

Dear Senator Bentsen
Congressman Ortiz
General Palmer
Secretary Stone

As Founder and Chairman of the Board of the National Archives and Historical Foundation of the American GI Forum, I take great interest in issues concerning Hispanics in our country's military services, particularly the recruitment, evaluation, and selection of Mexican-American candidates by our nation's service academies at Annapolis, Maryland, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and West Point, New York. Being a proud veteran of the United States Army, I am especially interested in cases involving Mexican-American candidates who have applied to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

It has been brought to my attention that Mr. Jesse Joseph Torres, who was formerly enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, has been denied admission into the U.S. Military Academy Class of 1994. It is my organization's understanding that Mr. Torres was rejected by West Point because his "academic record is not strong enough" to qualify him for admission. My sources have indicated to me that Mr. Torres received a very generalized letter of denial which failed to specifically reveal the factor(s) which rendered his academic record unsatisfactory for admission.

I am familiar with the cadet-candidate file of Mr. Torres, and I think that his record contains very commendable items of information. Although I am not entirely familiar with the exact standards set by the USMA admissions committee, I believe I should question the decision that Mr. Torres "would not have a reasonable chance for success if enrolled at this time." I think this decision is somewhat harsh, and I believe it was quite hastily considering Mr. Torres's overall record. I fear something in his file may have been inadvertently overlooked. Therefore I am respectfully making a formal request of the United States Military Academy and the United States Army to provide me with a most exact reason for Mr. Torres's academic record being deemed as "not strong enough". Why are his chances believed to be unreasonable?

In reviewing Mr. Torres's past academic and military accomplishments, I believe his chances for success are reasonable. He has completed a junior college curriculum and has accumulated 70 hours of college credit. He has also completed seven out of eight academic units at the United States Military Academy Preparatory School and has earned a numerical grade point average of 74 percent which I consider a strong "C" average. His SAT Scores consist of a 490 Verbal and 520 Math. I can see where these scores may cause Mr. Torres to be considered a slight risk; however, his ACT scores consist of a 29 English and 25 Math. His English Achievement test score consists of a 580 which is considered to be very good. He has been in the

Army since he was 17 years odd. He joined the Army National Guard when he was only a junior in high school. He felt an obligation to serve his country at an early point in his life. Upon graduation from high school he entered the Army ROTC 2 Year Early commissioning Program at Kemper Military Junior College. He successfully completed the program with the title of Distinguished Military Student and was scheduled to receive a Reserve commission in May of 1989. He turned down his commission in order to compete for admission to West Point. I believe that his commitment to becoming an officer is genuine considering the fact that he turned down a commission he earned in order to fulfill his goal of earning a West Point education. I think Mr. Torres is a young man of unusual promise. He took a tremendous risk when he decided to turn down his commission just for a chance of receiving an appointment to the Academy. He is a man of sacrifice and selfless service.

As I stated earlier in this letter I take a great interest in issues concernig Mexican-American youths applying to West Point. With that in mind I also respectfully request that the American GI Forum receive specific information as a result of the following inquiries:

- 1) How many Mexican-American cadets are enrolled presently at the United States Military Academy?
- 2) How many Mexican-Americans have applied, been accepted, and rejected since 1 April 1979?
- 3) How many Mexican-American officers have been graduated from West Point since 26 May 1979?
- 4) How many Mexican-American officers are currently serving on the USMA admissions committee?
- 5) How many Mexican-American "OUTREACH" officers are currently working for the Department of Admissions at West Point?

I would also like to know if the United States Military Academy preferentially evaluates the files of athletes from the USMA Prep School and from the civilian schools around the nation.

I hope you can understand my great interest in the above issues. With your help I may find the answers to the questions of my organization.

It would show great faith in any future negotiations if our questions were addressed as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your kind attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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