

TELEGRAM FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

JULY 10, 1964

TO DR. HECTOR GARCIA

FROM PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON

ENACTMENT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS BILL CHALLENGES ALL AMERICANS TO JOIN IN AN AFFIRMATIVE VOLUNTARY EFFORT TO PRESERVE ORDER AND TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF EQUAL TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS. TO ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST THIS VOLUNTARY CITIZENS' EFFORT, A COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE BILL UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE LUTHER HODGES AND UNDER THE DIRECTION OF LEROY COLLINS, FORMER GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA. THE SERVICE WILL ASSIST COMMUNITIES IN PREVENTING OR RESOLVING RACIAL DISPUTES AND TENSIONS THROUGH REASON, PERSUASION, AND CONCILIATION.

I AM APPOINTING A NATION-WIDE COMMITTEE OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE WHO WILL AUGMENT THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE. I WANT AS ITS MEMBERS LEADING AMERICANS WHO WILL LEND THEIR INFLUENCE, THEIR SKILL, AND THEIR TIME TO THE CRUCIAL TASK OF FOSTERING VOLUNTARY OBSERVANCE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL.

I DEEPLY HOPE YOU WILL ADVISE ME BY RETURN TELEGRAM THAT YOU WILL SERVE ON THE NATIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

IT IS CONTEMPLATED THAT AFTER THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THIS CITIZENS COMMITTEE AT WHICH TIME THE DIRECTIONS OF THE OVER-ALL NATIONAL PROGRAM WILL BE FULLY SPELLED OUT AND YOUR OWN ROLE WILL BE MORE CLEARLY DEFINED.

I URGE YOU AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN TO USE YOUR LEADERSHIP IN THE MEANTIME TO PROMOTE A SPIRIT OF ACCEPTANCE AND OBSERVANCE IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS AREA.

LYNDON B JOHNSON.