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STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HIGH COURT REFUSES PLEA
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WASHINGTON, D. C. - The United States Supreme Court refused this week to review lower court orders compelling a Mississippi registrar to enroll 43 Negroes as voters and to cease discrimination against prospective Negro applicants.

The court let stand a Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision against Forrest County registrar Theron Lynd, charged with civil and criminal contempt.

The United States Department of Justice contends Lynd defied court orders prohibiting racial discrimination against Negro voters. The registrar's attorneys have asked a three-judge panel of the Court of appeals to hold off judgement in the case until the Supreme Court rules on whether a defendant in such cases is entitled to a jury trial. The test case is that a Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett, charged with civil and criminal contempt for his part in trying to block admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi.

If the appellate panel decides to go ahead without waiting for the Supreme Court, and if they sustain the charges, Lynd's attorneys have asked for at least 91 days in jail and a \$301 fine, an appealable sentence.

Lynd's case goes back to 1961, when the Justice Department sued him in Jackson. The Department later won an order from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals after Federal Judge William Cox failed to issue one. The Supreme Court denied Lynd's appeal on November 5, 1962.

On April 30, 1963, the Department instituted contempt proceedings on the ground he did not obey the order. He was found in civil contempt, ordered to register 43 specific Negroes, to stop requiring Negroes to interpret sections of the state constitution more difficult than those assigned to whites, and to stop rejecting Negroes for errors on their applications if they had met certain other requirements. Lynd's appeal of this latest order was denied January 6, 1964.

Negroes are 28% of Holmes County's population. Only .20% are registered voters, however.