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Feb. 18, 2017

Dear Sen. John Cornyn:

Our Austin, Texas nonprofit helps persons from underserved populations learn their worth and connect with others through creative expression. The act of creating, we've discovered, is an effective bridge: bringing together persons from diverse ethnicities, gender identities, faiths, ages, and political views. As a Christian organization, we see such bridge building as our call. We believe bridge building is also an inherently American value. As a nation built by immigrants who came to our shores from nations across the globe, we have, from our inception, valued and benefitted from diversity.

We request, therefore, that you vote against 1) a wall dividing us from Mexico, and 2) embargos levied against trade from Mexico. We understand the need to protect our borders from those who would enter with intent to harm. However, wall building and embargoes represent a serious lack of imagination in solving this problem. We are a nation of inventors: a nation of creators. We can do better than this. We can, for example, assist Mexico in stabilizing her economy.

In addition, erecting such a wall robs our nation of the integrity that allowed President Reagan to challenge: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Whether we wall out or wall in, we divide.

We ask that you personally respond to our letter, thus demonstrating to the persons we serve that your primary commitment is to your constituents, rather than to the halls of power.

Lady Liberty stands on one of our nation's borders above the words: "Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore./Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,/I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Lady Liberty, not a dividing wall, is our nation's symbol. Let her challenge us to be the great nation we have potential to be.

Best Regards,

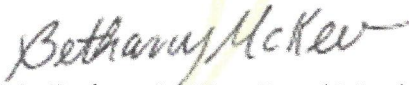

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