

**"Give Us the Ballot--We Will Transform the South,"  
Martin Luther King, Jr. , Worker (June 2, 1957)**

“Three years ago the Supreme Court of this nation rendered...a decision which . . . . came as a legal and sociological deathblow to the old Plessy doctrine of "separate-but-equal." Unfortunately, many states have risen up in open defiance. The legislative halls of the South ring loud with such words as "interposition" and "nullification." Methods of defiance range from crippling economic reprisals to the tragic reign of violence and terror. . . . [and] all types of conniving methods are still being used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters. . . . So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind--it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact--I can only submit to the edict of others.

So our most urgent request to the President of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote. Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights. Give us the ballot and we will no longer plead to the federal government for passage of an antilynching law; we will by the power of our vote write the law on the statute books of the Southern states and bring an end to the dastardly acts of the hooded perpetrators of violence. Give us the ballot and we will transform the salient misdeeds of bloodthirsty mobs into the calculated good deeds of orderly citizens. Give us the ballot and we will fill our legislative halls with men of good will, and send to the sacred halls of Congress men who will not sign a Southern Manifesto, because of their devotion to the manifesto of justice. Give us the ballot and we will place judges on the benches of the South who will "do justly and love mercy," and we will place at the head of the Southern states.”

Based on the passage above, complete the following tasks:

1. Briefly explain the author’s thesis.
2. Place this document in historical context. What events provoked the writing of this document?
3. What is the “point of view” the writer?