



State of Texas
House of Representatives
Austin

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Committees:
Natural Resources
Ways and Means

August 3, 1977

Dr. Cornell Barnard
Corpus Christi Independent School District
Board of Trustees
801 Leopard Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

Dear Dr. Barnard:

I am appalled by the surreptitious method being employed by the Board of Trustees in determining a qualified replacement for the position relinquished by School Trustee Marsha Darlington.

I predict that the present method of selecting a school board member behind closed doors will further divide and splinter the various community interests in the City of Corpus Christi. Such an imprudent selection process perpetuates the distrust that has manifested itself regarding school board policies and procedures.

A school board trustee is a public official elected by the constituency that he serves. The school board trustee should not be selected in secret by an elitist group that resides in a confined geographical area of the City of Corpus Christi, mainly, the Southside. The School Board should have members who are diverse in philosophy and ideology, with a proper ethnic-racial balance. The constituency that votes and determines the school board membership is likewise broadly representative of diverse socio-economic interests. It therefore becomes all the more necessary and in fact, mandatory, that the School Board conduct its hearing in public, in open view, so as to develop trust and respect for the member eventually selected.

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Please remember that the member to be selected should not be a person who represents your views or the narrow views of the remaining school board members. The member selected should be a person who can bring a new, progressive outlook to an otherwise regressive school board. That person, if selected, would be most qualified and would be the person best representing the broad based constituency situated within the boundaries of the Corpus Christi Independent School District.

The ultimate danger in selecting a person behind closed doors is that you will choose as a school board member a person who is not acceptable to the total community, further denying the public equal representation. A public official who is destined to be elected by the public at large should not be selected privately, with secret negotiations by present board members who did not truly represent the total community concept.

I hereby submit that the School Board convene for a special meeting and that you announce a time, date, and site for a public hearing, allowing maximum community input and participation for filling of such vacancy. In this manner, we will have a broadly representative constituency telling you, our public servants, who should be our next school board member. The taxpayers and citizens of the City of Corpus Christi deserve no less.

Further, I would like to make it quite clear that the selection of a minority member to the School Board trustees represents a token effort on the school district's part to provide an integrated body of school board officials. What we need is broad based representation, truly representative of ethnic-racial consideration within the Corpus Christi Independent School District. The selection of a minority will not preclude the necessity of the ultimate federal court trial to mandate the drawing of school district boundaries under a plan of single member district representation.

Respectfully submitted,



Hugo Berlanga
State Representative

cc: Dr. Dana Williams
cc: C.C.I.S.D. Board of Trustees
cc: Mr. Ruben Bonilla,
LULIAC State Director

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cc: Dr. Hector P. Garcia
American G. I. Forum
1315 Bright Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

cc: Mr. Elbert Ocanas
President, LULAC Council #1
4225 O'Day
Corpus Christi, Texas 78413