

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI

February 23, 1938

Hon. Theodore G. Bilbo,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

Thank you for the copy of your speech. I chanced to visit the Senate Chamber back in the early part of January, saw you from the visitors gallery, had you paged a little later when I was preparing to leave, but you were not to be found at that time.

I have been interested in the filibustering tactics of our Southern Senators in their opposition to the anti-lynching bill, and have kept up with it more or less. It seems now as if you have it defeated.

You doubtless noticed that our Mississippi legislature recently defeated overwhelmingly a hard liquor proposal. There cannot be any doubt as to how the citizens of Mississippi stand with reference to the legalization of liquor. We are against it strongly, and are still convinced that the only sensible way to deal with a business which is essentially a social, political and moral outlaw, is to outlaw it. Where can there be any consistency in legalizing and fertilizing the mother of the major part of our crimes, and by the same authority outlawing her numerous, legitimate criminal children?

I am writing this letter to ask if there is not something the United States Government can do to assist the States in their fight against the liquor business. I am told that in Mississippi that there are many hundreds of liquor dealers who hold Federal licenses to sell liquor in Mississippi in violation of our State laws. Is not this an open violation upon the part of our Federal Government of our much-cherished principle of State Rights? Is not this in violation of the guarantee which the Twenty-first Amendment to our Constitution gives the States wishing to retain prohibition? It seems to me that it is. It is a curious governmental anomaly that allows our National Government to reach its strong hand into our States and promote, encourage and take money for that which our States outlaw, and ~~do~~ it with impunity. In Mississippi we are forced to regard the Federal Government as our chief and preferred bootlegger.