## Mexican-American Joint Conference Committee

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, <a href="mailto:smile">smile</a>!" 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 Causasoid group. So, ask dear old bumbling HEW, am I "white" or am I "other"?

Sincerely yours,

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Professor of Latin American Education
Chairman, Mexican-American Joint
Conference Committee

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