

Sept. 10, 1956

Mr. Gilbert Torrez
State Chairman of Kansas
Box 936
Dodge City, Kansas

Your letter of September 6 was received and I certainly appreciate the points that you brought up. First, I want to say that our office has membership cards and application blanks, copies of which are enclosed. We also have the caps and pins. The Ladies Auxiliary caps are on order. I sent you a number of national charters for your signature, and asked you to please return them to me. However, I have not received them as yet. Please send them in as there are some new Forums that will have to be issued charters and I do not want to delay them. Then there is the question of the pledge to the National Office made by the Kansas Forum at the National Convention in Pueblo, Colorado. Will you see to it that that particular pledge is kept.

I realize that you have a great number of things to do, and that much of the work of the Kansas Forum is passed on to you. As a State Chairman, people will have a tendency to depend on you for many of the decisions to be made. We can relieve you in as much as any type of correspondence is concerned by sending out from this office any and all types of correspondence to individuals and Forum organizations. Since Ernest Sanchez, national treasurer, is running for State Representative of Bernalillo county and he is also chairman of the local Forum, the national office is taking on all his duties until after November. And although it is a burden, we are glad to spend a few more extra hours at night handling his duties and in that way further the aims and purposes of the GI Forum. At present Albuquerque Forum #1 has three members, Sanchez, Chacon, and Robles running for the New Mexico State legislature. From now until November everyone here will be working day and night. Vicente B. Jasso, the New Mexico State Chairman was in from Santa Fe to discuss work on the State level. He has certainly been doing an excellent job, although at times, he too has some trouble with getting better cooperation from his district chairman, especially. But Jasso tells me that he keeps after them until they start doing their duties.

Sept. 10, 1955

Page 2

I do not think that the news bulletin is a good idea at present, if it means that you will have to handle it. I am telling you this only for advice, since a bulletin must meet a deadline. In other words, the putting out of the bulletin cannot be put off for a week or two awaiting the receipt of news or other material. If I remember correctly, Colorado and New Mexico both started their news bulletins because the regular news bulletin was not being received every month as promised. However, New Mexico has decided to concentrate on the regular national office bulletin until such time as better facilities are available for the New Mexico bulletin. Even now, the New Mexico Forums are not sending in their news reports to the Victoria office, and I know for a fact that the Victoria office prints just about every news report sent to it. I certainly think that Ed Idax, and now Simon Rodriguez are doing a good job with the news bulletin.

The back to school drive that I suggested is one of the main programs of the GI Forum. It is consistent with our policy of education for Spanish speaking children and adults. It is certainly heartening to hear of the large numbers of children that attend school in that part of Kansas. If as you say, the problem is to get more students into higher education, then I suggest you go ahead and work on that. The GI Forum back to school drive is not restricted to children, it is part of our policy on furthering education at all levels. I know of three Forums that put on programs on TV with college students as the participants and a number of others that awarded scholarships for college work. So pass on this information to the Kansas Forums as I see no reason for mis-interpreting this particular program. Enclosed is an application blank for John Hay Whitney scholarships. It may be that some of the Kansas college students can qualify.

I am sure that you are aware of the problems each particular State Forum has. The directives or memorandums sent out from this office cannot be expected to fit each State. The persons receiving them must adjust them to fit their situation. The directives and memorandums must be interpreted in light of their own particular situations. For example, the GI Forum

Page 3

is interested in defending and protecting the civil rights of the Spanish speaking as well as any other American citizen. Now every State in the Union has at one time or another cases which involve the violation of a persons civil rights. However, each State Forum must of necessity use the best means at their disposal to solve the problem. In New Mexico, Vicente Jasso may call on Senator Chavez of the Federal District Attorney, Paul Larrozolo and that may be all he has to do. In Texas, Mr. Casias or Dr. Garcia may have to employ the services of a lawyer and perhaps get all the Forums together to fight the case as they did in the Hernandez case. In Kansas, you may have a Board or Commission to which you can refer cases to. Does Kansas have a Fair Employment Practices Commission? New Mexico and Colorado have a Fair Employment Practices Commission to which cases of unfair employment practices can be referred to. Texas, however, does not have an FEPC.

In the matter of the bracero program, I am not too clear as to what you mean. The important thing is that the GI Forum has worked on the problem of braceros, wetbacks, and migrancy in general and has done it successfully. In 1952, over one million wetbacks crossed the Rio Grande into Texas, New Mexico, California, Colorado, Arizona, and other states. The GI Forum in cooperation with other organizations stopped the influx and the exploitation of human beings, and everyone knows the history of that tremendous effort. The attack on the bracero situation is very simple. Challenge the farmers request for more and more cheap, docile, and rightless people. If we are against the exploitation of human beings, then our best position is to take a stand against the bracero program. I am fully in accord with the previous work of Dr. Garcia and Ed Idar on the migrant question. I will welcome any suggestions as to how to improve our program on the bracero program, but the suggestions will have to be constructive. I will incorporate any new ideas offered on the subject for the Forums to accept or reject on the merits. As to what I plan to do about the bracero problem, the last bulletin of the GI Forum carried the action I would like to see all other Forums to take. You will note it is a program of action and not of words. I want the Forums to act and carry out the resolutions passed in the various conventions and

Page 4

and the national convention. These matters have already been discussed and now the time has come to act. I have done just that, and I am asking the State Forums to do the same. I also believe that our actions are getting results, for it hasn't been but two days ago that the Governor of the State of New Mexico came to see me, even though I had not asked for an audience with him and in our conference promised to instruct the Employment Security Commission to make sure that the local available labor is employed first before any bracero labor is certified. Our manner of attacking the problem has nothing to do with sedatives or broken bones. For if that was the case, we would advocate that the patient be taken to a hospital. No this is a very real problem which cannot be likened to anything is simple as a broken bone. I have gone into great detail in this letter because I am very anxious for you to understand our reasons for taking the type of action we take on matters that are important to the Forum, the Spanish speaking people, and the entire community.

Please be assured that I believe you are doing an excellent job in keeping the Forums active in Kansas. I am also well aware of the great sacrifice that is being made by you in behalf of the GI Forum and your community. I am looking forward to seeing you at our national convention in Albuquerque next year. In the meantime do not hesitate to write and let me know how we can improve the workings of the GI Forum.

Very truly yours,

Vicente T. Ximenes
National Chairman

Copy to: Dr. Garcia