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Amnesty plan a blow to Asian Americans

The amnesty program of President Carter, by certain omissions, discriminates against Asian Americans, Immigration Commissioner Leonel J. Castillo was told by a delegation of the Immigration Task Force of the Pacific-Asia Coalition, Mid-Atlantic region.

The criticism was made during the second meeting of the group with Castillo at Washington, D.C. In the first meeting, when the plan was still being worked out by the administration, Castillo encouraged the group to give their comments and observations on any aspect of US Immigration.

Those who met with Mr. Castillo recently were Tino Calabia, Reuben Seguritan, Tania Azores, Angie Cruz, Dr. Young-Key Kim-Renaud, Josephine Ho and Keh Soo Park.

The group was particularly critical of the exclusion of exchange visitors and students from the plan to allow undocumented aliens who entered the United States between 1970 and 1977 to reside temporarily for five years.

"Most of the exchange visitors and students who came during that period were Asian Americans," the group asserted, "The effect of the proposal therefore would be to exclude a specific class of aliens, namely the Asian Americans, from

the benefits of the law."

"The situation would be deplorable," the group said, "because it would introduce a new discriminatory provision in the law. As it comes close to the heels of the anti-foreign medical graduates law that has the effect of excluding mostly Asians doctors from certain immigration benefits."

The group proposed to scrap the exclusion against exchange visitors and students. They also wanted a later cut-off date, like January 4, 1976, for the granting of permanent resident status.

Reacting to the criticism, Mr. Castillo said that he would favor granting amnesty to students who entered the United States without any explicit commitment to return to their countries of origin. He expressed reservations in the case of exchange visitors who had commitments to return to their countries.

Also discussed during the meeting were: the granting of some kind of relief to delay the deportation of aliens who may be benefited if the amnesty proposal finally takes effect; and the granting of indefinite voluntary departure to beneficiaries of approved third preference petitions.

The delegation also suggested Asian representation in the Immigration Advisory Committee. At present there is a Hispanic Advisory Committee composed of 15 members. There are plans however to make the committee national in membership and to expand it to 26 or 27.

The group also proposed the establishment of an Asian American Advisory Committee or at least the inclusion of Asian Americans in the committee. It added that ethnic representation should be in accordance with the number of immigrants coming to the US annually. Last year, Filipinos represented 9% of all immigrants who entered the US.