STATEMENT OF

VICENTE T. XIMENES

COMMISSIONER

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE
U.S. SENATE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR

August 11, 1969

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EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

FROM THE OFFICE OF VICENTE T. XIMENES, COMMISSIONER 202/343-3134

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Stapleton Amport Rmauls

As a Commissioner of Equal Employment Opportunity, as a Mexican American who knows what job discrimination can mean, and as a concerned human being, I can do no less than to continue my wholehearted support of S. 2453. On Monday, August 11, I testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Labor and I intend to carry on with my commitment to this comprehensive job opportunities legislation. The President's recent welfare proposal states that those poor, who can, must work to eat. I would say that the success or failure of such a program depends on our opening the doors to decent jobs for the poor of all races and national origins. (Attached for information is copy of testimony presented to Senate Subcommittee on Labor)

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am

Vicente Ximenes, Commissioner of Equal Employment

Opportunity. I support Senate Bill 2453. At my request the

Commission reviewed Equal Employment Opportunity legislation
on May 12, 1969. The consensus was that we continue to insist
on cease and desist powers for the Commission.

Prior to the May 12 meeting, I consistently proposed and explained the need for cease and desist powers to organizations, legislators and the general public.

In view of what I thought was the Commission's position as well as my belief in the need for comprehensive legislation I have wholeheartedly supported:

- 1. Cease and desist authority
- 2. Coverage for companies and unions of 8 persons or more
- 3. Coverage of federal Civil Service employees
- 4. Coverage of state and local employees
- 5. Federal government contract compliance activity transfer to EEOC

We have suffered too long to engage in "games people play."

We have suffered too long to continue employment tokenism for the blacks, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Orientals,

Spanish Americans and South and Central Americans. Our nation

will not survive in its present form, even with our magnificent moon landing feat and technical know how, if cease and desist and the other parts of Senate Bill 2453 as well as other meaningful civil rights do not become a reality soon.

Senate Bill 2453 is the most comprehensive and meaningful job discrimination legislation ever proposed. Comprehensiveness coupled with cease and desist authority is the answer to job discrimination against blacks, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Orientals, Spanish Americans, females and other groups.

S. 2453, if enacted, constitutes a master stroke against the evils of job discrimination.

In the Los Angeles hearings I found that in that metropolitan area the ABC, NBC, and CBS networks employed only 75 Spanish Surnamed persons out of 3,500 total employees. The picture is the same for blacks and other minorities.

As we look across the nation at private industry employees, we see over 75 percent of all minority employees holding blue collar and service jobs while only about 50 percent of all white employees hold such jobs and these are primarily the better paying, more prestigious craft classifications. These patterns are local, they are regional and they are nationwide. They are monotonous in their similarity.

In the federal government the same patterns exist. In 1967, 87 percent of all black general schedule employees were in grades one through eight; 76 percent of all Mexican American GS employees were in grades one through eight; and 83 percent of all Indian GS employees were in the one throught eight category. The above compares with 56 percent in grades one through eight for all employees. In five southwestern states the Department of Interior, for example, employed 3,650 persons in grades 12 - 18 and only 35 of these were Spanish Surnamed. Similar breakdowns are there to be seen within the wage board and postal field pay categories.

At the local level, the record of the City Public Service

Board of San Antonio serves as example of the need to extend

our coverage. In 1968 this municipally owned board had 14 Negro

employees of whom 9 were in service or labor classifications and

807 Mexican Americans of whom about 616 were laborers, 157 were

operatives and 34 were classified above grade five. Mexican Americans

and Negroes account for nearly 50 percent of the total population of
the city of San Antonio.

While I served in the double capacity of member of the

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and as Chairman of
the Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican American Affairs (1967 to
early 1969), I received hundreds of complaints from Mexican
Americans regarding federal government discrimination in hiring
and the whole gamut of work and wage conditions. Often these came

to me in my capacity as an Equal Employment Opportunity

Commissioner. I could do nothing to help them. It was only
through the Inter-Agency Committee that we could seek relief for
these persons. But the tools at our disposal were uncertain and
limited to presenting the employee's complaint to appropriate
officials and counseling the aggrieved party. Several times we set
up meetings between federal officials and community persons. However, these measures were all dependent on the good will of those
involved—a tenuous thread on which to hang the relief of an employee
who has suffered discriminatory action.

I strongly believe that these minority patterns of employment spell historical and systematic discrimination, in and out of government, at all levels. Therefore, only a systematic, comprehensive approach will do the job of controlling and finally eliminating the sickness in our employment markets.

Thre President's recent welfare proposal states that those poor, who can must work to eat. I agree with the statement if at the same time the doors to job opportunity are opened wide by private, federal, state and local government sectors of our economy. The comprehensive job opportunity measures proposed in S. 2453 would certainly help the welfare situation for the minorities who suffer from job discrimination.

The people, the captains of industry, the organizers of labor, the officials of government know what is needed. There is no compromise or middle road between the right and the wrong.

We are either committed to end job discrimination—as we are committed to the Spirit of Apollo—or we are playing games.

At any rate, we fool only ourselves, not the people who see the blindfold of Justice gone askew and feel her jaundiced eye upon them.