

Freeman challenges seating of Mitchell

Fight looms in Congress as candidate takes fraud case before nation

Debra Hanania Freeman, the independent candidate supported by the U.S. Labor Party for Congress from the 7th District of Maryland — and the actual winner of the seat in the Nov. 7 election — has formally initiated her election contest against the incumbent Parren J. Mitchell before the House of Representatives.

On Friday, Dec. 29, Mrs. Freeman served Mitchell with a "Notice of Intention to Contest," as well as filing with the Clerk of the House. Mrs. Freeman's action, brought under the Federal Contested Elections Act, sets into motion the procedures of the Elections Act. The next step is for Mitchell to answer the charges.

Under the U.S. Constitution, each House of Congress is the sole judge of the qualifications of its members. Therefore, despite the fact that corrupt election officials in the state of Maryland have certified Mitchell as the "winner" of the Nov. 7 general election, the final authority over the disputed seat lies exclusively with the House of Representatives.

Under Rule 32 of the House, Freeman must be admitted to the floor of the House while the outcome of the contest is pending. Mitchell now has 30 days to file a formal response to Mrs. Freeman's charges. Mitchell can file an answer to the charges, in which case Freeman's attorneys can begin taking evidence and testimony from Mitchell, election officials, and voters in the 7th district; or Mitchell can move for dismissal of the contest, in which case the matter will be decided after an open hearing in front of the House Administration Committee's subcommittee on elections. In recent years all election contests have been dismissed by the House after going through the formalities of such hearings.

Freeman draws blood

In 1977, eight challenges were initially brought under the Federal Contested Elections Act, and four of those resulted in formal hearings before the House Administration Committee. In all four cases, the committee threw out the challenges on Motions to Dismiss, thus preventing any of the contestants from utilizing the discovery provisions of the Act in order to gather the evidence which would enable them to prove their cases.

In the case of Republican Ron Paul of Texas, who was contesting the election of Democrat Bob Gammage, the vote difference was only 268, and Mr. Paul had evidence of significant fraud and irregularities. Yet, the Administration Committee threw his case out in an action

that the committee minority properly described as "bizarre" and "incredible."

Mrs. Freeman's challenge drew blood within 24 hours of her filing. On Dec. 30, Parren Mitchell resigned as chairman of the Black Political Caucus, stating that he wanted to "spend more time with his constituents." His concern is well founded. Since the Nov. 7 election, Mrs. Freeman has served as the real representative of the residents of the 7th district, with her office handling constituency problems.

Congress will soon become aware, however, that Mrs. Freeman's constituency goes far beyond Baltimore. Unlike the timid contests waged by Republicans and others in the past, Mrs. Freeman will demonstrate to Congress that voters all across the country want her in Congress as their spokesman for U.S. participation in the European Monetary System.

A nationwide "Citizens' Memorial to Congress" is being circulated across the country calling for Congress both to censure Mrs. Freeman as a spokesman for the EMS, and to launch a thorough investigation into the nationwide vote fraud machinery. At the same time, however, the Kennedy-Mondale wing of the Democratic Party can be expected to put up a strong battle to defend Mitchell. He has served as a stalwart in shepherding pet Kennedy projects through the Congress, including the Humphrey-Hawkins slave labor bill, decriminalization of marijuana, and others.

The Freeman-Mitchell contest will put the House to a sore test of its willingness to face up to the pervasive corruption that infects the electoral machinery in this nation today. In Maryland, both the courts and election officials are conducting a flagrant coverup of the fraud committed against Mrs. Freeman in the November elections. So intent are Maryland officials in covering their tracks that they have even refused Mrs. Freeman access to election materials which are normally available to the public. Likewise, the process by which Parren Mitchell was certified as the "winner" of the November elections defies all the requirements of Maryland's election code.

Congress itself has shown no willingness whatsoever in recent years to uncover the rats' nest of vote fraud which is corrupting this nation's electoral process — and the Congress itself. But neither has Congress in recent times faced anything like the fight shaping up around the Freeman case.