



ROBERT F. WAGNER, JR.
PRESIDENT

FILED BY
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JUL 9 1952

PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
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Hon. Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
White House
Washington, D.C.



Dear Mr. President:

I write to urge you to veto the McCarran-Walter Omnibus Immigration Bill passed by the Senate and House last week. This legislation is contrary to the liberal tradition and leadership which you have strengthened and maintained in our Nation over the past seven years. A study of this bill has convinced me that it is a restrictive measure, contrary to the philosophy of liberalized immigration which has made our country great. I need not dwell on the obvious fact that it is the immigrants who have come to our shores over the past 150 years whose strength and courage have made the United States the strongest, wealthiest, and freest nation in the world.

In addition to our self-interest in bringing to our shores the man power which will continue to give us strength, we have another very important self-interest in a liberalized immigration policy. Today the United States is engaged in a fierce fight to preserve democracy and freedom against communist aggression and totalitarianism. If our immigration policy is one of restriction, selective in its nature, creating additional grounds for exclusion, it is a direct slap in the face at the many friendly countries outside the "iron curtain" with whom we are allied. In a certain sense we are creating a "curtain" of our own by this type of legislation, which can do nothing but harm for us in our international relationships.

There is a third reason of pure humanitarianism, upon which America has always prided itself, in evaluating the need for a liberalized immigration policy.

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The problem of over population in many of the countries of Europe and elsewhere requires our cooperative effort in its solution. We must be prepared to welcome to our shores the overflow of peoples who are friendly to us and are anxious to aid us in our fight for democracy against communism.

Specifically, there is much to correct in the McCarran Immigration Bill. It preserves the quota system based on the 1920 census rather than the more obvious and fairer 1950 census. It refuses to permit pooling of unused quotas so that more than 50% of the theoretical number admissible under the law, will actually enter the United States. It makes pretense about the elimination of racial discrimination in our immigration and naturalization laws; yet it sets up a quota for the British West Indies which effectively and obviously discriminates against the Negroes who reside in Jamaica and Trinidad and other Western Hemisphere Islands. It provides for a fantastic and complicated Asia-Pacific triangle, assigning to this particular area an annual quota of 100, which in itself appears to be a good and proper thing, while at the same time providing that an alien born outside of this triangle but attributable to it by reason of his race and ancestry as much as one half is chargeable not to the quota of the country of his birth but to the quota of the country of his ancestry or this Asia-Pacific triangle. This is pure racialism in the tradition of the Nuremberg Laws of Nazi Germany.

The bill as passed also drastically limits so called "new seed" immigration, placing much emphasis on immigrants of high education, technical training, specified experience and skills. While this superficially would appear to be in our own self-interest, it will effectively exclude thousands of persons whose abilities doubtless were similar to that of the overwhelming majority of the ancestors of our Americans of today. These "ordinary" people are the backbone of America; we need a substantial portion of this type of people in our immigration quotas. The proposed bill also sets up many new grounds for deportation and exclusion and effectively

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contributes to a philosophy originally made a part of the Nationality Act of 1940, whereby our naturalized citizens became in effect second-class citizens, whose rights and privileges are restricted in comparison with those of our native-born citizens. Limitations on court review and arbitrary methods of administrative determination add to the inherent defects of this bill whose philosophy is contrary to our traditional liberal immigration policy.

I renew my request, Mr. President, that you exercise your power of veto and return this bill to the Congress of the United States without your approval.



Respectfully yours,

Robert F. Wagner, Jr.

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