Hon. Herbert H. Lehman,  
United States Senate,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Lehman:

The Defense Department appropriation bill, as passed by the House of Representatives, contains Section 640 which would eliminate the cost-of-living allowance now paid to federal workers in the territories and possessions. However, the elimination would strike only at residents of a territory or a possession working for the federal government in the territory or possession of their residence.

For example, in Alaska, all classified employees now receive 25 percent in addition to the basic salary in recognition of the higher cost-of-living there. In Hawaii, the figure is 20 percent. If Section 640 is enacted, the Alaskan would be required to work without the cost-of-living allowance, while the person recruited from any one of the states or a territory or possession would continue to receive it. The effect very naturally would be that the Alaskan would be required to quit his job since he could not afford to live under the new pay rates. The cost to the federal government would be added to rather than diminished because of the need that would arise for the recruitment of many additional workers to take the place of territorial residents who would be required to leave their jobs.

Section 640, curiously enough in view of the fact that it is a rider to an appropriation bill, would apply not only to Department of Defense employees but to employees of all other departments of government.

It is a matter of record that the House Committee on Appropriations heard no witnesses on this subject whatsoever. This was admitted when I presented an amendment to the bill on the floor of the House. The committee remained adamant in its position, and the amendment was lost, despite the best efforts of Delegate Farrington and myself to cause it to prevail, and despite, too, the fact that information had come to me that Lt. Gen. Joseph H. Atkinson, Commanding General of the Alaskan Command, was gravely disturbed by Section 640 and urged that corrective action be taken.

Now, I am in receipt of a radiogram signed by 332 federal employees in Anchorage, Alaska, urging that this section be stricken by the Senate from the Defense Department appropriation bill and finally from the bill as enacted. It was interesting to me that most of the signers of the radiogram and the letter which followed on the same subject are not residents of Alaska and would
not be affected by the provisions of Section 640. They oppose that section not out of any selfish interest but simply because they know it is wrong and discriminatory and would affect adversely the best interests of the federal government as well as being altogether unfair to resident Alaskans. I was requested to write you on this subject by residents of New York who signed the radiogram. They are Evangeline St. Clair, Ernest Metropole, Elizabeth Mather, Albert Jeffrey, William Hausuii, Barbara Hammond, Lois Booth, Doris Gooding, Jessie Patnode, Lois Decker, Ruth Emmons and Rose Bruce.

Your support in opposition to Section 640 would be greatly appreciated. I want to add that I, Delegate Farrington of Hawaii and Resident Commissioner Fernos-Isern of Puerto Rico were given adequate opportunity to state our views by the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on the Defense Department appropriation bill. Chairman Ferguson and Senator Saltonstall, who were in attendance at the time, were most considerate. During the course of the hearing, Senator Ferguson announced that he had been advised that the Department of Defense would urge an amendment to Section 640 which would exclude Alaska from its provisions.

There are attached: (1) copy of Section 640; (2) copy of the text of the radiogram mentioned sent from Anchorage on July 9; and (3) copy of a letter which reached me yesterday morning.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

E. H. Bartlett