

OCT 19 1953

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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G.F.I.

126-J

October 17, 1953

Dear Mr. Idar:

This is in reference to the letter signed by you and Mr. Paul C. Sparks of the Texas State Federation of Labor and sent to the President on October thirteenth.

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Unfortunately, your letter arrived too late to revise the President's full schedule of commitments during his visit to Texas for the dedication of the Falcon Dam. However, I assure you that the matter about which you wrote is receiving most careful consideration by appropriate officials and agencies of the government.

X PP 71-F-3 Japan

Sincerely yours,

PAUL T. CARROLL
Staff Secretary

re "webback" labor #problem

Mr. Ed Idar, Jr. X
Executive Secretary
American GI Forum of Texas
310 Nalle Building
Austin, Texas

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Copy for: Paul C. Sparks



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AMERICAN GI FORUM OF TEXAS
INDEPENDENT VETERANS ORGANIZATION

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412 LITTLEFIELD BUILDING
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AUSTIN, TEXAS

October 13, 1953

Hon. Dwight D. Eisenhower
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

It is with growing concern that we have observed plans developing for your visit to the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas for the Falcon Dam dedicatory ceremonies without any preparations for your visit to include arrangements for you to become familiar with one of the most crucial problems facing our nation. We refer to the wetback problem on which Attorney General Herbert A. Brownell reported to you in detail following his visit to California.

We earnestly hope and pray, Mr. President, that you will take advantage of your visit to make a personal survey of the wetback situation. It will be a great opportunity for you to become familiar at firsthand with the acute problems created by the wetback. Thousands of citizens in South Texas and elsewhere who are affected adversely by this problem are anxious that you not miss this opportunity to familiarize yourself personally with the conditions in the area.

We feel confident that the United States Border Patrol can point out to you in the course of only a very short time many examples of the effects of the wetback in the area, examples of the housing and living conditions of the wetbacks, examples of the thousands of wetbacks flooding the country.

It will be a simple matter for these conscientious officers, Mr. President, to show you wetbacks at work practically within eyesight of your host's residence in the Valley, taking the livelihood away from other thousands of American citizens who are forced to migrate because they cannot compete with labor that is paid as little as twenty-five cents an hour.

It will be a simple matter, Mr. President, for you to examine the apprehension records in Border Patrol Headquarters at McAllen—records which will prove beyond all doubt who are the most flagrant violators of our immigration laws in that border area. It will be a simple matter for you to see thousands of homes boarded up in the Valley at this time of the year because their occupants, all American citizens, and their families have been forced on the road in search of better-paid employment. It will be a simple matter for you to visit the Border Patrol Alien Detention Center at McAllen and observe the

October 13, 1953

It will be a matter of utmost simplicity to drive in less than half an hour from your host's residence in the Valley to see practically the same squalor and living conditions at wetback camps as you saw in defeated Nazi Germany. It will be also a simple matter for you to determine the extent to which low-paid, illegal labor was used in the construction of the very project that you are to dedicate.

In the name of thousands of citizens who are suffering from this grievous problem, Mr. President, we direct this plea to you, urging you not to allow your official guides to conduct you merely along the glitter and gloss of U. S. Highway 83 but to urge that you be taken for a few minutes ride on either side of the famed Military Highway that you may see for yourself the true conditions to be found in the area. One hour of your two days in the Valley, Mr. President, with Border Patrolmen in McAllen as your guides will be sufficient for you to determine where the truth really lies on this vital issue. Will you not grant that one hour, Mr. President, for the sake of thousands of citizens of Spanish-speaking descent and other thousands of working people throughout the country who are suffering from the effects of this problem?

Respectfully yours,

Ed Idar, Jr.

ED IDAR, JR.
Executive Secretary
American GI Forum

Paul C. Sparks

PAUL C. SPARKS
Executive Secretary
Texas State Federation of Labor

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