

**G.F.**

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON

RECEIVED  
MAR 29 1954  
CENTRAL FILES

March 19, 1954

MEMORANDUM to the Honorable Bernard M. Shanley,  
Counsel to the President:

I have replied directly to Mr. Reuther's telegram of March 3 and letter of March 4, both addressed to the President. Enclosed is a copy of my reply. I am also returning Mr. Reuther's correspondence.

*re Migratory Labor*  
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*James P. Mitchell*  
James P. Mitchell  
Secretary of Labor  
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Enclosures.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON

MARCH  
APR 19 1954

Mr. Walter P. Reuther  
President  
Congress of Industrial Organizations  
718 Jackson Place, N. W.  
Washington 6, D. C.

Dear Mr. Reuther:

The President has asked me to reply to your telegram of March 3, concerning the Mexican Farm Labor program and your letter of March 4, transmitting petitions protesting the use of Mexican National workers under this program. In both of these communications, you stressed the need for agreement on this subject between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. Such an agreement was signed on March 10 in Mexico City by representatives of the two governments.

The newly revised agreement continues to require the payment of prevailing wages to Mexican contract workers, with the determination of such wages to be made by the Secretary of Labor at least once a month. For the information of Mexican workers, the prevailing wage rates will be posted both in the Mexican recruitment stations and in our American reception centers. As before, we will continue to communicate this wage information to the Mexican government.

I also wish to reply to your letter to me, dated February 26, to which you attached petitions from persons in Arizona objecting to employment of Mexican contract workers in agriculture.

It has consistently been, and will continue to be, the policy of this Department that American citizens who are qualified and apply for farm jobs should be referred by the Employment Service to vacancies of the type for which they have applied. When no such vacancies are available Mexican contract workers doing such work must be removed in order to make place for the American workers. Our reports indicate that this policy has been followed. If you know of any instance where there has been a failure to observe this policy, I would appreciate your furnishing me with the specific facts so that I may investigate and take any necessary corrective action.

The employment reports we have received on Arizona indicate a decrease this year in the employment of Mexican contract workers. In February, 1954 Mexican contract workers constituted 2 percent less of the total employment in Arizona of seasonal hired farm workers than



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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WASHINGTON

Mr. Walter P. Reuther

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they did in February, 1953. As a matter of fact, in February, 1954 there were about 260 more domestic seasonal hired farm workers employed in Arizona than in February, 1953, and about 480 fewer Mexican contract workers.

I should like to assure you that in administering the Mexican farm program under Public Law 78, as amended, we are interested in doing everything within our power to prevent an adverse effect on the wages of American farm workers.

Yours very truly,

James P. Mitchell

Secretary of Labor

✓

March 5, 1954

**MEMORANDUM FOR:**

**Honorable James P. Mitchell  
Secretary of Labor**

Attached is telegram of March 3 and letter of March 4 addressed to the President by Walter P. Reuther, President of the CIO, urging withholding approval of House Joint Resolution 355 regarding Mexican farm labor.

I would appreciate having your suggestions as to what reply to make to Mr. Reuther.

**B. M. Shanley  
Special Counsel to the President**

**Attachments**

**BMS:hc**

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# Congress of Industrial Organizations



718 Jackson Place, N. W. Washington 6, D. C.

OFFICE OF  
THE PRESIDENT

March 4, 1954

EXECUTIVE 3-5581

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

At the request of our affiliated organizations in California and Arizona, I am transmitting herewith two sets of petitions signed by more than 3,000 persons in the Imperial and Salt River Valleys, many of whom are available for work at fair wages and under fair conditions. I believe that other signatures are those of businessmen who see clearly that the economies of these communities are being depressed by the drastic wage reductions accompanying the employment of either Mexicans recruited at the border or Mexican wetbacks who must accept whatever payment is offered. ✓

This transmittal supplements my wire to you of March 3, urging that you withhold approval of House Joint Resolution 355 which would legalize the unilateral program for border recruitment of Mexican farm labor.

The hardship and anxiety dramatized by these petitions seem to us to emphasize the need for working out a fair bilateral agreement between the Republics of the United States and Mexico with proper protection for the citizens of both countries. ]

Respectfully yours,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter P. Reuther". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Walter P. Reuther

President

Enclosure  
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The White House  
Washington

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1954 MAR 3 PM 7 39

WASHINGTON DC MAR 3 64 7PME

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

URGE YOU TO WITHHOLD APPROVAL OF BILL FOR LEGALIZING UNILATERAL  
MEXICAN FARM LABOR RECRUITMENT PROGRAM WHICH THE SENATE PASSED TODAY  
AND EXPEDITE PENDING NEGOTIATIONS WITH MEXICAN GOVERNMENT SO THAT A  
NEW US MEXICAN AGREEMENT CAN BE EXECUTED BETWEEN GOOD NEIGHBORS IN A  
SPIRIT OF FAIRNESS AND EQUITY ON THE MERITS OF THE SITUATION .

WALTER P REUTHER PRESIDENT CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Box 968

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