Copy of the letter sent to Mayor Gayle

Honorable Mayor W. J. Gayle
City Hall
Montgomery, Alabama

May 21, 1954

Dear Sir:

The Woman’s Political Council is very grateful to you and the City Commissioners for the hearing you allowed our representatives during the month of March, 1954, when the “city-bus-fare-increase case” was being reviewed.

There were several things the Council asked for:

1. A city law that would make it possible for Negroes to sit from back toward front, and whites from front toward back until the seats are taken.

2. That Negroes not be asked or forced to pay fare at front and go to the rear of the bus to enter.

3. That buses stop at every corner in residential sections occupied by Negroes as they do in communities where whites reside.

We are happy to report that buses have begun stopping at more corners now in some sections where Negroes live than previously. However, the same practices in seating and boarding the bus continue.

Mayor Gayle, three-fourths of the riders of these public conveyances are Negroes. If Negroes did not patronize them, they could not possibly operate.

More and more of our people are already arranging with neighbors and friends to ride to keep from being insulted and humiliated by bus drivers.

There has been talk from twenty-five or more local organizations of planning a city-wide boycott of buses. We, the Council, believe that forceful measures are necessary in bargaining for a convenience which is right for all bus passengers.

We, the Council, believe that when this matter has been put before you and the Commissioners, that agreeable terms can be met in a quiet and amicable manner to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Many of our Southern cities in neighboring states have practiced the policies we seek without incident whatsoever. Atlanta, Baton Rouge and Savannah in Georgia have done this for years. Even Mobile, in our own state, does this and all the passengers are satisfied.

Please consider this plan, and if possible, not favorably upon it, for even now plans are being made to ride less, or not at all, on our buses. We do not want this.

Respectfully yours,

Jo Ann Robinson, President