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October 1, 1936.

Mayor Lloyd C. Stark,
Stark for Governor Headquarters,
Jefferson City, Missouri.

Dear Sir:

I made an effort to see you this morning about a matter I wished to discuss with you, but arrived at your hotel after you had checked out and am writing you now instead.

The registration exposures at Kansas City call for prompt and drastic treatment. I am aware of your declarations in favor of honest elections and of the indications given of action on your part in harmony with these declarations when, and if you should be elected governor. That is not sufficient - the situation demands immediate attention from you with all the energy and intelligence of which you are capable. If these frauds are permitted to go on to fruition you will be the chief beneficiary as the head of the state ticket. The gangsters will drop their swag in your lap. You will be the fence to receive these stolen ballots. How you and the other members of the state ticket can maintain your aloofness to this matter is beyond my comprehension.

I know that this rape of the ballots could not go over except with the help of renegade Republican clerks and judges and election commissioners. Nevertheless, it is a Democratic machine built and operated by Democrats for the benefit of Democrats. The Democrats cannot escape responsibility for it and for failure to suppress it.

These crimes against the ballot rank next to treason. They are crimes against the government because ours is a government of the people and the ballot is the voice of the people speaking and directing in government. To suppress that voice, to simulate it, to fraudulently record it, the mind cannot conceive a blacker crime, far worse than any wrong one may do an individual can possibly be.

The registration books should be rigidly checked and every fraudulent name that can possibly be detected should be stricken off. The statutory remedy seems to be efficient if applied. There is a whole month ahead of you before the election. The commissioners in office of themselves will do little. Enough possibly to withstand an attack by demurrer as the lawyers say, but no more than a face saving exhibition. The Kansas City Star

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has shown a number of instances in which its reporters have followed in the track of the clerks of the commissioners and uncovered ghosts by the score not theretofore disturbed.

There is no difficulty about the course to take. Here is the plan. I urge you to call a conference of all the candidates for State offices, the Governor and the State committee and begin immediately a thorough and relentless scrutiny of these registration lists employing whatever agencies may be necessary to get at the facts. Bring the election commissioners into sincere cooperation, or if this is not possible, remove them and appoint others and furnish the judges and clerks of election in November with purged registration lists and maintain your organization for service in the election to prevent frauds in voting and recording.

The ideal this programme presents is that of an honest count of ballots cast by a free people in government, noble in concept and practical of accomplishment. You once

marched under a banner inscribed: "Save the world for Democracy." Will you hold back now when the cry is, "Save your State for Democracy" from a horde of thugs and gangsters who are seeking, and have in part succeeded in supplanting orderly government with mob rule.

I have heard the talk about your Pendergast alliance. I have given no heed to it. I have assumed that you would be practical enough to accept all the support offered you in your race, and I have had no disposition to speculate upon whether you had or had not sworn fealty to the Boss. I had faith in the Stark name. It has been a household word in my family, now numbering six Democrats, ever since we built our first home forty- seven years ago, and procured a Stark catalogue to help with our plantings, but an issue has been framed for you by the current of events which puts you to the test now in advance of the election, and if you yield and remain obscure and inactive in this emergency, how can we suppress anxiety with respect to your independence after the election.

In conclusion, it must be obvious to you that the generalizations in which you dealt with the subject of honest elections in your speech at St. Joseph last night, do not answer the demand for a clear, specific and unmistakable statement from you as to what you personally intend to do now about this Kansas City situation.

Very truly,
Joseph Morton