Civil Rights leadership; Brown was cast as the leader of the riots on the Eastern Shore in Cambridge in 1967. Agnew indicted the leaders for refusal to openly repudiate men like Carmichael, Brown, and others who shared the militant philosophy, essentially suggesting an alliance between the moderates and militant:

⁵ [Telegram to and potential list of attendees to the conference with Civil Rights and Community Leaders, 9 April 1968.](#)

⁶ [Opening Statement by Governor Spiro T. Agnew, Conference with Civil Rights Leaders and Community Leaders, State Office Building, Baltimore, Maryland, 11 April 1968, 2 pm, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

You met in secret with that demagogue and others like him – and you agreed, according to published reports that have not been denied, that you would not openly criticize any black spokesman, regardless of his remarks. You were beguiled by the rationalizations of unity; you were intimidated by threats; you were stung by insinuations that you were Mr. Charlie’s boy, by epithets like “Uncle Tom.” God knows I cannot fault you who spoke out for breaking and running in the face of appeared to be the overwhelming opinion in the Negro community. But actually it was only the opinion of those who depend upon chaos and turmoil for leadership – those who deliberately were not invited today. It was the opinion of a few, distorted and magnified by the silence of most of you here today.

For Agnew, the leaders had fallen short, unable to stamp out the message of violence preached by the militants that ultimately manifested in the destruction in Baltimore:

I publicly repudiate, condemn, and reject all white racists. I call upon you to publicly repudiate, condemn, and reject all black racists. This so far you have been unwilling to do.

His speech would go on to advocate working together to rebuild the city from its ruins while promoting a society where racism and the violent minority did not rule the day.

Conscious that his words would bruise feelings, he attempted to show that he understood the anxiety the leaders felt when they observed the riots:

Above all I believe you represent the views of the overwhelming majority of Maryland’s Negro citizens – responsible, hard working, decent people who are as horrified by the past day’s events as you or I.

He closed noting that the myth of opportunity for blacks was dispelled by their very presence and role as leaders. But throughout his speech, Agnew’s words prompted a steady stream of those in attendance, some estimates say 70 out of 100, to walk out of the meeting with a range of emotions from anger to disappointment to betrayal. For those who saw reports on the scene it was shocking to learn that a room once full in the beginning of the speech held only a few that stayed to listen to all of the Agnew’s words.

Those who remained hoped the rough beginning of the speech would have a smooth, if not apologetic ending; it ultimately did not come.

As with the riots, communication to the executive offices was extremely active, with a flood of correspondence reacting to the speech. Agnew's words seemed to strike a chord with nearly everyone who had seen or read his statements. *WJZ-13* ran an editorial piece that stated its disapproval noting, "It's no wonder that most of the Negro leadership present walked as the governor was speaking. The things he said were not only insulting and unfair, but they were not born out of the facts."⁷ Citizens who saw Agnew as the man they believed could lead the state into a new era of progress, particularly after advocating equal housing and urban renewal programs, expressed deep disappointment:

Although I am an active democrat...I voted for you in 1966 in the belief that you would be the first genuinely progressive governor of Maryland within my memory...My [second] disillusionment was your recent statements on the causes of the riots. I was utterly shocked that a man of your apparent integrity would turn an opportunity for reconciliation into an opportunity to pass the buck...Your cautious approach toward questions concerning race relations while you were County Executive were justifiable, but your decision to cash in on hysteria is utterly inexcusable...⁸

Some of the key issues for detractors of the speech were: Agnew had made the leaders out as scapegoats, he oversimplified the true sentiment of anger and despair in the black community by pointing to the militant influence, and he dictated to blacks how they should govern themselves and who was fit to be a leader in the eyes of mainstream whites, "I can see their point – they would rather set their own house in order, even if we great white fathers don't think they are capable of doing so."⁹ As time moved on in the wake of the meeting, detractors of the speech seemed to agree it was not the text of the

⁷ ["Governor Agnew Misunderstandings," editorial run on WJZ-13 TV, 12 April 1968 MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

⁸ [Letter from Stephen Goodell to Spiro T. Agnew, 13 April 1968 MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

⁹ [Letter from Mrs. Jim Cox to Spiro T. Agnew, 11 June 1968. MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

speech, rather the tenor and the timing of Agnew's words that had cause so much hurt. Many, like the following excerpt from a letter addressed Mr. Wendell Wright, President of the Northwest Civic Forum of Baltimore City, wrote that they desired to see another meeting to begin a true dialogue:

...we think your decision to avoid communicating with certain segments of the Negro population can only widen the gulf which separates you from them. We feel this is the case with any group, black or white, and we urge that – as the elected leader of all people of Maryland – you should assure that your doors are always open to representatives of all points-of-view, no matter how divergent their attitudes may be from your own.¹⁰

Agnew met these opinions with a personal touch, acknowledging the opinion but standing firm in his beliefs. The previous note from Mr. Wright provides insight into the methods Agnew chose to respond to his detractors. Wright's entire letter included an eleven-point outline of suggestions for future plans in healing the governor's relationship with the black community. Agnew drafted his own eleven-point response addressing each issues raised by Wright for example:

Dear Mr. Wright...1. My doors are always open to representatives of all points of view, no matter how divergent their attitude, so long as they operate within the framework of our laws. 2. This administration has assigned top priority to the problems all of the poor and will continue to do so within the limit of the state's ability to meet these needs...4. Enclosed for your information is the Governor's Code of Fair Practices promulgated by my Administration. If there is bias in any department of State Government it will be overcome within the framework of State Law. The Attorney General has been so instructed...¹¹

In another response to a letter from Mr. Ronald Wilner where Wilner noted, "Your estrangement of the black people was the result of miscalculation which must, of

¹⁰ [Letter from Wendell Wright, President, Northwest Civic Forum, to Spiro T. Agnew, 2 May 1968. MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

¹¹ [The first draft containing the eleven point response appears to be Agnew's initial reaction. This draft somewhat sarcastically mirrors Wright's letter, but the final letter was retyped in paragraph form and mailed back to Wright on 9 May 1968. MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

necessity be born of misunderstanding.” Agnew appeared to be on the defensive, perhaps tired of the negative reaction to the speech, replied:

I am sure you realize that I have received a tremendous amount of advice since the controversial statement was issued over a week ago. Contrary to the oversimplification and emotional reaction felt by Negroes, I am not a bigot; nor have I failed in my attempt to communicate and understand their needs...I said what I said because the reasonable moderate community both white and Negro, cannot work in harmony while extremist on the fringes are urging them to kill each other.¹²

Time and again Agnew responded to his detractors with the ingrained belief that he was in correct in statements with black leadership. In a letter dated May 16, Mr. Dewitt L. Sage of Baltimore wondered, “It would be interesting to know how many telegrams and letters you received pro or con on the subject [of his meeting].” Agnew responded, “I have received about 3,000 telegrams and about 12,000 letters on that subject. The outpouring was heavily in favor.”¹³

Indeed, Agnew could stand tall knowing that a large portion of the public was behind him. His strong and unbending persona as a politician was only reinforced by the volume of support of his speech. Those who had cried out for a response were more than happy with what they finally heard from their leader:

My praises go to you for putting personal politics aside and for saying what needed to be said at a time when it would be best heard...I think you were right in speaking up when you did – because the public was listening then. We were all fed up to the ears with rioting and fear throughout the city...The rank and file of the Maryland public is behind you...¹⁴

Even in the face of media admonishment, the speech was an overwhelming success in the court public opinion. The day after the meeting, the *Baltimore Sun* took Agnew to task

¹² [Spiro T. Agnew response to letter from Ronald M. Wilner, 23 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

¹³ [Letter from Dewitt L. Sage to Spiro T. Agnew, 16 May 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41; Spiro T. Agnew Response to letter from Dewitt L. Sage, 21 May 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

¹⁴ [Letter from Barbara Satterfield to Spiro T. Agnew, 15 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

for his statements disagreeing with his castigation of the leaders however, Agnew later received a letter with 385 signatures from *Sunpaper* employees stating, “The undersigned, employes of the *Sunpapers*, wish to offer congratulations upon the stand you took at the recent meeting with Negro leaders in regard to the civil disorders which have taken place in Baltimore.”¹⁵ Agnew appreciated the positive letters in the heat of controversy and again responded with his personal flair. On April 12 Mr. Jerome S. Cardin of Baltimore wrote a two word letter to his governor, “Congratulations! Brilliant!” Agnew returned the favor of the simple letter with a simple response, “Thanks!”¹⁶ In his return letter to Mr. Eugene D. Johnson, a black man from New York City who agreed with the speech, Agnew wrote, “The fact that these beliefs are shared by you, a Negro...makes me believe that the leaders to whom they were addressed do not truly reflect the thinking of the enlightened black community.” As more letters expressed sentiments like, “What a relief to find a public official who has the courage to speak the truth,” it became clear that most Marylanders were not looking for someone to unify; it was looking for someone to take control.¹⁷ Though it is clear that his comments to the leaders eventually cast Agnew as something of a tyrant, his response to the June 4 letter from Mr. Clifford C. Miller of Baltimore displays a much more reflective and compassionate side of his personality:

Certainly, the events of the past months have had a profound impact upon my political thinking. I believe that within the week surrounding the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, the country suffered a series of convulsive shocks that have affected the American mind more deeply than the sum of political consequences over the past five years. I know that I have come away with new insights and new doubts. I am willing to keep an open mind, to hear new ideas, and to view new

¹⁵ [Letter from *Sunpaper* employees to Spiro T. Agnew, 16 November 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

¹⁶ [Letter from Jerome S. Cardin to Spiro T. Agnew, 12 April 1968; Spiro T. Agnew response letter to Jerome S. Cardin, 7 May 1968. MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

¹⁷ [Letter from William Rosenberg to Spiro T. Agnew, 19 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

and old faces in a different light. You cannot see your cities burned before your eyes and not expect to question deeply and, perhaps to change.¹⁸

This very candid statement, made months after the fallout from the meeting on April 11 gives great insight into Agnew's personal dismay with the riots, far removed from the cameras and press clippings. When contrasted with the legacy of a man like Dr. King, there is no question that Agnew's words to the black leadership on that April afternoon did not lay a solid foundation for establishing unity between both blacks and whites; but perhaps, believing he was on the right side, Agnew tried his best to put out the fires.

Lastly, Maryland's elected officials also passed along their opinions of the speech. In the wake of the meeting, many state leaders felt it was necessary to stand behind their executive officer. State Senator Paul Bailey, Fifth Senate District, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, wrote:

I have had an opportunity in my area to discuss your remarks and your stand with many people of all stations in life. There is one unified opinion as to your position in these matters that I gather from listening to the majority of those I have met and that opinion is that you are on firm ground and are abiding securely by your oath as a member of the Bar and your oath as Governor of this State. I want you to know that I feel you have taken a courageous and lawful stand.¹⁹

Not to be outdone, State Senator Frederick Malkus, 16th Senate District, passed along these words, "We need someone like you to tell the people that the masquerade is over, to face realities and revert to law and order."²⁰ Still, black leaders who chose to respond to the governor, particularly those who had attended the meeting, found themselves in a precarious position. When addressing Agnew, they had to defend their own political record while trying to express their disappointment with Agnew for his views. Delegate Floyd B. Adams, Second District, Baltimore City, made the following comments:

¹⁸ [Spiro T. Agnew response to letter from Clifford C. Miller Jr., 4 June 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

¹⁹ [Letter from Paul J. Bailey to Spiro T. Agnew, 19 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

²⁰ [Letter from Senator Frederick Malkus to Spiro T. Agnew, 12 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

It is agreed by all right thinking Americans that burning and looting do not solve problems but by the results shown, create more problems for all...My main concern at this time is to talk a little concerning your remarks addressed to Negro leaders. I cannot accept your remarks due to the fact that during the disturbances many of the leaders stayed up all night to quell the disturbances and you felt that they ran or shirked their civic responsibilities. This is totally unfair...To tell you as plain as I can, you have not developed a dialogue with leaders and the people that live in the ghetto. The Negro men you castigated did, and cannot represent the people in the ghetto. The people in the ghetto feel that they have leadership and don't appreciate you giving or delegating leadership to them.²¹

Adams also noted many times in his letter that he could not amply describe his feelings and suggestions in one letter but tried to speak a truth that the governor may have never considered. Delegate Aris T. Allen included newspaper clippings of previous interviews where he personally criticized the militant sentiments in the black community. He chose to address Agnew with remarks such as these:

First, let me point out quite candidly that during the two years you have been in office considerable progress has been made in the field of Civil Rights...I would like to further point out that I have supported your programs in the past even at times when it was personally politically unsound for me to do so...Secondly, the telegram I received earlier this week invited me to a meeting in the Governor's office. As it turned out this was not a meeting, but a press conference called by Governor Spiro T. Agnew for the specific purpose of publicly reprimanding and embarrassing the Negro leadership as a whole...I feel that had you felt the need for a conference with the Negro leadership, it should have been done in private surrounded by an atmosphere of trust, harmony and complete cooperation. I would also like to emphasize that I did not walk out of Thursday's meeting, but waited to give you an opportunity to express yourself completely and to explain exactly what you meant.²²

Agnew delayed in responding to Adams, in part to grant some time for emotions he believed boiled over to settle down to a simmer. Agnew wrote back that he appreciated Adams' honesty and the letter represented a part of the dialogue that he felt was missing. He went on to say:

²¹ [Letter from Delegate Floyd B. Adams to Spiro T. Agnew, 23 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

²² [Letter from Delegate Aris T. Allen to Spiro Agnew, 13 April 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

The principal thrust of my remarks was not directed to choosing leadership in the Negro community, but to point out the terrible consequences of responsible leadership giving way to irresponsible persons in times of urgent need and imminent crisis...Our system, as few others do, contemplates and makes possible the changes that are needed. However much you may disagree with either the time or tone of my remarks, this I believe and this, I hope, you believe.²³

In his return letter to Allen, Agnew noted that he appreciated Allen's support throughout his tenure, and disagreed with Allen's assertion that the meeting was ill timed. Agnew went on to press the issue that both he and the black leadership should move on to greater concerns:

Perhaps now that almost two months have passed you do not feel as critical of the content. Speaking out against extremists and pointing out the imminent and ultimate dangers of a conciliatory attitude toward advocates of violence was quite unique then...I would like to point out that I made no attempt to classify those invited to the meeting in any category other than "articulate, responsible leadership..." Finally, I believe that nothing can be gained by prolonging discussion over these remarks. My record in civil rights reveals clearly where I stand and gives credence to the honest inspiration of my comments. I have indicated every willingness to resume the dialogue and to work with all people dedicated to building a better Maryland.²⁴

Undoubtedly, the discourse between Agnew and the elected officials of the state mirrored his relationship with the citizens of the state. Although one may certainly disagree with the words of expression from either party, it is evident that an active correspondent relationship existed especially among political contemporaries.

While the examples shared in this paper are only a small sampling, what is clear is Agnew's open ear and consistent voice; always quick to point out what he agreed and disagreed with. The General File also consists of further documentation into the aftermath of the meeting, including memos from the executive department urging a follow-up dialogue with black leadership and Agnew's short lived plan to implement

²³ [Spiro T. Agnew in response to letter from Delegate Floyd B. Adams, 15 May 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

²⁴ [Spiro T. Agnew in response to letter from Delegate Aris T. Allen, 10 June 1968, MSA SC 2221-12-41.](#)

leadership programs for returning black Vietnam veterans. By the fall of 1968, before any of these efforts could become a reality, Agnew found himself the favorite to become Vice-President of the United States. His hard line with black leadership gave him unanticipated prestige in the Republican national party and popularity with working class whites.

Sources have to be maintained to allow users to make their own assertions and conclusions, even it means conserving the controversy of a figure like Agnew. As a repository and destination research facility, the Maryland State Archives presents Agnew documentation in numerous formats, from paper record to online collections, essential to interpreting the foundation Agnew built his name on. The particular collection used for this research is important to understanding the evolution of his platform coupled with his triumphs and missteps along the way.

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