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Committee on Chicano Rights c/o  
Herman Baca  
1837 High Land Av.  
National City, ca 92050

I am appreciative of the conversation we held over the telephone last week, as I informed you I wish to be reinstated. I am hereby requesting your support to initiate an investigation on my performance as Chief of Migrant Services including the circumstances & reasons for my dismissal.

Sinceramente  
Edmundo Velez

2174 Ferran Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95832  
May 11, 1978

Mr. Mario Obledo, Secretary  
Health & Welfare Agency  
915 Capitol Mall  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This letter is to fully inform you of events which led to Mr. Livingston's decision to dismiss me as Chief of Migrant Services. Please review this material as I am requesting of you an investigation of this issue.

On April 24th I met with Mr. Gene Livingston at which time he advised me of his decision to terminate me as Chief of Migrant Services. The reason cited for my dismissal was his dissatisfaction in my method of handling the Parlier and Yuba City Projects. No comments were made with regards to the success of the other 23 rehabilitated projects. He centered his comments on Parlier and Yuba City with the following statement:

"I do not know why you allowed the demolition of the old units in Yuba City without first having a construction contract."

Mr. Livingston also said that "nothing was done to meet the needs of the families during the reconstruction projects, until we stepped into the situation." (We, meaning Jim Mattesich, Livingston, and Housing and Community Development) Lastly, Mr. Livingston charged, with respect to the Yuba City Project, that I was not supportive of modular housing and that I failed to convince the Director of the Housing Authority in Yuba City of the value of having modular housing placed in that city. He also said that I left the Director of Housing Authority in Yuba City with the impression that the modular units to be placed there would be of a "shitty" and poor construction.

I contested any and all charges made then, and at this point, I will relate the reasons: The situation in Yuba City became a crisis in the fall of 1976 when the Sutter County Building Department, in conjunction with the Sutter Health Department, condemned the total housing units in the Yuba City center. Mr. Leónel Alvarado, then Chief of OMS, was able to convince the Yuba City Housing Authority to open the center for occupancy in the season of 1977 and promised in March 1977 that mobile trailers would be installed in June, 1977. This promise was not kept, as Mr. Alvarado left in April 1977. However, Mr. Alvarado left a construction package out to bid for \$6,800 per unit cost for an approximate of \$453,000 for 50 units; \$340,000 for 50 units and \$113,000 for site

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development and other incidentals to the project. I received the results of the bid proposal in June of 1977, which showed that the project was grossly under-budgeted and very unprofessionally planned. Since Alvarado had already approved the demolition of the total project in Yuba City, they demolished the whole center at the end of the season, which was October. Recognizing that the county had totally condemned the units two years prior and that they would not be fit for human habitation any longer, I proceeded to replan and rebudget the project with actual cost estimates needed to rebuild the center. Since the budget allocation was set for '76-77, the additional costs were planned to be funded by the 1977-78 budget for the factual cost of \$23,000 per unit, an increase of \$15,200 per unit, which was underbudgeted by the previous chief of OMS, for a total cost of \$1,200,000 for 50 units.

The County Housing Authority indicated in October 1977, during the time of the demolition, that they would provide 50 of their own housing units to meet the families' needs during the reconstruction period in 1978. When the County Housing Authority in Yuba City received promises from Leonel Alvarado and the Acting Chief, Ricardo Nieto, that mobile units would arrive before June 30, 1977, these promises could not possibly be honored due to the fact that the plan was underbudgeted and poorly planned. In the first part of December, I sent Mr. Manuel Castro, a staff member of OMS, to investigate the possible alternative housing in the Yuba City area. He reported verbally that housing was not available for farmworkers in mobile sites, hotels, apartments and single housing units.

I proceeded to contact the following agencies to seek alternatives for housing with the knowledge that OMS had no budget allocation to utilize to solve the problem of emergency housing:

- National Guard
- Cal-Trans
- Office of Emergency Services
- Sidney Withrow, the buyer of the Parlier Site units
- Tur Lok Modular Housing Fabricator
- California Manufactured Housing Association

Consequently, we began to prod EDD for definite budget monies in our program. On March 22, 1978, we received a call from EDD, Budget Audit, that we had an additional \$380,000 to spend by June 30, 1978. Had we had this information in October, 1977, Yuba City would not be in the situation which now exists.

In a memo dated March 31, 1978, I related this to Mr. Gene Livingston and requested that monthly financial budget reports be sent to OMS in a timely and accurate fashion. On March 29, 1978, the California Manufactured Housing Association offered to sell, deliver and install 50 units completely furnished to Yuba City by

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May 1, 1978, at a per unit cost of \$11,800. Via a memo to James L. Wyhbidko, Chief of Fiscal Program Division, EDD, dated the same day of March 29, 1978, I requested immediate action on this emergency situation. This request was approved by Mr. Whybidko and sent to Mr. Tolbert Elliot, Director of Housing Authority in Yuba City. At this time, Mr. Jim Mattesich, who had just been appointed as my superior, stopped and retrieved the emergency request by calling Tolbert Elliott to return the mobile home amendment unsigned.

In now has been made clear that Jim Mattesich and Gene Livingston met with the administrative staff of HCD, believing that they could resolve the problem, though they had no concrete knowledge of the efforts of the OMS staff. In fact, no one in OMS was asked, invited or counseled about the meetings taking place with Gene Livingston and Jim Mattesich, to the point that they did not know that OMS was already working with the Chief of Codes and Standards, Xavier Mendoza, and specifically with Mr. Bob Allen of his staff.

By not including me in the HCD discussions, EDD put me in an adverse position and the results were that HCD duplicated the investigation of OMS and recommended a modular housing concept which would not meet the immediate need that is to house the families by May 1st - the harvest season. This would have not been the case if EDD would have approved my original proposal.

With regards to the Parlier project, Mr. Livingston told me that "nothing has been done in Parlier; the units were removed without first having a construction contract; the needs of the families are not being met; the Raisin City camp will not be ready to open on May 1st," therefore it's opening could not be of any help to this problem. He stated that I had been informed that the policy of the administration is to go solar energy and I had eliminated it from the Parlier Project. I contested all of these points. Certainly Mr. Livingston has valid concerns, but his concerns are not valid reasons for my dismissal.

I told Mr. Livingston that since September 16, 1977, when we received the Notice of Grant award, we had spent \$200,000 in the planning, engineering and architectural services for the Parlier project which included cost analysis and the preparation for the construction bid package. It was recommended and planned that the Fresno Housing Authority (FHA) would be the General Contractor in order to save construction cost and that the development would take place in two phases. Construction for the first 50 units would start early in March, 1978, and be completed and ready for occupancy by midseason - July 30, 1978. The rest of the units would be completed and ready for occupancy by the end of the season. In the meantime, the needs of the families would be met

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by the FHA by accomodating them in the surrounding areas in housing units owned by the FHA. The Raisin City center would be used to house families that normally stay in Parlier, since the Raisin City center went through a great turnover of families staying there last year. The Raisin City center did open May 1, 1978, as scheduled.

The Parlier project has advanced very rapidly in spite of the delays caused by EDD's Legal Department in not preparing a contract with Fresno Housing Authority in an expeditious manner.

The units were removed, fas per the contract, to clear the site for the reconstruction tasks. EDA's (public works program) regulations clearly state that the project must break ground and be ready to commence within 90 days after the grant award notification. Parlier broke ground on December 1, 1977. At that time the housing authorities promised and has already offered (to the families) to house them in their low-rent housing projects (no response from the families). Construction plans and specifications were put out to bid during the month of February. The results of that bid showed that not enough subcontractors submitted a bid to award contracts. A second bid package was developed and let for bid on March 24, 1978, and the results were the same except that this time, a major contractor bid the entire project as opposed to subcontractors. In the days that followed, the Fresno Housing Authority negotiated the bid amount to meet our budget. It was then that I learned we would not be able to go with the original plan, due to lack of interest from subcontractors. On March 29, 1978, I notified the housing authorities to proceed and award the contract as negotiated. Further approval was needed from the Fresno Housing Authorities' Board of Commissioners to approve the contract. In the meantime, Mr. Livingston came to see me at my office on April 12, 1978. He told me that he was concerned about the Parlier project saying that nothing had been done there, the estimated per unit cost was too high, and that we would have problems substantiating that cost to Mr. Kyser, the Budget Legislative Analyst. He wanted to check into the possibility of bringing in modular housing to Parlier since it would be less costly and we could buy more units. He instructed me to call Fresno and order a halt to the contract award for two days until he could locate modular housing fabricators in the area. He also wanted to check with EDA for approval. I told Mr. Livingston that I didn't agree with the statement that "nothing had been done in Fresno". I also told him that \$200,000 had been spent in the planning of the entire project, which was about to be contracted out, and that the per unit cost was the most reasonable one to date for the type of housing that was designed with solar energy. He then said, "We can always bring the solar energy later." This indicated to me that solar energy was no longer a priority. As per Mr. Livingston's instruction, I halted the construction contract; however, I also requested from Fresno a budget revision which excluded solar energy, as per Mr. Livingston's own words, "We can always bring solar energy later."

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Mr. Livingston did not call back to inform me of his findings with regards to his proposal to bring modular housing into Parlier. I sent him a memo in which I justified the per unit cost in Parlier and asked Mr. Livingston not to pursue modular housing for that project. The week that followed, I spent three days in Parlier meeting with the community, the FHA, Legal Aid, the Parlier Mayor and City Administrators in an attempt to find an immediate solution to the housing problem that had been grossly exaggerated by local pressure groups. I found out in my visit there that these pressure groups have a long-standing feud with the local housing authorities and the Parlier project is being used negatively and adversely against the Director of the Housing Authority. The Parlier City Administrator, the Fresno Sheriff's Department, the Fresno Health Department and myself have gone out there to look into the situation and have found out that no families are sleeping in cars as has been reported. Though it is true that families are living in overcrowded conditions and paying high rents, they are not responding to the low rent housing offered by the housing authorities. The persons who initiated this issue have promised housing to the migrants and are advising them not to move to Raisin City. While in Fresno, the Housing Authority and I worked out a plan to bring 25-30 of the old units to the site for immediate installation (3 weeks) without disturbing the construction. This plan also allows for the use of the daycare center with maximum security and safety for the children. I asked the housing authorities to put that in the form of a proposal, and to send it to my office immediately for approval. On April 26, 1978, I learned that orders were given by Mr. Jim Mattesich not to approve any contracts until his return to the office.

Mr. Obledo, as I told Mr. Livingston, I don't agree that the Parlier and Yuba City projects have been mismanaged by me. The Yuba City project was poorly planned from the beginning and I feel that the steps and actions taken by me to correct the situation were most appropriate. The Parlier project has moved very expeditiously in spite of the delays caused by EDD's legal unit. We have been able to move ahead and the needs of the families are being met with the help of the Fresno Housing Authority. You should also know that for the first six months my staff of nine employees had decreased to five of which only two are classified as professionals and only one had housing experience. OMS's budget allows for a staff of 13 and assistance from EDD has been minimal in the areas of Personnel, Fiscal and Legal. Even under these circumstances, I am proud of the work I have done. In terms of measurable results, I feel the work I have done has been of superior quality.

Mr. Obledo, please verify my statement and also verify the fact that when I took office, the 3½ million dollar rehabilitation project was 10 months behind schedule in 25 centers throughout the state. Today, after 11 months of hard work, we have reached a minimum of 85% completion. Please compare the status of OMS contracts last year with this year's. You should know that most of the 25 centers did not have an approved budget nor a contract

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to operate even after the opening season. Also, last year, prior to my appointment, the relationships with our contractors was at its poorest ever, full of confusion, mistrust and disrespect for the office. As of the date of my dismissal, that trust had been restored. I was able to accomplish that by taking the initiative to establish a workable and responsible attitude in the delivery of services to our constituents. This gave me the support and cooperation of our contractors. You should also know that during the first four months of my administration, I was able to initiate and get two proposals funded; one for \$300,000 from the Fresno County CDBG program and the other for \$2.7 million for the rehabilitation of the Parlier Center which is now being considered by EDA as a model project for the nation, which is one of the reasons why I opposed Mr. Livingston's modular housing proposal for Parlier.

In conclusion Mr. Obledo, I want to be reinstated, but more than that, I want it made very clear that the work performed by me as Chief of OMS was more than adequate when considering the status of the office at the time I took over the administration compared to the status today. I wish to inform you that the credibility and reputation that I have built during the last nine years of work in the housing field has been severely damaged by this unwarranted dismissal. I consider my termination, though within the scope of Mr. Livingston's authority, to be unjustified.

I respectfully request from you an independent review of the circumstances for my dismissal including any investigation of my statements.

Respetuosamente,

Edmundo Velez

EV/gr

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Herman Baca  
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Estimado Sr. Baca

La presente me sirve para saludarle e informarle acerca de el caso de Anita Vega y su hijo Salomon Vega que se encuentra extraviado desde el dia marzo 18-79. el caso es como sigue;

La Sra Anita Vega fué arrestada por oficiales de la Inmigracion en Fresno, cuando ella se encontraba trabajando en una Empacadora de Frutas, La suegra de Anita quien cuidada los niños (2) una niña de 7 meses y un niño de 3 años le entrego los niños a la inmigracion aún a sabiendas de que los niños son nacidos en Fresno, ca. — Anita Vega fue deportada a Mexico con sus 2 niños

En Tijuana <sup>enfrente del HOTEL AZTECA</sup> se encontro a "El Caballero" <sup>en un restaurante</sup> quien se dedica a pasar gente de Tijuana a San Diego por \$250. hasta Los Angeles Empezaron a cruzar el monte de Tijuana a S. YSIDRO la Noche del 18 de marzo, despues de 3 Horas de camino, llevando en brazos a sus 2 niños, un hombre se ofrecio a ayuda a llevar el niño y una señora se ofrecio a llevar la niña (Anita tiene 4 meses de embarazo) al poco rato los sorprendio la inmigracion y todos echaron a ~~correr~~ correr

anita logio rescatar a su hija pero el señor que se ofrecio a ayudarle con el niño logio escapar -  
Despues que hicieron todos los arrestos anita le dijo al oficial de inmigración "aquí falta gente" el oficial te respondió con una cachetada y le dijo "tu eres la coyota"! despues anita explico que no era coyota y que le hacia falta un hijo - en el monte los aprendidos fueron desnudados (Hombres y Mujeres) por la inmigración, despues llamaron a un Helicoptero para buscarlo que se escapó con el niño - en esta carta estoy mandando una foto de anita puesto que el niño nunca fue retratado!

Agradesco toda la asistencia que me puedan facilitar

S. S. Servidor

Guendo Kelz

P.D. El niño responde al Nombre de Ramon Vega - y su mamá le llamaba "JABIAN"