



The Senate of Texas
Senate Hispanic Caucus

MEMBERS:

Gonzalo Barrientos
Chair

Judith Zaffirini
Vice-Chair

Carlos F. Truan
Frank Tejeda
Eddie Lucio

State Capitol
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711-2068
(512) 463-0077
(512) 463-0114

Gladys A. Alonzo
Executive Director

November 14, 1991

Dr. Hector P. Garcia
Founder
American G.I. Forum
Dr. Hector P. Garcia Chapter
P.O. Box 5820
Corpus Christi, TX 78465

Dear Dr. Garcia:

Please find enclosed a copy of the Senate Hispanic Caucus' letter to Governor Richards in support of the American G.I. Forum's petition to launch an investigation into charges of racial/ethnic discrimination of soldiers of Hispanic ancestry in the Texas Army National Guard.

I appreciate your bringing this matter to the attention of our Caucus, and hope that Governor Richards will grant your request.

As always, please feel free to contact us on matters involving state government. We appreciate the good work which the American G.I. Forum continues to do on behalf of our Hispanic soldiers and veterans and await word from the Governor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gonzalo", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

Gonzalo Barrientos



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The Honorable Ann W. Richards
Governor
State of Texas
State Capitol Bldg., Rm. 200
Austin, TX 78711

COPY

Dear Governor Richards:

The Texas Senate Hispanic Caucus joins with the American G.I. Forum in urging you, as Commander-in-Chief of the Texas Army National Guard, to launch a full-fledged investigation into complaints of racial discrimination filed by individuals of Hispanic ancestry within the Guard.

The Caucus has received a report detailing an investigation conducted by the G.I. Forum's Civil Rights Committee which contains sworn affidavits from soldiers filing complaints alleging selective enforcement of Guard policies, obstruction of both military justice and due process, and a series of other ethnically-related charges. (A copy of the Committee's report entitled, "In Search of U.S. Military Justice" has been submitted to your office under separate cover by the G.I. Forum.)

While the G.I. Forum's Civil Rights Committee investigation has produced critical documentation on the alleged abuses, their investigation has been hindered because the Committee does not have the authority to examine the entire record in each of these cases. For this reason, we seek your intervention in initiating a comprehensive investigation to determine both the existence and extent of such racial discrimination within the Texas Army National Guard.

Pending the conclusion of such an investigation, we also respectfully request you order a "Stay of Separation" in all cases involving the separation of Hispanic soldiers from the Texas Army National Guard until such time as all the charges have been fully investigated and corrective actions have been initiated. Specifically, we are concerned about the pending separations of SPC Jose G. Rodriguez, SGT Homero Palacios and SSG Reyes Torres this month.

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As you know, Governor, the American G.I. Forum has been the most prominent national Hispanic organization advocating for our Hispanic soldiers and veterans. It was the G.I. Forum which called our attention to the racial discrimination occurring in the Texas Selective Service Board and the Texas Veterans Administration in previous administrations and produced much needed reforms in these two agencies. Thus, we feel these charges have been dutifully investigated by the G.I. Forum to the extent possible and are deserving of our most serious attention.

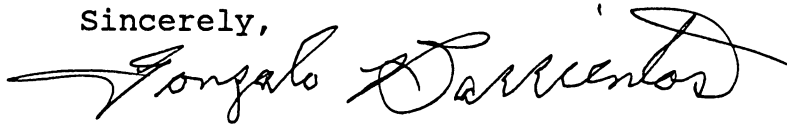
The Civil Rights Committee specifically seeks an investigation into the followings areas:

1. Selective age discrimination enforced for involuntary separations;
2. Retaliation for exerting the right to petition the Texas Army National Guard offices for a redress of grievances;
3. Permissiveness of degrading racial slurs in the Armory workplace;
4. Breakdown of the Texas Army National Guard Chain of Command in inter-office correspondence;
5. Double standard enforcement of the Army's Physical Fitness and Weight Control Programs;
6. Denial of Equal Opportunity in promotion and selection boards;
7. Obstruction of Texas Army National Guard Military Justice system;
8. Obstruction of Texas Army National Guard Military Due Process;
9. Obstruction of Career Progression Programs;
10. Entrapments for selective separations; and
11. Denial of Medical examinations on separations and treatment of service connected disabilities and illnesses.

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In closing, our Senate Hispanic Caucus respectfully requests your favorable response to our request for an investigation into incidents of ethnically-motivated discrimination within the Texas Army National Guard. If we may be of any assistance in this matter, please feel free to call on me, or have your staff contact Ms. Gladys Alonzo, Executive Director of our Caucus at 463-0077.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gonzalo Barrientos". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Gonzalo Barrientos

cc: The Honorable Judith Zaffirini
The Honorable Carlos F. Truan
The Honorable Frank Tejeda
The Honorable Eddie Lucio, Jr.
Dr. Hector P. Garcia, Founder, American GI Forum
Gilberto Garcia Jasso, Chair, Civil Rights Committee