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Executive Committee  
Public Relations

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HR 5678  
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Dear Mr. President:

Before you is a piece of legislation which has occasioned extended discussion and aroused deep emotions, namely that providing for revision and codification of the laws on immigration, naturalization and nationality. Despite the sharp divisions of opinion and regrettable misunderstandings which have surrounded this legislation, I am firmly convinced that it does not merit a veto.

For the past four years I have followed closely the evolution of the bills which resulted in the recent action of the Congress. On two occasions opportunity was afforded me to present the views of my organization to the subcommittee working on revision pursuant to S.Res 137 of the Eightieth Congress. This was at the hearings of July, 1948 and March, 1951. During the fall and winter of 1950-51, I participated in several technical study groups of voluntary agency representatives examining the legislation section by section. Since reporting of the bills, and during debate in House and Senate, I followed the discussions daily. Against this background I reached the conclusion that the details of the legislation were given serious and careful attention, and that Congress was not acting hastily when the bills were passed after amendment and extended debate.

That not all groups and individuals concerned are satisfied with the results in every aspect is only to be expected. No government can assure such universal satisfaction to all its people, especially a democracy which must respect the honest views of all.

Admittedly there remain desirable objectives to be pursued for the improvement and liberalization of our immigration system. This is particularly true as regards the allotment of quotas under the existing law and the bill recently passed. Nevertheless, it would be less than truthful not to recognize that the final conference version of the

The President,  
The White House,  
Washington, D.C.

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bill represents a net improvement over present law in a number of aspects, not least of which is extension of opportunity for immigration and citizenship to Asians of all countries.

Such gains should not be overlooked simply because Congress found it impossible to accede to all requests for liberalization at this time. It is noteworthy that in committee and on the floor a number of such requests were acted upon favorably. For my part I see no contradiction between accepting the majority decision of the moment and continuing to work for further improvement through education. Moreover, I believe in liberal immigration policies but also recognize that not everything called liberal is necessarily for the good of the country or in accord with the wishes of its citizens.

Today, circumstances in free Europe are such that the special migration and resettlement program begun after the war should not be allowed to lapse. Yet it will lapse if some action is not taken soon. Hence, it was with considerable satisfaction that I read your message of March 24th, and later found implementation of its objectives provided for in H.R. 7376 and S. 3109. I trust that continuing United States participation in resettlement will be assured through prompt passage of these bills.

It would indeed be unfortunate were controversy over certain features of permanent immigration legislation, which cannot possibly be fully resolved at the moment, to obscure the urgent need for a continuing program.



Very respectfully,

*William J. Gibbons, S.J.*

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