August 13, 1953

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

I am sending you herewith a copy of S. 2585, which is a proposed revision of all the immigration and naturalization laws, and also a copy of a summary of the Bill as printed in the Congressional Record of Monday, August 3, 1953. This Bill is a complete revision of the McCarran-Walter Act -- the Immigration and Nationality Act -- and, if translated into law, would remove the McCarran's Act's defects and inequities, many of which you have publicly criticized and condemned on a number of occasions.

As stated in the summary, S. 2585 is the result of more than eight months of intensive drafting work by legal scholars and experts in the field of immigration and naturalization law. No Bill in my knowledge or experience has been the subject of comparable endeavor by so many individuals of outstanding talent and reputation. The monumental efforts put forth on this Bill were all volunteered and without compensation except the satisfaction of participating in a pioneering legislative project.

All who joined in this work felt deeply that this project was being undertaken for noble purposes which you, among others, have frequently described -- the elimination of racism, discrimination and injustice from our immigration laws.

As you will note, this Bill was introduced on the very last day of the session. We delayed introduction for some days out of a desire to avoid any possible interference with the prospects of the special emergency bill whose passage you so strongly advocated. The delay was further occasioned by our efforts to obtain bi-partisan sponsorship.
All through the drafting of the Bill, it had been planned and hoped to have it bi-partisan ly sponsored, with equal representation from both sides of the aisle. I am sure you feel, as we do, that the question of the McCarran Act is beyond partisan politics.

However, in the closing days of the session it proved difficult to obtain the concurrence of Republican members of the Senate in this measure. Some of those who were approached desired, first, to obtain some expression of sentiment from you in regard to this Bill.

Had it not been important for this Bill to be printed and made generally available for public discussion over the recess, we would have delayed introduction further until the next session in order to get Republican co-sponsorship. We propose, at the beginning of the next session, to reopen the sponsorship list and to enroll among the introducers of this Bill a number of Republican members. I hope strongly that this can be done.

Now I come to the main point of this long recital and this transmission to you of our Bill. My purpose is not only to call it to your attention, but also to urge that you consider supporting it, or the major part of it, as part of the Administration's program. I hope you will consider this Bill with that purpose in mind.

Since we, ourselves, are likely, in any case, to wish to make some revisions in S. 2535, on the basis of study and discussions during the summer, we would be able to include with these changes other modifications which might be agreed upon as a result of consultations with you and your advisers.

I think I can say, on behalf of all those who participated in the drafting, that they would be more than happy to join in efforts to make some further changes in this Bill, if necessary, on the basis of constructive suggestions you might make. I am glad to offer my services as a coordinator of this effort, as I have been serving all these past months.
If it is possible to come to an agreement with you as to the provisions which ought to be substituted for the restrictive, unfair and discriminatory laws which are now on our statute books, all of us will join in following your leadership in fighting for this vital advance in the cause of justice, equality and humanity. All of us would truly welcome the opportunity to get behind you in a campaign to put such a Bill through Congress, and give to our people, and the world, a kindly, friendly and generous solution to the problem which means so much to millions of our own citizens and to less fortunate peoples everywhere.

Yours respectfully,

Enclosures