

PROJECT AMERICA

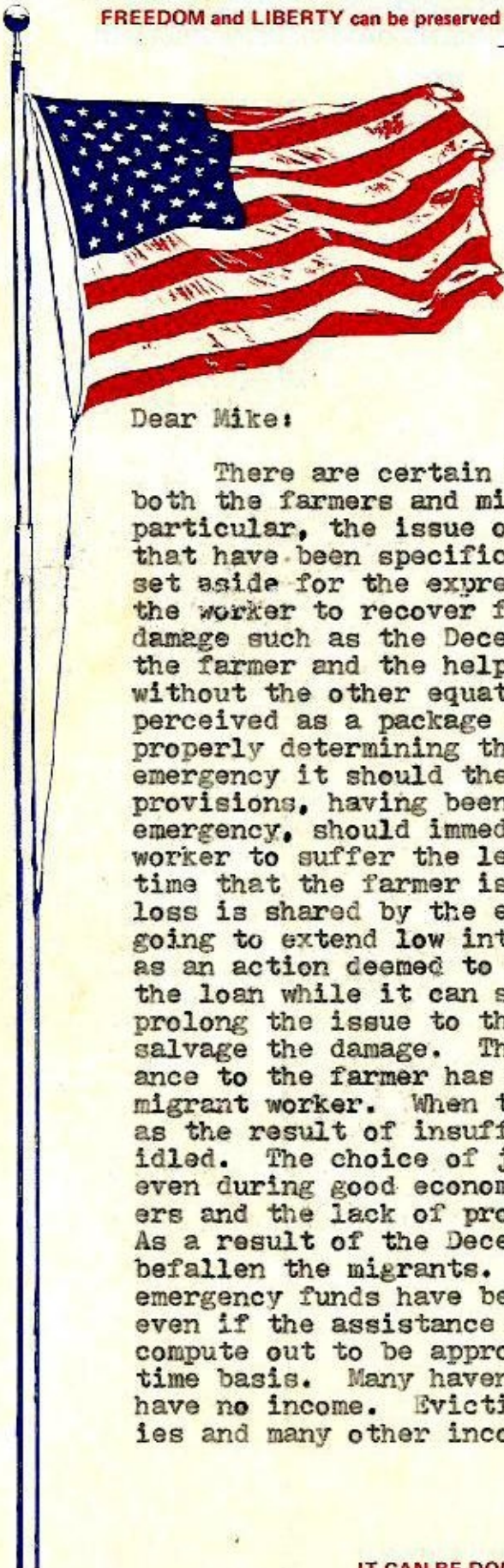
FREEDOM and LIBERTY can be preserved only through Unity — Stand up for America or be buried by Communism!

Robert Franklin Watts, Founder

415 South Collins Street
Plant City, Florida 33566
Phone: (813) 752-7310
(813) 752-1717

February 13, 1984

Congressman Michael Bilirakis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515



Dear Mike:

There are certain issues that must be addressed regarding both the farmers and migrant workers of our country. In particular, the issue of the allocation and dispersal of funds that have been specifically earmarked as "Emergency Funds", set aside for the expyress purpose of helping the farmer and the worker to recover from miscellaneous types of severe crop damage such as the December freeze here in Florida. First, the farmer and the helper must be treated equally since one without the other equates out as nothing. They should be perceived as a package deal and treated accordingly. After properly determining that any incident does qualify as an emergency it should then be handled as such. The necessary provisions, having been made sufficiently in advance of the emergency, should immediately follow enabling the farmer and worker to suffer the least amount of lost time possible. Any time that the farmer is inhibited, for any reason, the overall loss is shared by the entire country. If the government is going to extend low interest loans to the farmer they should, as an action deemed to be in their own best interests, expedite the loan while it can still be used effectively, and not prolong the issue to the point that it proves to be too late to salvage the damage. This failure to provide immediate assistance to the farmer has an even more devastating effect on the migrant worker. When the farmer can no longer afford to farm, as the result of insufficient funding, the migrant worker is idled. The choice of jobs for migrants in any community, even during good economic times, are few due to language barriers and the lack of proper qualifications required for most jobs. As a result of the December freeze wide spread hardships have befallen the migrants. Promised assistance in the form of emergency funds have been, to this date, non-existent. Yet, even if the assistance did come through, all at once, it would compute out to be approximately \$11.00 per person on a one time basis. Many haven't worked in seven weeks, therefore have no income. Evictions, repossessions, disruption of utilities and many other inconveniences have become common practice.

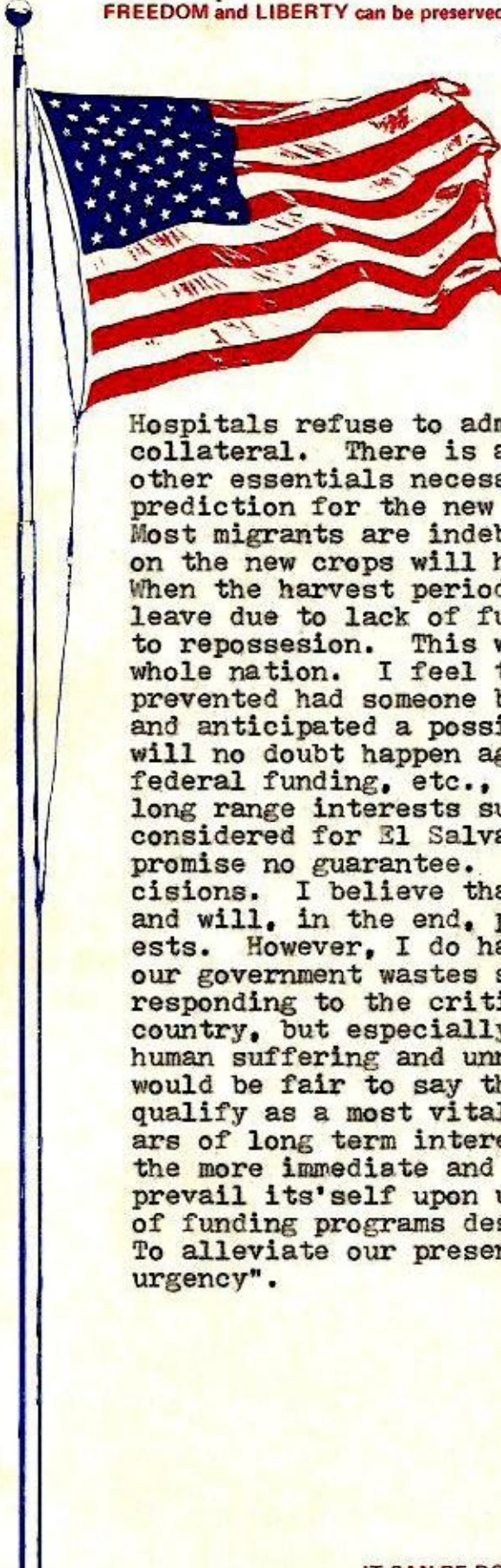
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2



Hospitals refuse to admit their sick because they have no collateral. There is an acute lack of food, blankets and other essentials necessary to life. The most optimistic prediction for the new crops to bear is from 3 to 4 weeks. Most migrants are indebted so deeply that the money earned on the new crops will have to be used to repay their debts. When the harvest period ends here many won't be able to leave due to lack of funds and the loss of their vehicles, due to repossession. This will have an adverse effect across the whole nation. I feel that this entire dilemma could have been prevented had someone been monitoring the situation properly and anticipated a possible emergency such as has happened and will no doubt happen again. We speak of allocations, grants, federal funding, etc., in the billions of dollars for possible long range interests such as the 8 billion dollars being considered for El Salvador. These are investments that promise no guarantee. I have no problem accepting these decisions. I believe that for the most part they are necessary and will, in the end, prove to be made in our own best interests. However, I do have a difficult time understanding why our government wastes so much vital time before appropriately responding to the critical needs of any vital interest of this country, but especially when those needs become a catalyst for human suffering and unnecessary hardships. I believe it would be fair to say that farming has proven its' self to qualify as a most vital interest. Let us remove the binoculars of long term interests for the time being and deal with the more immediate and more important problem that chose to prevail its' self upon us by the implementation and expedition of funding programs designed to meet these crucial needs. To alleviate our present crisis the key words are "extreme urgency".

Thank you,



Bobby Watts

IT CAN BE DONE, IT MUST BE DONE, IT WILL BE DONE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Michael Bilirakis
M.C.

Michael Bilirakis
Dear Mr. Watts

Mr. Robert F. Watts
415 South Collins Street
Plant City, FL 33566

MARCH 08,

1984

(Signature)

1984-03-08 10:10 AM

MICHAEL BILIRAKIS
9TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
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HUMAN SERVICES

REPUBLICAN RESEARCH COMMITTEE
TASK FORCE ON SOCIAL SECURITY



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
March 8, 1984

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Mr. Robert F. Watts
415 South Collins Street
Plant City, FL 33566

Dear Mr. Watts:

Thank you for contacting me to express your concern over the plight of migrant farm workers as a result of the unemployment caused by the Christmas weekend freeze.

I certainly understand and share your concern. The Governor's office and state and local agencies throughout Florida have worked very hard to assist these unemployed workers and to make emergency resources and services available to them. I have enclosed a summary of the actions that had been taken up to February 21 and more recent communications I have had with the State have assured me that these efforts have continued.

Thusfar, the Governor has not requested a Presidential disaster declaration, which would make federal unemployment assistance funds available to qualified unemployed workers. The reason for this is because thusfar, Florida's situation does not meet the requirements for such a designation. The available statistics do not indicate a large pool of workers who are unemployed and ineligible for state assistance, as was the case in Texas after the freeze. You may be sure, however, that I will lend my support to a request from the Governor should the collected data indicate that Florida meets the requirements for a Presidential disaster declaration. I am keeping in touch with the State on this matter.

I want to clarify that the emergency assistance from the Farmers Home Administration that has become available is not an outright gift or "handout." The assistance is in the form of low interest loans for which farmers, who have invested great sums of money in their farming operations, must qualify and which they must pay back over time. I was pleased to have played a part in securing the timely announcement of disaster assistance for Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

Please be assured that I am following this situation closely and

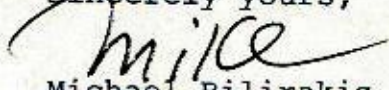
Mr. Robert F. Watts
March 8, 1984
Page 2

that the information I have indicates that all that can be done
is being done.

I appreciate having the benefit of your views.

Warm regards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "mike".

Michael Bilirakis
Member of Congress

MB/lb
Enclosure