

Source 1

Source Information: Tom F Baker to Harry S. Truman, May 10, 1949. Harry S. Truman Student Research Files, (37) Migratory Farm Labor, Box 1 of 2, Box Orange, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY

Official File

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Essex, Missouri

May 10, 1949

Mr. John Steelman
Presidential Advisor
White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Steelman,

As you know negotiations with the Mexican Government regarding a new Farm Labor Agreement have been at a standstill for several months. This has caused a great deal of comment and criticism in the 27 states having a need for additional labor at peak harvesting periods. From the daily correspondence and newspaper clippings I receive as a member of the Mexican Labor Sub-Committee of the Special Farm Labor Board, I gather that the general concensus of opinion is that the needs of the labor users are being sacrificed in favor of oil interests in this country and others which would benefit from the Mexicans receiving a sizable loan from us. Practically without exception, these letters and newspaper clippings infer that our State Department has not approached the problem from a realistic point of view.

Incidentally, United States Employment Service figures indicate there is a definite need for imported "stoop" labor, even though many of our more skilled laborers are out of work at present. The USES is making a fine effort to affect importation of Puerto Ricans, but in many cases their small stature prevents their doing heavy work.

I realize yours is an especially sensitive position as regards this matter, but I am convinced it would be best for the President and all concerned if pressure could be brought to bear to affect enactment of a new Farm Labor Agreement between our country and Mexico without further delay, as matters are getting out of hand on this end.

Cordially yours,

Tom F. Baker

X 227

X 16-A

X 212-A

X 552
Misc.

X 400-A
Puerto Rican

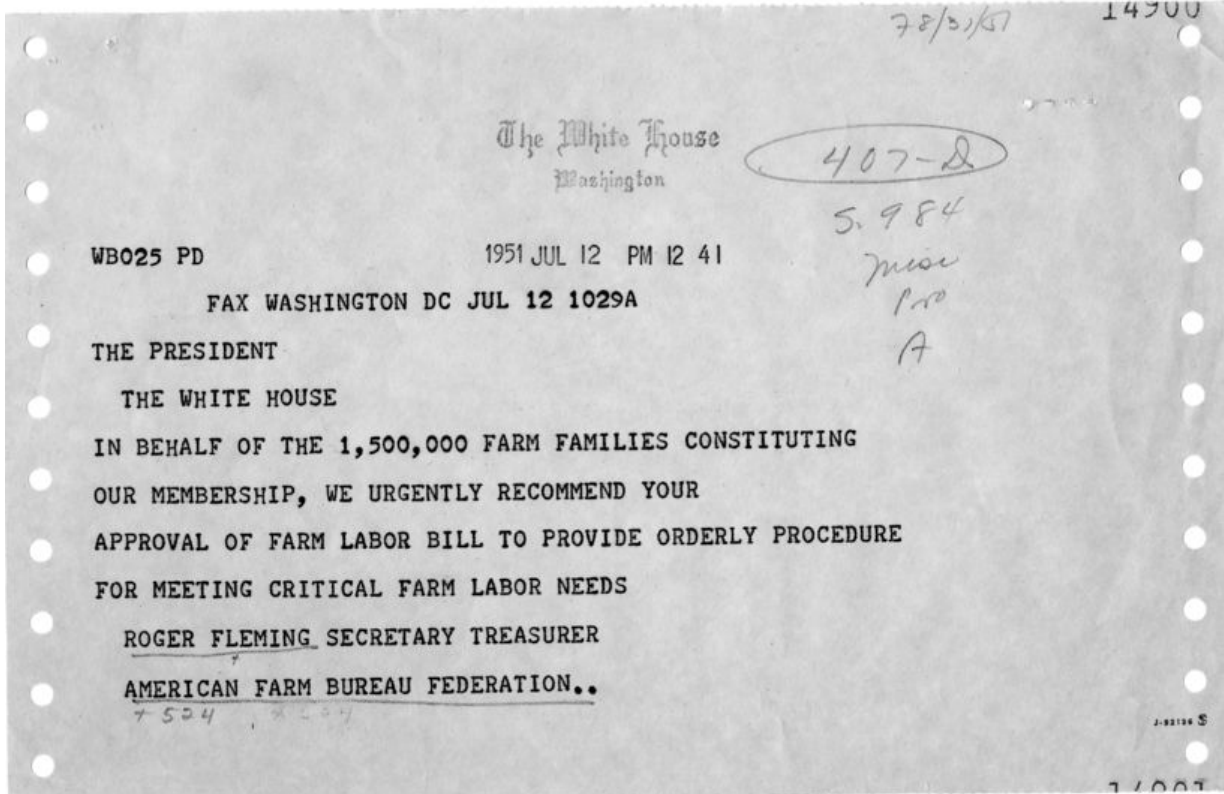
B FILE

Using Source 1

Sourcing Questions	1. Why is the document important because a farmer wrote it?
Contextualization Questions	1. What do you think the writer means when he says he doesn't feel they have looked at the problem from a realistic point of view?
Corroboration Tasks	1. How is this letter similar to the telegram from Farm Bureau?
Close Reading Questions	1. What are examples of why the migrant workers are needed?

Source 2

Source Information: Telegram, American Farm Bureau Federation to Harry S. Truman, July 12, 1951. Truman Papers, Official File. OF 407-D: Mexican Agricultural Workers. The Problem of Migratory Farm Labor in the United States, 1948-1953, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.



Sourcing Questions	What do you think the American Farm Bureau Federation does?
Contextualization Questions	Who is the author representing and why?
Corroboration Tasks	What does this telegram say that is similar in the other two documents?
Close Reading Questions	What is the purpose of wanting workers?

Source 3

Source Information: Correspondence Between Arch Underwood and Harry S. Truman, July 6, 1951.
Truman Papers, Official File. OF 407-D: Mexican Agricultural Workers. The Problem of Migratory Farm
Labor in the United States, 1948-1953, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

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The White House
Washington

1951 JUL 6 PM 8 01

WB057 PD

LUBBOCK TEX 6 345P

MATTHEW CONNELLY

THE WHITE HOUSE

WE ARE MAKING THE LARGEST COTTON CROP IN SOUTHWEST
HAVE EVER HAD PLEASE URGE THE PRESIDENT TO SIGN
THE MEXICAN LABOR BILL AS WE WILL NEED ALL THE HELP
POSSIBLE TO HARVEST SAME

ARCH UNDERWOOD.

x 258

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J. 92174 S

(407-D)

July 9, 1951

FILED BY
MISS CONWAY
JUL 16 1951

Dear Arch:

I was glad to have your telegram of the sixth. I have the legislation, to which you refer, under consideration now. I haven't made up my mind as yet what to do about it.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

x Gen
x PA 4410

Mr. Arch Underwood
Lubbock

Using Source 3

Sourcing Questions	1. Why is Underwood writing to President Truman?
Contextualization Questions	1. Where do you think this author lives? 2. Why would his location affect his opinion on migrant workers?
Corroboration Tasks	1. How is this telegram similar to the telegram in source 2?
Close Reading Questions	1. How did Truman respond to Underwoods telegram? 2. Why is his response significant?

Source 4

Source Information: Correspondence between the League of United American Council No. 160 and Harry S. Truman, October 22, 1948 and Correspondence between the League of United Latin Americans Citizens Council, Oct 21, 1948. Harry S. Truman Student Research Files, (37) Migratory Farm Labor, Box 1 of 2, Box Orange, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

WB205 NL PD

PECOS TEX OCT 22 1948

OCT 22 9 54 AM 1948

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITEHOUSE

MR PRESIDENT: DUE TO DIFFICULTY BEYOND OUR CONTROL WE ARE ASKING YOUR HELP IN STOPPING ILLEGAL ENTRY OF MEXICAN LABOR FROM MEXICO TO THIS COUNTRY. IT IS NOT ONLY A THREAT TO OUR NATIONAL ECONOMY BUT A DIRECT DANGER TO OUR OWN CITIZENS WHOM ARE ALREADY OUT OF WORK OR FORCED TO MOVE ELSEWHERE. AS A CIVIC ORGANIZATION WHICH ENDEAVORS TO PROMOTE THE GENERAL

WELFARE OF ITS LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS ESPECIALLY OUR YOUNGER GENERATION WE ASK FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF OUR FEDERAL LAWS WHICH ARE BEING VIOLATED ACCORDING TO PRESS DISPATCHES. WE ALSO ASK DEPORTATION OF ALL PERSONS WHO ARE IN THIS COUNTRY ILLEGALLY

LEAGUE OF UNITED AMERICAN COUNCIL NO 160.

WB194 DL PD

OCT 21 4 11 PM '48

NEW BRAUNFELS TEX OCT 21 157P

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WE SOLEMNLY PROTEST TO THE ACTION OF THE UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES IN ALLOWING ILLEGAL ENTRANCE TO THIS COUNTRY OF MEXICAN WORKERS. THE UNNECESSARY AND UNCALLED FOR INFLOW OF WORKERS FROM MEXICO IS A DIRECT THREAT TO SECURITY OF OUR OWN CITIZENS MANY OF WHOM ALREADY ARE UNEMPLOYED OR FORCED TO WORK FOR STARVATION WAGES. WE REQUEST AN IMMEDIATE

INVESTIGATION OF THE SITUATION

LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS COUNCIL

#155 NEW BRAUNFELS TEX ESTEBAN LOPEZ PRES..

Using Source 4

Sourcing Questions	1. Based on these sources, how might the authors feel about Public Law 78?
Contextualization Questions	1. What might have influenced the authors when we wrote this letter?
Corroboration Tasks	1. Do these documents have the same stance on migrant workers? How can you tell?
Close Reading Questions	1. What claims do the authors make? How are their claims similar?

Source 5

Source Information: William Green to Harry S. Truman, July 3, 1951. Truman Papers, Official File. OF 470-D: Mexican Agricultural Workers. The Problem of Migratory Farm Labor in the United States, 1948-1953, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.



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Filed by Mrs Stone 7-18-51

THE WHITE HOUSE
JUL 5 8 36 AM '51

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Washington 1, D. C.

July 3, 1951

RECEIVED

Honorable Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

The American Federation of Labor requests that you veto the Mexican labor importation bill passed by Congress on June 30th.

It certainly goes far afield from the findings and recommendations of your Commission on Migratory Labor.

This legislation discriminates against American workers employed in large scale agriculture and provides no means of setting standards of wages or working conditions for our own citizens.

As adopted by the Senate, the bill contained a provision penalizing employers who hire illegal aliens from Mexico. This was stricken from the measure as finally passed. In our opinion, the legalization of Mexican wet-backs who have allegedly been in the United States for five years is meaningless, in that it will be almost impossible to determine when such persons came into the country in violation of our immigration laws.

We object strongly to the provision permitting the employment of imported Mexican nationals in the food processing plants of the United States. The majority of such workers are now organized into our unions and have established excellent wage scales and working conditions in the industry. The employment of Mexican nationals in this industry will be a threat to our labor standards.

The exemption of Mexican nationals employed in the United States from the payment of income and social

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security taxes is discriminatory against all American citizens who must pay such taxes.

3
The provision that employers shall not be required to post a penalty bond to insure the return of imported workers to Mexico at the end of their period of employment, encourages unscrupulous employers to dismiss the Mexican workers and causes them to remain in the United States. The provision that employers be required to pay only the cost of returning Mexicans to the border reception centers is entirely inadequate.

6
The provision assessing employers of imported Mexican workers the sum of \$15 for each worker is much too low. This means the United States Treasury must make up the difference in the cost of transportation, subsistence enroute and while workers are in the reception centers awaiting employment or return to their home. In the opinion of the American Federation of Labor, this is a thinly disguised subsidy for a large number of agricultural and processing employers who hire seasonal labor.

We, therefore, urge that you veto the Ellender-Poage Mexican Labor Importation Bill (S. 984), and we believe that such a veto will be sustained in the Congress.

I beg to remain,

Respectfully yours,



President
American Federation of Labor

Hon. Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
Page 2
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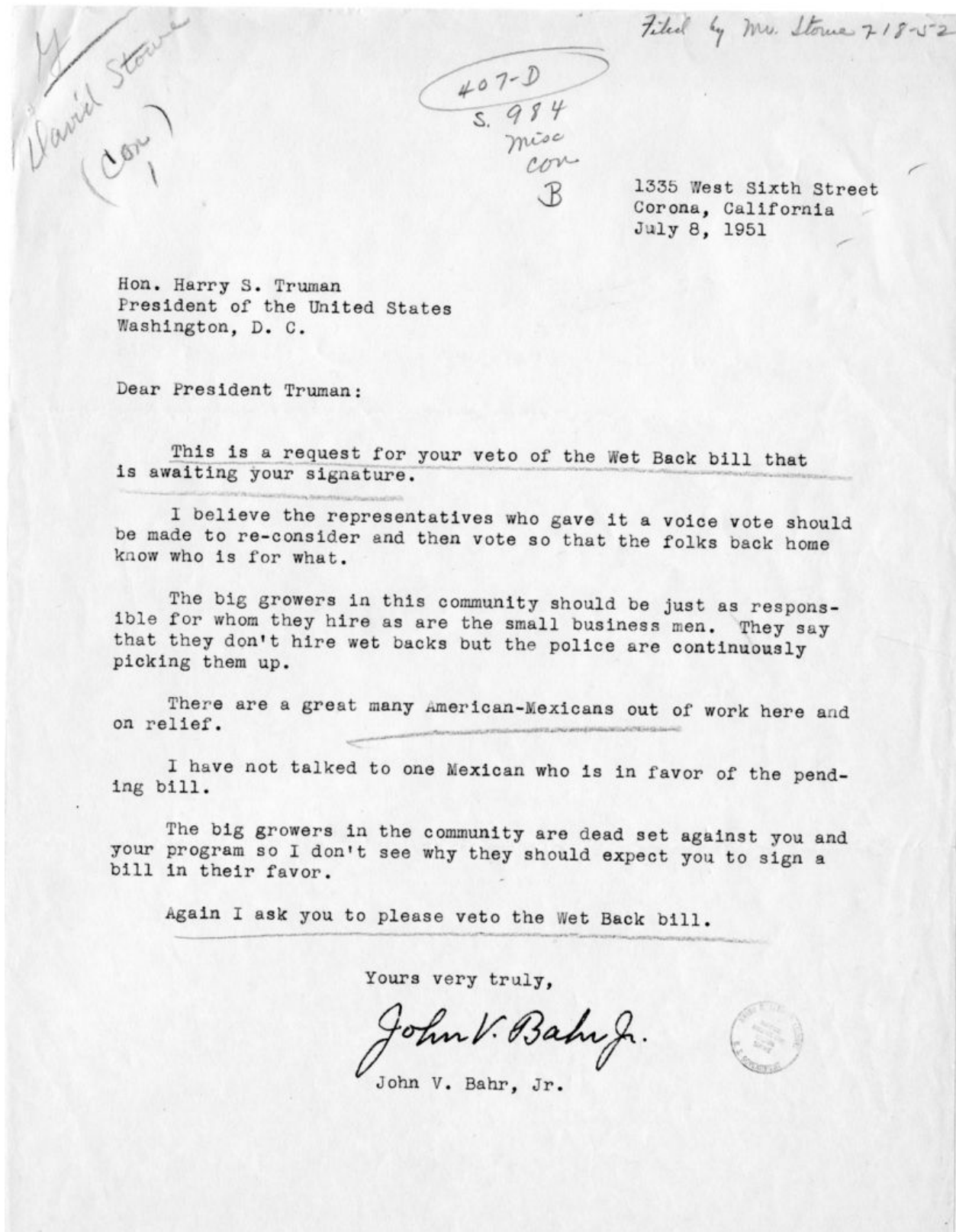


Using Source 5

Sourcing Questions	1. Based on the information in the source, what do you think the author's perspective is on migrant workers?
Contextualization Questions	1. The author disagrees with the potential bill. What are some reasons for this attitude? 2. What might have influenced the author when we wrote this letter?
Corroboration Tasks	1. The author disagrees with the potential bill. What are some reasons for this attitude?
Close Reading Questions	1. What is the author trying to convince the president to do?

Source 6

Source Information: Correspondence between John V. Bahr Jr. and Harry S. Truman, July 8, 1951. The Problem of Migratory Farm Labor in the United States, 1948-1953, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.



Using Source 6

Sourcing Questions	1. Based on the information in the source, what do you think the author's perspective is on migrant workers?
Contextualization Questions	1. What might have influenced Bahr Jr. when we wrote this letter? 2. Bahr Jr. disagrees with the potential bill. What are some reasons for this attitude?
Corroboration Tasks	1. Bahr Jr. disagrees with the potential bill. What are some reasons for this attitude?
Close Reading Questions	1. What is Bahr Jr. trying to convince the president to do?

Source 7

Source Information: Special Message to the Congress on the Employment of Agricultural Workers from Mexico, July 13, 1951. Public Papers, Harry S. Truman, 1945-1953, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

July 13, 1951

To the Congress of the United States:

I have approved S. 984, an Act relating to the recruitment and employment of agricultural workers from Mexico.

For many years, the Mexican Government, by agreement with the United States, has allowed its citizens to come into this country on contracts with agricultural employers to assist in harvesting vital crops--principally cotton, sugar beets, citrus fruits, and vegetables--and mostly in the southwestern part of the United States.

But this is very limited progress, which hardly touches our basic farm labor problems. The really crucial point, which this Act scarcely faces, is the steady stream of illegal immigrants from Mexico, the so-called "wetbacks", who cross the Rio Grande or the western stretches of our long border, in search of employment. These people are coming into our country in phenomenal numbers--and at an increasing rate. Last year 500,000 illegal immigrants were apprehended and returned to Mexico. In 1949, less than 300,000 were returned.

There are many thousands of these people who have escaped detection and remain in this country today. Thousands more will find their way here before the year is out. Since these unfortunate people are here illegally, they are subject to deportation if caught by our immigration authorities. They have to hide and yet must work to live. They are thus in no position to bargain with those who might choose to exploit them.

And many of them are exploited, I regret to say, and are left in abject poverty. They live always under the threat of exposure and deportation. They are unable, therefore, to protest or to protect themselves.

If we are to begin to meet the basic problem, we must do two things right away. First, we must put a stop to the employment of illegal immigrants. Second, we must improve the use of our domestic labor force. These steps will require more sanctions than our laws now provide and more administrative machinery and services than are now available. Therefore, I recommend that the Congress take the following action:

First, legislation should be enacted providing punishment for the offense of harboring or concealing aliens who have entered this country illegally. While we have a law on the books purporting to make this an offense, that law is not enforceable, because no penalty was adequately provided. This should be remedied at once. In addition, to help discourage the smuggling of aliens, the existing provisions of law punishing transportation of illegal immigrants

must be strengthened. While such legislation will be very useful in bringing illegal immigration from Mexico under control, it will also be a valuable addition to our general immigration laws.

Second, legislation should be enacted to clearly establish the authority of personnel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to inspect places of employment, without a warrant, where they have reason to believe that illegal immigrants are working or quartered. Immigration inspectors are able to cope with known illegal immigrants by obtaining warrants for their arrest. But where there are places of employment, consisting of many acres of land on which many workers are employed and quartered, inspection is necessary to find out whether illegal immigrants are among those workers. The inspections would involve no more, and probably a good deal less, than inspections of mines or factories by public authorities to assure compliance with accident prevention laws. Of course, a farmer's dwelling should be safe from search without a warrant. But there is no reason why other premises which serve as places of employment should not be open for inspection to aid in the enforcement of our immigration laws.

Third, a supplemental appropriation should be made available immediately to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to expand its personnel in the southwest so that all types of enforcement work can be stepped up--including apprehension, investigation, and deportation of illegal entrants. I shall shortly send a budget estimate for this purpose to the Congress.

It is absolutely impossible, without the expenditure of very large amounts of manpower and money, to seal off our long land borders to all illegal immigration. But these three actions by the Congress will give us the tools we need to find and deport illegal immigrants once here and to discourage those of our own citizens who are aiding and abetting their movement into the country.

From time to time, therefore, as the report of this Commission is studied and appraised, I intend to send further recommendations to the Congress, looking toward more improvements in the working conditions and living standards of our migrant workers. Meanwhile, it is my earnest hope that the Congress will lose no time in acting on the recommendations outlined in this message.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

Using Source 7

Sourcing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who is the author of this text?2. When was this written?
Contextualization Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why was this document created?2. What was different then?
Corroboration Tasks	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What might be another document to consider?
Close Reading Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What claims does the author make for the use of migrant workers?2. What claims does the author make against the use of migrant workers?