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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date 5/12/75

EYES ONLY

TO: JIM LYNN

FROM: JERRY H. JONES

You asked Don Rumsfeld to check
this. He did and the answer is no.

NO

Post

IMPORTANT

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
ROUTE SLIP

DATE 5/5/75

TO: Director - O'Neill has a
FROM: Jrey *copy.*

REMARKS: Recommend you raise
this with President orally for
reasons indicated on p. 2
Probably not a good time
to propose -- economy + CAP
proposals -- but desirable
on merits and included as
line item in 1976 Budget.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

DATE: May 5, 1975

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: LR/Sweeney

SUBJECT: GSA draft bill to increase pensions for Presidents' widows

Mr. Frey

GSA has submitted for clearance a draft bill to raise the statutory pensions for eligible widows of former Presidents. This is a resubmittal of a draft bill proposed to the 93rd Congress and is set out in a separate schedule under GSA's Legislative Program in the 1976 Budget (Appendix, p. 798).

Background

Legislation enacted in 1971 provides each former President an annual allowance equivalent to the pay rate for Executive Level I. The same legislation increased to \$20,000 (from \$10,000) the annual allowance for former Presidents' widows.

A 1973 Senate Appropriation Committee report (Montoya) concluded that the widows' pension level was "barely adequate" and asked GSA to consider developing legislation to increase the amount. The resulting GSA proposal received no action in the 93rd Congress.

During the 1976 budget review process, it was decided that the proposal should be resubmitted to the 94th Congress. Since then, GSA staff has indicated to EG staff that it has received letters opposing the proposal and that transmittal at this time would not be well received on the Hill.

Draft bill

The draft bill would provide that pensions for widows of former Presidents will be 55% of the annual amount authorized for former Presidents. Substitution of this formula--which is patterned after that for survivor benefits under the civil service retirement system--would result in automatic adjustments in the future without need for legislation.

Since Presidents' pensions are currently at the Level I \$60,000 rate, widows' pensions would be \$33,000 compared to the present \$20,000.

Under the law, Presidents' widows are not eligible for pension if they remarry before the age of 60 or if they hold paid official offices or positions in the Federal or D. C. Governments. Accordingly, three Presidential widows are currently receiving pensions and would be eligible for increases under the GSA draft bill--Mrs. Truman, Mrs. Eisenhower, and Mrs. Johnson.

Recommendation

It is a long-standing practice to check with the President personally any legislative proposals concerning Presidents or their families. Although the GSA draft bill was included in the 1976 budget, to our knowledge this proposal was not explicitly checked with President Ford. *as a
separate
item*

While adverse mail received by GSA should not be the governing factor in clearance and submission of the bill to Congress, we believe the President should be aware of and decide the question.

A proposed memorandum to the President is attached.

Naomi Sweeney

Naomi R. Sweeney
Chief, Labor-Welfare-
Personnel Branch

Attachment