

September 26, 1967

Senator Ralph Yarborough  
United States Senate  
460 Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Yarborough:

I understand that HEW has requested that students be classified as "white," "Negro," and "other" -- the latter to include "Latin American." This is ridiculous! Also, it is contrary to legal definitions -- all of which classify Americans of Mexican descent as "white." I put the word "white" in quotes for sociological, biological, and anthropological reasons. Who, indeed, is "white"?

However, in view of a racist oriented culture, we Americans of Mexican descent resent being placed in a category that (improperly) connotes inferiority to the lay mind. We are proud to be "Latin American," or "Mexican-American," or "Spanish-American," or just plain "Mexican." But, as the "Virginian" said, "When you call me that, smile!" They are not smiling when they look down on us as, unfortunately, they do the Negro, the Indian, the Oriental. I insist that they cut it out.

Statistical data by ethnic groups are valuable, virtually indispensable. But, let us stick to the old terminology: Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid. If we want to break any one of those down, let us do it in sub-columns. While one could argue to the contrary, custom and usage, as well as the courts place "mexicans" in the variegated Caucasoid group. So, ask dear old bumbling HEW, am I "white" or am I "other"?

Sincerely yours,



George I. Sanchez  
Professor of Latin American Education  
Chairman, Mexican-American Joint  
Conference Committee

cc: Ed Idar  
Hector Garcia  
Chris Aldrete

GS:tw