

The original documents are located in Box 8, folder “Congress - Complaints about Departments and Agencies” of the John Marsh Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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FEB 13 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: MAX FRIEDERSDORF *M. G.*

SUBJECT: Department/Agency Complaints
from the Hill

In compliance with the President's request to know the most frequent complaints from the Hill to the various departments and agencies, the following is submitted:

DEFENSE

1. Delay in response to inquiries.
2. Failure to keep Members promptly informed on developments that concern them.
3. Delay in processing transcripts.
4. Failure to consult our friends until it is too late for them to help us when we get into difficulty; especially true in case of Minority Members.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, ie. Motorcycle helmets, safety bills, truck and bus brake standards, air bags, etc.
2. Airport Security - raised by La Guardia bombing - but goes to question of cargo screening, locker security, etc.
3. Urban Mass Transit Capital Assistance - Just as a multitude of sophisticated applications from a number of metropolitan areas are coming, limited funds and short remaining life of program, precludes most new starts and many modernization programs.
4. Aircraft Noise - Exacerbated by the Concorde decision, the fact is the 80% of commercial flight in operation today does not meet standards for new aircraft. As a result there is substantial pressure in Congress to require "retrofit" on noisy aircraft and in many cases to establish local curfews that play havoc with a coordinated national aviation system.



5. Administration initiative to limit operating subsidies for mass transit to 50% of available Section V funds under the Urban Mass Transit Act - the remaining 50% to be used only for capital purpose. We are vulnerable here because this initiative is inconsistent with Administrative thrust to permit greatest possible local flexibility.
6. Making mass transit fully accessible to the elderly and the handicapped. This is an emotional issue - made more difficult by the sensibilities of the Vietnam veteran - but one that makes no sense from a cost/effective point of view. It would be cheaper to provide taxi service for the elderly and handicapped than to convert buses, subways etc., to accommodate them. Nevertheless, separate but equal does not satisfy many vocal advocates.
7. Too much general taxpayer support of specific modes of transportation rather than user support. This Administration is committed to relieving the burden of the general taxpayer vis a vis aviation costs - but this issue could be exploited very successfully by the President in this election year.

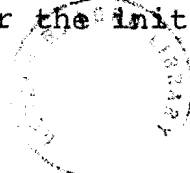
CIEP

Since CIEP is not a line department but a coordinating entity, Congressional requests are generally for information about Administration economic policies, rather than complaints or criticism.

AID

1. We spend too much money for foreign aid.
2. Our aid ends up in the pockets of the fat cat leaders and not the poor people.
3. Our food aid does not get to the hungry people.
4. We do not spend enough money on foreign aid.
5. We do not pay enough attention to the private voluntary organizations and religious community foreign aid efforts.

NOTE: AID does not have a domestic constituency outside the religious community, the private voluntary organizations, and the university community. For the most part, the American public has very little interest in foreign aid in general and AID in particular. Denis O'Neil's comments reflect the standard Congressional correspondence in order of frequency, but do not include one major issue: personnel problems. They have had a major RIF over the past year, and have had hundreds of complaints that there is at RIF at AID but very few complaining that they mishandled the RIF. Most complaints reflect lack of information and knowledge, and they have very few follow-on complaints after the initial response.



USIA

1. How we report the news and the various aspects of the American "scene":- is it "free" and unrestrained or is it guided and controlled?
2. Prohibition against domestic dissemination of the Agency's program materials, contained in our basic statute; leads to continuous rejection of requests.
3. VOA signal is faulty in many parts of the world.
4. Budgetary constraints have led to the reduction or elimination of certain language broadcasts by VOA (e.g. Slovans) and consequent complaints by ethnic groups.
5. As an internal complaint: Morale factors arising from such uncertainties as (i) organizational "major surgery" recommended by Stanton; (ii) taxability of allowances incident to overseas duty.

STATE

1. Kissinger's star quality leads to unrealistic demands on his time.
2. Consular cases - many of which should be directed against the law rather than the Consular officer.
3. Conflicting signals from the Administration (examples - 200 mile bill, Panama Canal Treaty, Grain deal.)

ACTION

1. Handling of applications to serve as a volunteer in Agency programs - long delays, no response, switched signals, etc.
2. Failure to process applications for grants speedily.
3. Cut off of care in Foster Grandparent program when recipient reaches age 21.

DEFENSE (addition)

1. Base closures and realignments
2. Late responses to letters
3. Worry about the Defense position on certain matters (SALT, Detente especially), not being pushed sufficiently in Administration positions.
4. Overkill by DoD representatives.



5. Waste in the department.
6. Personnel benefits package - i.e., retirement recompensation, commissaries.
7. Base realignments
8. Procurement - i.e., where a machine gun is to be built, fighter aircraft production competition.

ERDA

1. Time required to analyse and evaluate technical proposals.
2. Who is making energy policy?
3. Need more information on energy.
4. "nitpicky"

LABOR

1. Status of Black Lung claims
2. Status of Worker's Compensation claims
3. OSHA regulations
4. Complexity of pension regulations
5. Distribution of grants

EPA

1. Construction grants under PL92-500, the \$18 billion waste treatment grants - red tape, delays, etc.
2. Under the Clean Air Act, transportation controls, parking management, indirect source regulations - complaint: burdensome Federal regulations.
3. Pesticides regulations under FIFRA: suspension/cancellation, aldrin/Dielohin, heplacho/chlorodane, etc.
4. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) complaints about delays in Federal projects of all sizes and shapes.
5. Solid waste: returnable bottles issue in Federal facilities - proposed regulations - comment period ended January 23, 1976.



VA

1. Criticism of VA because of late checks, i.e. pension checks, compensation checks, etc. (This due mainly to antiquated computers. We are acquiring a new one that will be in place in 4 months and this should help immeasurably.)
2. Overpayments. This due mainly because of legislation directing payments be made in advance, and universities and colleges not advising VA when students drop out, do not attend, etc. VA recovers about 75% of overpayments and are making progress otherwise.
3. Criticism for supposedly poor medical care for VETS. With 171 hospitals - some discrepancies occur and these are the ones the Press plays up. VA doing well in this regard.
4. Criticism for not updating hospitals and medical facilities. Simple matter of not enough money. VA doing best possible with available funds.
5. Pension Reform - (by Senate bill). We must watch this closely as present bill expires September 30. Democrats are likely to put through a very costly bill daring the President to veto in October, just before elections.

HUD

1. Slowness, delays and red tape in processing applications for housing projects. (from builders, developers, etc) Often reflects applicants unhappiness with HUD decisions and efforts to reverse them. But often justified by bureaocratic infighting.
2. Complaints concerning Interstate Land Sales Program. Reflect belief that the program is being used to harass smaller developers rather than focusing on the big land fraud problems in Florida, Arizona, etc.
3. Complaints that HUD is not providing sufficient funding for local housing authorities whose projects are beset by rising utility rates, higher operating costs, etc. (Tenant rent strikes or refusal to pay rents adds to the pressures on these authorities.
4. Complaints about expending Federal tax dollars on wasteful projects like Taino Towers in New York. (11 foot ceilings 20 foot balconies, swimming pools, air conditioning, etc., paid for by the middle class for the poor.



HEW

Highest case loads:

1. Social Security cases, especially disability cases.
2. Supplemental Security Income cases, again especially disability cases.
3. Civil Rights cases, especially new load of women's rights and handicapped rights cases.
4. Grant funding uncertainties - because of vetoes, rescissions, deferrals and continuing resolutions.
5. Highly publicized invididual grants or contracts - such as current sex/marijuana study funded by National Institute on Drug Abuse.

JUSTICE

1. Inquiries as to whether the Department is or isn't investigating indicting or suing someone - runs the gamut from ordinary constituents who many have run afoul of the law to various allegations of wrong-doing that acquire notoriety in the media.
2. Requests for free legal advice by private parties who are either engaged in litigation or sore at something the government has or hasn't done.
3. Inquiries as to why the Department or the Federal government as a whole isn't doing more to reduce crime.

FEA

1. Rising cost of petroleum products and utilities.
2. Inequities in the entitlements and allocation regulations.
3. The effects of deregulation and decontrol vis-a-vis continuation of the regulatory process.
4. Initiatives on energy conservation.
5. Decontrol of petroleum products as mandated by the energy policy and conservation act.



INTERIOR

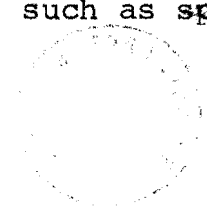
1. Communication response. We are obviously less guilty than most departments.
2. Complaint from minority and majority that the Administration does not respond on policy. It is my view (John Kyl) that most of the time the objection is that we do not give the response the Member wants.
3. Getting reports and testimony to Committees late. The Department, OMB and other elements of the Administration are guilty.

GSA

1. Too difficult to do business with Federal government - selling products, services, etc....cut the red tape. Have more seminars. Be more aggressive in cutting down on the forms, the process.
2. Get small business more involved in working with the government. Too much emphasis on large firms.
3. Government buildings too "imposing" - don't feel welcome. Employees "do you a favor" by seeing you.
4. We should lease more space rather than build new buildings - help tax base, etc. (This one goes both ways but shifting emphasis to helping economy of local communities by leasing.)
5. We should consult more with local governments before placing buildings in specific locations, determining how to dispose of property, etc.. Need to incorporate local views (give them priority) on all issues. Help small communities but don't tell them what is in their best interest.

COMMERCE

1. Export licensing
2. Title X funds from EDA. Mentioned because the Department could go through the same hassle give the \$6.1 billion EDA bill coming down the pike of which 500 million would be Title X. EDA had very little control over the direct allocation of these funds this past year.
3. The Arab boycott issue.
4. Foreign investment question.
5. Import problems in relation to industrial items such as specialty steel, shoes, electronics, etc.



SBA

1. Not enough direct loan funds; capital too difficult to obtain; loans too hard to get.
2. Too much paperwork, government regulation and delays.
3. Too much preference to minorities.
4. Loan credit criteria too restrictive - should make more "high risk" loans.

TREASURY


1. Re-issuing lost or stolen checks (welfare, social security, veterans)
2. Re-issuing lost bonds.
3. Customs problems:
 - foulup clearing through a port of entry
 - clearances for aircraft or ships during off-duty hours at ports of entry.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

February 11, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROBERT K. WOLTHUIS
Deputy to the Assistant For
Legislative Affairs
The White House

FROM: PAUL THEIS 
Deputy Under Secretary
For Congressional and Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Congressional Mail

Following up the Camp David meeting, here is a rough breakdown by subject of USDA mail and telephone calls from the Hill (separate from case mail):

- Food Stamps -- 25-30%
(most complaining about abuses)
- Russian wheat exports -- 20-25%
(including about half complaints about the embargo)
- Grain inspection -- 25%
(and demands to do something)
- Miscellaneous -- 25%
(including complaints about rural development loans, target prices and other items)

Of course, news and Congressional activities cause variations from time to time, but this has been the pattern over the past few weeks.

