



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

PRESTON SMITH
GOVERNOR

March 20, 1970

Dr. Hector P. Garcia
1315 Bright Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Dear Dr. Garcia:

It has been suggested that you, as a leader in your area, would be interested in the work of the Governor's Committee on Human Relations. This committee was created by the Texas Legislature last year at my request.

Please note the attached. I am asking that your name be added to the list to receive further reports from the committee.

I am anxious to be of service and welcome having your views and suggestions. All good wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Preston Smith".

Preston Smith
Governor of Texas

PS:bfr
Attch.



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Governor's Committee on Human Relations

MARTIN DIES, JR.
CHAIRMAN

ROY R. BARRERA
VICE-CHAIRMAN

Preston Smith, Governor
Austin, Texas 78711

JAMES R. RAY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ADA ANDERSON
SECRETARY

March 19, 1970

INTERIM REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Secretary of State Martin Dies, Jr., Chairman of the Governor's Committee on Human Relations, called the committee for its first real working meeting last month. Following a brief session in the Senate Chamber, the committee divided into subcommittees for the purpose of receiving testimony.

All who requested time to be heard by the committee were given the opportunity to meet with the subcommittee or subcommittees of their choice. In addition to the many requests received by the committee, several citizens and officials were requested to testify before the various subcommittees by members of the committee or its Executive Director, Jim Ray.

The subcommittees worked well into the evening hours in order that all witnesses could be heard. Over 70 persons from throughout the State appeared before the committee.

The Human Relations Committee is charged with making legislative recommendations to the Governor and members of the Legislature by November 1, 1970. In view of the great volume of information presented to the subcommittees, all were of the opinion that no final recommendations should be presented at this time. However, on the second day of the meeting, the following observations were made to the full committee by the subcommittee chairmen.

EDUCATION: Rabbi Hyman Schachtel, Chairman. Many areas in the field of education were considered by the committee and the members expressed a desire to give more in-depth study to the problems before making final recommendations. Among the tentative recommendations slated for further consideration were:

1. expansion of free lunch program
2. school board elections included in General Election
3. teachers should be provided more training to make them more sympathetic to the situation of minority groups
4. abolish rules prohibiting speaking of Spanish in schools and expand bilingual programs
5. increase support for developing colleges

6. increase emphasis on vocational and technical education and thus enable all citizens to confront life with dignity and have a capacity to earn a living.

EMPLOYMENT: Carl Waldman, Chairman. People must be properly educated, whether it be in the arts and sciences or in a vocational field in order to have fair or proper employment. Much interest was expressed in the presentation by representatives from the Texas State Technical Institute regarding vocational and technical training. Members of this subcommittee are meeting again in Austin March 23-24 and will attend the Governor's Conference on Technical-Vocational Education in Texas.

The subcommittee commended the 61st Legislature for its legislative programs and Governor Smith for providing the leadership to streamline our educational system to accomplish the vital function of preparing every citizen to earn a wage and find a responsible and useful place in his community. It called upon all to help strengthen our basic concept of the dignity of work and right of every person for his own destiny.

In addition to the problem of education for employment, the subcommittee also heard from witnesses and expressed concern about such areas as employment with dignity, utilizing facilities and resources which are available to the underemployed or unemployed but not used to the fullest extent, and many others. It is expected that much more attention will be given to actual job discrimination by all segments -- industry and labor -- prior to making final recommendations. It was the feeling of the committee that all persons must have a chance to earn a living.

STATE EMPLOYMENT: T. E. Mitchell, Chairman. Most state agencies leave much to be desired with respect to employment of minorities and employment policies must improve. The subcommittee did express appreciation that Governor Smith is leading the way in giving minorities an equal opportunity by taking positive action to encourage the full utilization of the skills of state employees and to open employment opportunities to disadvantaged Texans regardless of racial background or sex.

The Governor was called upon by the subcommittee to appoint a Spanish-surnamed American as an assistant and noted that members of minorities should be named to policy-making boards and commissions.

(NOTE: Among the appointments to the Governor's staff since the committee meeting have been a Public Service Careers Specialist to work in the area of state employment and a Mexican-American who, in addition to other duties, will be responsible for housing programs.)

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE-LAW ENFORCEMENT: John Allen Chalk, Chairman. Testimony pointed to the need for better trained, more sensitive police officers. Some "believable" method must be devised for hearing and acting on citizen complaints against police. Strong, precinct-level community relations departments need to be organized.

An all-out study of our criminal justice system should be considered and measures explored to restore minority confidence in the administration of justice. All citizens must be assured **COMPETENT, independent LEGAL HELP AT TIME OF ARREST.** Abuses of civil rights or personal rights must be exposed and corrected wherever they are found.

All law enforcement agencies must mount effective programs and every effort be exerted to recruit minority officers.

HOUSING: Glenn Barber, Chairman. Under consideration is a recommendation to the Governor and Legislature that a state agency or department should be established to deal solely with the problems of housing. At the present time statewide information or statistics on housing in Texas is virtually non-existent. It is estimated, however, that as much as 50% of the housing units in our state are inadequate or substandard.

One area of grave concern to the committee members is the intolerably high interest rates. High interest rates have forced costs beyond the reach of a large number of our citizens and have tended to dry up sources of money for the housing industry.

Included among other recommendations to the subcommittee were calls for more public housing, possibly at the state level, and a statewide building code. The subcommittee has made the testimony and other information available to the Texas Research League and has accepted the Governor's challenge to assist in exploring means to meet the housing needs in Texas and assure all Texans adequate and decent housing.

The Committee will be called to meet again by early summer. It is anticipated firm recommendations to the Governor and members of the Legislature will be forthcoming at that time.

In the meantime, the Committee, along with the Executive Director and staff, continues to serve as a liaison between the Governor and minority groups throughout the State. Although not equipped to handle individual problems, the Executive Director, under the direction of Secretary Dies and the Governor, has sought to be helpful when called upon. He has been helpful in establishing communications in local disputes. Various groups have been visited throughout the State in an effort to create interest in the work of the committee and to gather information for use by the committee.

(Of possible interest, it might be noted that at the request of the Houston Teachers Association and through the efforts of the Governor's Committee on Human Relations, Governor Preston Smith signed a proclamation declaring December 10-17, 1969, to be Human Rights Week in Texas. This was the first time a Governor of Texas has made such a proclamation.)

The Committee and its staff continues to seek to be of all possible assistance in the efforts to find solutions to the problems confronting the citizens of Texas. The problems are many and although we all realize that it is far easier to establish goals than to accomplish them, we must not allow this to deter our efforts.