

January 26, 1940

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

We women of the Jersey Homesteads, out of the depths of our affliction turn to you to help us in our dilemma.

Our husbands availed themselves of the opportunity offered by the Government when it opened the Jersey Homesteads, to try to make for our families a better, fuller life, and we invested our life's savings in the plan to operate a co-operative clothing factory. Today we are in despair. The co-operative plan has failed despite all the efforts of the Government, our leaders, and our men. Our families are at the brink of utter destitution.

The entire community has agreed that the thought of throwing ourselves on the Government and asking for relief is intolerable, and that we must try to interest private industry in locating in the Homesteads factory. Thus our men may be employed and we may yet have that better life we hoped for when we left the cities to come here.

The committee appointed for the purpose of securing industry has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. They have been able to persuade the firm of Kartiganer and Co., of New York City, the largest millinery manufacturers in the country to open a plant in our community under full union conditions. Ironically enough, the Farm Security Administration has placed such unusual restrictions in the lease for the factory building that the concern is unable to sign it. Their contention is that the restrictions would so destroy their flexibility of operation in their highly seasonal industry that it might be disastrous to them.

In this predicament of ours, and trusting in your deep desire to assist plain people in the solution of their grave problems, we turn to you, and ask you to intercede in our behalf with the officials of the Farm Security Administration. Please help us to help ourselves. We have been assured that if the Government will grant an ordinary lease to this firm, such a lease as usual in real estate rentals, our factory will be rented and our men and youth employed.

We women see what the present situation is doing to our families. Our men are becoming bitter and discouraged. It seems that no matter how hard we try something always must stop them. Our grown sons and daughters are becoming demoralized. They feel there is no place for them. It is easy to become cynical when one sees such an opportunity



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before them to live and work as human beings should, and yet are stopped by a wall of prohibitions which helps no one but ruins us.

We know you will not fail us. Help us to have the right to determine our own fate, and in the name of all our women may God bless you.

Very sincerely yours,

Lora Garber  
Mrs Fannie Wiener  
Mrs Sarah Lefter  
Mrs Anna Lowenthal  
Mrs. Ray Grushka  
Rose Dukin