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Honorable Albert Watson
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Watson:

I have carefully considered your letter of September 25, 1964, concerning the complaint of L. Maurice Bessinger of Columbia, South Carolina, that his rights were violated when customers at his restaurant in Sumter were harassed by the Department of Justice on September 24.

Mr. Bessinger is president of Piggie Park Enterprises, Inc. which operates six restaurants in Columbia, Florence and Sumter. Five of the restaurants are drive-ins located on interstate highways and one of these is in Sumter.

The Department has received several complaints that Negroes have been refused service at the Piggie Park restaurants. An investigation was begun to determine the accuracy of the complaints and whether the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has been violated. This investigation is continuing and is apparently the basis for Mr. Bessinger's claim.

I am informed that on September 24, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were conducting a phase of the investigation in Sumter.

My review of this matter does not disclose any violation by the Department of the rights of Mr. Bessinger. The Department will, of course, not permit harassment in any manner. Our concern is the enforcement of federal law uniformly to all citizens.

Sincerely,

NICHOLAS deB. KATZENBACH
Acting Attorney General

cc: Records
Chrono
Doar
Investigation File
Marlin