



house of representatives

Representative Gonzalo Barrientos
Box 2910 Austin, Texas 78767

475-3072

Committees:
Appropriations
Social Services

October 27, 1975

The Honorable Mark C. White
Secretary of State
Austin, Texas

Dear Secretary White:

Today I received your letter of October 24, 1975 responding to my letter of October 15, 1975, regarding submission by your office of H.B. 1097, Acts of the 64th Legislature, to the U.S. Department of Justice for its review pursuant to the extension of the Voting Rights Act.

I am disappointed that you and your staff have not yet found the time to submit H.B. 1097 to the Justice Department, and had hoped my request to be informed when you planned to submit it would garner a more substantive answer than "as soon as possible." As I stated earlier, this legislative redistricting act will require much time for the Justice Department to review it properly.

Every member of the Legislature from counties redistricted by H.B. 1097 and private citizens interested in seeking election to the House from those counties would, I believe, inform you that it is advisable to have the Justice Department act on H.B. 1097 well in advance of the filing deadline for this spring's primary. I know from first hand experience in 1974 the magnitude of the problems created by planning a campaign in one district only to have a totally different district presented at the last minute. I am aware that you played a role in that experience, and I am not at all interested in repeating the situation. Whether they agree with your position on the Voting Rights Act or not, I am certain my colleagues effected by H.B. 1097 would not be appreciative if they too were forced into such a situation.

Shortly after I sent my letter to you I received a copy of correspondence between your office and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund in San Antonio. In a letter dated October 17, 1975, Mr. George J. Korbel of MALDEF requested that you explain your refusal of MALDEF's earlier request for copies of all submissions to the Justice Department made by your office pursuant to the Voting Rights Act. When contacted

by telephone this morning Mr. Korbel had yet to receive a response to his letter. I am hopeful you will not provide them with an explanation of your denial, but with the material they are seeking.

It is obvious to me that no one, with the exception of your staff and the Justice Department, knows which changes in Texas election laws have and have not been submitted to the Justice Department for review. I am therefore requesting that all submissions which have been made to date be made available for inspection in your office by a member of my staff on Thursday, October 30, 1975.

There are many people who privately contend that your unsuccessful attempt to exclude Texas from the extension of the Voting Rights Act has led you to engage in tactics aimed at self-fulfilling prophecy. You have charged continuously in your Texas to Washington shuttle, and in numerous meetings throughout the state, that the portion of the Voting Rights Act requiring federal review of changes in state and local election laws and procedures will create chaos in Texas elections. These critics believe you are deliberately delaying required submissions, thereby insuring any changes ordered by the Justice Department will not come until the last moment. If planning by state and local election officials were altered after the expense of time and money then your prophecy of havoc would be fulfilled.

The fact that you have yet to submit H.B. 1097 to the Justice Department, although months have gone by since the passage of H.B. 1097 and the Voting Rights Act, tends to give credence to your critics' view. I am hopeful that a review by my staff of your submissions to the Justice Department will lead me to conclude this view is not correct. If you need to contact me regarding this inspection, please do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gonzalo Barrientos", written in a cursive style.

Gonzalo Barrientos

GB/mgc

CC: See attachment

Attachment:

CC: Mr. George J. Korbel
MALDEF
201 N. St. Mary's Street
San Antonio, Texas

The Honorable Roy Blake
The Honorable Carl Parker
The Honorable Chester Slay, Jr.
The Honorable Pike Powers
The Honorable Ronnie Earle
The Honorable Sarah Weddington
The Honorable Wilhelmina Delco
The Honorable Ed Watson
The Honorable Ed Harris
The Honorable Andy Baker
The Honorable Lyndon Olson, Jr.
The Honorable Lane Denton
The Honorable Elmer Tarbox
The Honorable R. B. McAlister
The Honorable Joe Salem
The Honorable Carlos Truan
The Honorable DeWitt Hale
The Honorable Paul Moreno
The Honorable Luther Jones
The Honorable Bob O'Kelley
The Honorable Ron Coleman
The Honorable Melchor Chavez
The Honorable Tony Garcia
The Honorable Chris Miller
The Honorable Dave Finney
The Honorable Gib Lewis
The Honorable Joe Spurlock
The Honorable Tom Schieffer
The Honorable Doyle Willis
The Honorable Charles Evans
The Honorable Bill Hilliard
The Honorable Bud Sherman
The Honorable Craig Washington
The Honorable Bob Vale
The Honorable G. J. Sutton
The Honorable Ben Reyes
The Honorable Mickey Leland
The Honorable Joe Hernandez
The Honorable Matt Garcia
The Honorable Barbara Jordan
The Honorable Richard Moya

✓ Dr. Hector Garcia
American G. I. Forum