

S0745 Senturia, Ben (1943-)

Papers, 1976-1987

50 Folders, Artifacts, 12 Photographs, 2 Tapes

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Related collections:

S0747 Senturia, Ben (1943-), Addenda, 1969-1988

S0752 Senturia, Ben (1943-), Campaign Finance Reform, Records, 1975-2000

St. Louisan Ben Senturia (b. 9/23/43) donated these papers to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri St. Louis on August 28, 1992.

Long active in environmental, antiwar and political reform efforts, Senturia graduated from Washington University in 1966. He served as a research assistant for Barry Commoner, an early and ardent environmentalist, from 1966 through 1968. Senturia became a predoctoral fellow in the Environmental Field Program at Washington University at this time. Thereafter, he worked as an organizer and campaign consultant for a variety of public interest, non-profit organizations, chief among them were the St. Louis Coalition for the Environment (for which he served as Executive Vice President, 1970-1972, Executive Director, 1972-1977, and then as a member of the Coalition's Board of Directors) and the St. Louis based Clearinghouse for the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign (as Education/Outreach Coordinator, 1982-1986.) Throughout this time and beyond, Senturia frequently acted as a consultant to numerous nonprofit organizations, assisting them in organizing and directing political or fund-raising campaigns as part of a private business, the Center for Active Citizenship, organized in 1989.

Other collections related to the Senturia papers include: S0421, Coalition For The Environment (1969-), Records, 1968-1978; S0453, Coalition For The Environment, Records Addenda, 1969-1984; S0454, National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, Records, 1980-1986.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1-CITIZENS FOR REFORMED ELECTRIC RATES, PROPOSITION 1, 1976, FOLDERS 1-8

In December 1975, the Missouri Public Service Commission approved a policy called Construction Work in Progress (CWIP). CWIP allowed Union Electric to increase electric rates to finance in part the construction of its Callaway nuclear power plant. Consumers were expected to pay part of the construction costs of the plant before it began producing power (see collection S0423).

The public service commission's decision generated immediate opposition.' By March 1976, the Utility Consumers Council of Missouri, the Missouri Public Interest Group, the St. Louis

Coalition for the Environment, among several consumer and environmental groups, formed the Citizens for Reformed Electric Rates. CRER headed a successful state-wide effort to place a proposition on the ballot that would overturn the Public Service Commission's award of CWIP to Union Electric. Voters approved Proposition 1 and reversed the CWIP decision.' Arranged by topic under the following subseries: Petition campaign for Proposition 1 (f.1-2); Campaign material for Proposition 1 (f.3-4); newspaper coverage of Proposition 1 (f.4); nuclear power regulatory campaigns, various states, 1976 (f.6-8).

SERIES 2-CITIZENS FOR A RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY (CRP) 1980, FOLDERS 9-12

In December 1979, environmental groups from across Missouri, opposed to the construction of nuclear power plants, met to organize a political effort to prevent the completion of Union Electric's Callaway nuclear power station. The groups, including St. Louis-based environmental organizations, formed Citizens for a Radioactive Waste Policy. CRP worked to place Proposition 11 on the November 1980 ballot. Prop 11 provided that any firm building a nuclear power plant in Missouri had to develop a long term nuclear waste disposal policy before construction permits could be issued. CRP succeeded in putting Proposition 11 on the 1980 ballot but voters soundly rejected the issue. Union Electric and its supporters outspent the CRP \$1,428,677 to \$50,636.02. Arranged by topic under the following subseries: CRP campaign material for Prop. 11 (f. 9); CRP get-out-the-vote effort (f.10);' newspaper coverage of the Prop. 11 issue, (f.11) opposition to Prop. 11 (f12).

SERIES 3-ST. LOUIS COMMITTEE TO *HELP* HANDICAPPED EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING PROGRAMS, 1980, FOLDER 13

HELP supported St. Louis City Proposition No. 1 to levy a \$.05 property tax increase to provide funds for the support of handicapped adults living in the city. The funds would provide sheltered workshop jobs and residential facilities. Material in this subseries deals with getting yes voters to go to the polls in the August 1980 primary election (f. 13).

SERIES 4-NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREEZE CAMPAIGN (NATIONAL CLEARING HOUSE, ST. LOUIS), 1982-1986, FOLDERS 14-38

(**Note:** WHMC holds the official records of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, donated by its long-serving director Randy Kehler.' See S0454 for a detailed description of that holding.)

The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign opened its St. Louis office in December 1981.' The St. Louis office, dubbed as the National Clearinghouse, served as the permanent administrative office for the NWFC. Ben Senturia served as political education/outreach coordinator for the National Clearinghouse and this series reflects that role.' The records deal chiefly with developing, organizing, and supporting state and local political activity in support of a nuclear weapons freeze in the early and mid-1980s. The NWFC campaign culminated in the 1984 elections with a nationwide push to elect senators and congressmen willing to approve legislation freezing nuclear weapons production. Series 4 is arranged by topic under the following subseries:' early lobbying efforts to win a nuclear freeze, 1981 through 1983, (f.21-34); the 1984 election effort (f.35-38).

SERIES 5-THE "NO DOME" CAMPAIGN, 1985-1986, FOLDERS 39-45

In 1985, William "Bill" Bidwell, owner of the St. Louis Cardinals football team, threatened to move his organization to another city unless the city of St. Louis or St. Louis County built a domed stadium to house the team. St. Louis County Executive Eugene McNary embraced the idea and worked to find a private corporation to build the stadium while offering the county's political and financial support in the effort. Sverdrup Corporation, a major St. Louis construction firm, owned 500 acres of land near the Earth City complex in far western St. Louis County, along the Missouri River. Sverdrup sponsored a feasibility study on building a domed stadium on some of that property. County Executive McNary endorsed the idea. The proposed dome project led to the formation in February 1986 of a "No Dome" Committee organized by a coalition of environmental groups (notably the Missouri Coalition for the Environment and the St. Louis region Open Space Council) and other civic groups. Environmentalists particularly opposed the proposal because Sverdrup's property lay within a federally protected wetland area. The "No Dome" committee employed Ben Senturia to direct its "No Dome" campaign. The City of St. Louis, led by Major Vincent C. Schoemehl, Jr., and Anheuser-Busch, owner the baseball Cardinals, opposed the idea as well. For much of 1986, the "No Dome" Committee gathered petitions, advertised the "No Dome" theme, and urged county municipalities to approve resolutions opposing the plan. In the end, the stadium proposal failed to win widespread support. Arranged by topic under the following subseries: the stadium proposal (f.39); organizing and directing opposition to the dome (f.40-41); newspaper coverage to the campaign (f.42); study opposing the stadium, 1986 (f.43); legal action against the dome (f.44-45).

SERIES 6-CAMPAIGN HANDOUTS, FOLDER 46

A collection of handouts from the above listed series. (f.46)

SERIES 7-ARTIFACTS, FOLDERS 47-48

Campaign buttons (f.47); decals and bumper stickers (f.48)

SERIES 8-TAPES, FOLDER 49

T745.1, T745.2

FOLDER LISTING

BOX 1 (009731)

Folders 1-18

Series 1-CITIZENS FOR REFORMED ELECTRIC RATES (CRER), PROPOSITION 1, 1976

1. Organizing the Petition effort
2. Proposition 1, Petition campaign, Organizing the Petition Effort
3. Campaign Material, Proposition 1
4. Campaign Material, Proposition 1
5. Newspaper Coverage, Proposition 1

6. Campaign Material from California, to regulate nuclear power, 1976
7. Campaign Material from California, to regulate nuclear power, 1976
8. Campaign Material to regulate nuclear power, various states, 1976

**Series 2-CITIZENS FOR A RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY (CRP),
PROPOSITION 11, 1980**

9. CRP, Proposition 1, Organizing the Petition effort
10. CRP, Get out the vote effort, Proposition 1
11. Newspaper Coverage on the Proposition 1 campaign
12. Opposition to Proposition 11

**Series 3-ST. LOUIS COMMITTEE TO *HELP* HANDICAPPED EMPLOYMENT AND
LIVING PROGRAMS, 1980**

13. Campaign Material for the *HELP* issue, Proposition 1
- Series 4-NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREEZE CAMPAIGN (NWFC, NATIONAL CLEARING
HOUSE, ST. LOUIS, 1982-1986
14. Budgetary Material, 1982-1985
 15. Organization and Operation of NWFC National Clearing House, 1982-1985
 16. NWFC National Committee Meetings, 1983, Jan. 1984
 17. NWFC National Committee Meetings, July 1984, 1985
 18. NWFC National Conference, Annual Meetings, 1983, 1984, 1985

BOX 2 (062517)

Folders 19-38

SERIES 4, (CONT'D)

19. NWFC National Conference, Annual MeetingS1985, 1986
20. NWFC, Closing the St. Louis Clearing House, 1984-1985
21. "The Freeze Newsletter," July 1981
22. NWFC, the 1982 election and the nuclear freeze issue
23. "Citizens Lobby" and an anti-nuclear weapons demonstration, Washington, DC 1983
24. Support for nuclear freeze proposals, 1982, 1983
25. General information on a nuclear weapons and a nuclear freeze, 1982-1984
26. Congressional action on a nuclear freeze, 1982-1984
27. News clippings on a nuclear freeze, 1983-1985
28. General information on nuclear freeze efforts, 1983-1985
29. Planning the "Freeze Voter Campaign" for 1984 election
30. Essays on a nuclear freeze
31. NWFC planning, 1983-1985
32. Direct action for a nuclear freeze, 1983-1985
33. "Lifecycle" in support of NWFC, 1984
34. Information on the economic impact of nuclear weapons
35. Nuclear weapons and 1984 election
36. "Bird Dog" campaign and nuclear weapons freeze, 1984 election
37. Freeze voter campaign, 1984

38. "Turn out the vote" effort, election-day, November 6, 1984

BOX 3 (067518)
Folders 39-49

SERIES 5-THE "NO DOME" CAMPAIGN, 1985-1986

- 39. The stadium proposal, 1985-1986
- 40. Organizing and directing the "No Dome" campaign
- 41. The petitioning effort, 1985-1986
- 42. Newspaper coverage of the "No Dome" issue, 1985-1986
- 43. Study opposing building the dome, 1986
- 44. Legal action against building the dome, 1986-1987
- 45. Legal action against building the dome, 1987

SERIES 6-CAMPAIGN HANDOUTS

- 46. Campaign handouts from all the series

SERIES 7-ARTIFACTS

- 47. Campaign button
- 48. Decals and bumper stickers

SERIES 8 TAPES

- 49. T745.1, T745.2
- 50. **Photographs, 745.1-745.12**