

July 23, 1970

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The Honorable Preston Smith
Governor of Texas
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Smith:

I have for a long time been concerned about the lack of minority group representation in the Texas Air Guard and Texas Army National Guard.

The problem exists at every level of the Guard apparatus. When minority group men can get into units, they are almost exclusively in the lower ranks. Very few become officers of any rank, and those who do achieve officer rank seldom find themselves promoted on the same basis as their Anglo counterparts. These men find themselves consistently performing jobs that are below their capacity to do, and with little or no opportunity for meaningful advancement.

This situation also exists in the office of the Adjutant General. According to the Legislative Council report on employment patterns in the state government, not a single Spanish surnamed employee of the Adjutant General's office had more than a semiprofessional job; only six were rated as clerks, and the remainder of the 27 Spanish surnamed employees seem mostly to have been maintenance people. The same pattern was true for Negroes; only two Negroes were clerks, and none worked in a higher capacity than that.

I have ample reason to believe that the Guard units in Texas do not offer promotions on an equal basis. Yet in time of war those who are the victims of discrimination find themselves asked for the fullest measure of devotion and loyalty. They have not failed to give it.

Discrimination does not exist in the face of combat. I do not believe that it can be allowed to exist in the units that are supposed to protect the State from military and civil threats. I urge you to take prompt action to create true equality throughout the Guard, beginning in the office of the Adjutant General and extending all the way to every unit in the State.

Sincerely yours,

Henry B. Gonzalez, M. C.