

# STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

**BOARD MEMBERS**

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CHAIRMAN, HILLSBORO

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COMMISSIONER

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

JOHN H. REAGAN BUILDING

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

June 4, 1968

Hector P. Garcia, M. D.  
3024 Morgan  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Dear Doctor Garcia:

I am enclosing a copy of my letter to Mr. Albert A. Pena, Jr. which involves the same matter about which you wired me.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Will Bond  
Chairman

encl.

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June 4, 1968

Honorable Albert A. Pena, Jr.  
Commissioner Precinct No. 1  
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Mr. Pena:

This will acknowledge your letter of May 24, 1968 in regard to statements attributed to Public Welfare Commissioner Burton Hackney. I have delayed replying to your letter until I could obtain all of the facts and also discuss the matter with Mr. Hackney. I have obtained many reports from different newspapers and other sources and have also conferred with Mr. Hackney. Based on my investigation, I wish to advise you as follows:

I have known and worked closely with Mr. Burton Hackney for many years. I have never known him to be intolerant, prejudiced, or take a position that would belittle or discriminate against anyone, regardless of race, creed, color or national origin. To the contrary, I have found him most understanding, tolerant, and considerate at all times. As Chairman of the Texas Public Welfare Board, I feel that he is administering one of the outstanding programs in the United States. It was through Mr. Hackney's efforts that our fine program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, covering approximately 366,000 of the most needy citizens in our State, was put together. This program is looked upon as one of the most outstanding programs of this kind in the United States.

In reviewing the articles which appeared in the press and discussing the matter with Mr. Hackney, there is possibly a poor choice of words and the wrong interpretation being placed upon the words that were used, but I can assure you that I am completely satisfied that there was no intent on the part of Mr. Hackney to make disparaging remarks or belittle any group or any individual.

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Honorable Albert A. Pena, Jr.

6-4-68

I completely disagree with your statement: "Hackney represents the type of mentality and bigotry of the past that has led to the present lack of understanding and/or complete disregard for the problem." I doubt if you have ever met Mr. Hackney or had any dealings with him for I believe if you knew this man as I know him that you would not make this type of statement.

In regard to your statement: "In San Antonio alone, there are 100,000 people suffering from malnutrition, including emaciated, hungry, dying babies at the Robert B. Green Hospital. Unfortunately, most of these people are of Mexican descent". If this statement is true, I am surprised that you as Commissioner have not been able to do more about the situation at a local level, and to call it to the attention of other responsible citizens of San Antonio and Bexar County who I know would be most happy to assist in eliminating a matter such as you have mentioned in your letter. Also, as Chairman of the Texas Public Welfare Board, this is the first time it has been brought to my attention or the attention of the Texas Department of Public Welfare as we would have been willing to do anything that we could to help alleviate this situation.

For your information, there is a nutrition survey which will begin on June 18th. This will be a comprehensive study to identify the prevalence, magnitude, location, and cause of malnutrition and related health problems in the United States. Bexar County is one of the counties in which this study will be made, and I am enclosing a copy of the announcement. You will note that it is under the supervision of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, Texas. I do hope you will help get factual information to this group. Also, I would like to call your attention to the June 3, 1968 issue of U. S. News and World Report, starting on page 22, where this problem is discussed rather fully.

I am sorry I find it necessary to disagree with the contents of your letter, but in view of the investigation I have made and the facts I have found to be true, as Chairman of the Texas Public Welfare Board I will continue to support Commissioner Burton Hackney as I feel he is rendering a fine service to his State and is doing a good job as Commissioner of Public Welfare.

Yours very truly,

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Will Bond  
Chairman