

**OPEN LETTER TO FRANCISCO IVARRA
AMERICAN GI FORUM OF THE UNITED STATES**

Francisco Ivarra, Past Commander
American GI Forum of the United States

Dear Francisco

I am taking this opportunity to thank you for your decorated service in the Armed Forces of The United States and also to the American GI Forum organization where you have served as its National Commander twice. Your distinguished service and contributions were and are very much appreciated.

During your first term as the organization's leader, you regained the respect and admiration of Corporate America and at your departure left a sizeable bank balance meant to serve the legacy and the instituted programs of the American GI Forum. Your accomplishments during that first term came at a cost where not everyone was supportive; however, you managed to work and accomplish the mission with the help of your board members and with the guidance of the Founder's Legacy.

Your return to lead this great organization this past year again was challenging. The many obstacles placed before your fellow officers during the past year did not go unnoticed. Clearing the many hurdles placed before you included battles with insubordinate members and matters of financial misdeeds. We have to commend you and your fellow board members for selecting the high road in dealing with these highly charged matters and continuing as much as possible with the organizational mission.

The National Board of Directors took immediate and decisive action relative to the wayward ways of certain members by following lawful processes within the American GI Forum Constitution. We realize that these actions were hard to take and that at times you and the board members must have felt isolated and under great pressure. As individual members though, we were feeling your isolation and pressure and because of that, many of us understood why the organization could not proceed with the more normal events of the day. During your first term, you met the challenges of the time and once again during your second term you proved your mettle. Yours were not fancy slogans or empty promises, they were kept promises and the organization gained from your integrity and leadership.

During the National Conference in Las Vegas, the Colorado candidate for commander came to the California Delegation to state his position in running for the office of commander. During his visit he was asked, "will you honor the work done by this past board of directors?" His answer was "yes" and he added "I might do things a little differently". In retrospect to that answer, I have to ask myself, is there another American GI Forum Constitution that I have not heard of? We will be watching and I suppose that time will tell all.

Commander Ivarra you are among the men that can stand tall in any gathering. You served your country and you have certainly added to the credibility and legacy of the American GI Forum. As others take the lead in guiding the organization, may they look towards men like you and the late Dr. Hector P. Garcia for inspiration as they undertake the great challenges that lay before them.

Sincerely,

Tu Amigo
Augustine Lerma, Editor
California Forumeer