

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
Washington, May 5, 1950.

Hon. JOSEPH C. O'MAHONEY,  
*Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,*  
*United States Senate, Washington, D. C.*

MY DEAR SENATOR O'MAHONEY: I am highly gratified by the thorough and objective consideration which your committee is giving to H. R. 331 and H. R. 49, bills which would enable the Territories of Alaska and Hawaii to take their rightful place as members of the Union. As you know, I have long supported the objectives of these important bills which carry out the pledges made to the people of the two Territories. I sincerely hope that the Congress, during its present session, will enact legislation granting statehood to Alaska and Hawaii. The need is more urgent today than ever before. By such action, we will not only promote the welfare and development of the two Territories, but also greatly strengthen the security of our Nation as a whole.

It should not be forgotten that most of our present States achieved statehood at a relatively early period of their development. The stimulus of being admitted as full partners in the Union, and the challenge of managing their own affairs were among the most significant factors contributing to their growth and progress. Very few of our existing States, at the time of their admission to the Union, possessed potential resources, both human and natural, superior to those of Alaska and Hawaii. I am confident that Alaska and Hawaii, like our present States, will grow with statehood and because of statehood.

There is no necessity for me to repeat at this time the arguments for statehood. The many qualified witnesses who have appeared before your committee have, I am sure, presented convincing evidence both as to the need for and the tangible benefits to be derived from statehood. There is, however, one objection made by opponents of H. R. 331 and H. R. 49 which I believe requires further discussion because it goes beyond the question of statehood and raises a fundamental constitutional issue. I am referring to the objection that Alaska and Hawaii as States would be entitled to representation in the Senate of the United States disproportionate to their population.

The argument is not only entirely without merit, but also directly attacks a basic tenet of the constitutional system under which this Nation has grown and prospered. Without the provision for equal representation in the Senate of all States, both great and small, regardless of population, there probably would have been no United States. This was one of the great compromises which the Federalist says was a result "not of theory but of a spirit of amity, and that mutual deference and concession which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable." There is no justification for denying statehood to Alaska and Hawaii on the basis of an issue which was resolved by the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

America justly takes pride in its record of fulfilling to the letter its obligations to foreign nations. We should be no less scrupulous in carrying out the promises made to our own citizens in Alaska and Hawaii. The case for statehood rests on both legal and moral grounds.

These are troubled times. I know of few better ways in which we can demonstrate to the world our deep faith in democracy and the principle of self-government than by admitting Alaska and Hawaii to the Union as the forth-ninth and fiftieth States.

Sincerely,

HARRY S. TRUMAN.

#### FINANCIAL BURDENS OF STATEHOOD

Differing points of view as to the ability of the Territory to support State government were presented to the committee. Attention is directed to the testimony of Mrs. Mildred Hermann, secretary to the Alaska Statehood Commission, who went into the subject in great detail at the hearings (hearings, p. 109).