

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
London, England.

Hon. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN
Chairman Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: You are shortly scheduled to meet with a delegation from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The delegation will be seeking your support for a legislative initiative that I regard as one of the most promising economic development proposals on the horizon for my beleaguered party of Northern Ireland. The initiative would have a profoundly positive impact on other deprived areas of Northern Ireland and the border region of the Republic as well. I am speaking of the proposed legislation that would begin the process of creating a free trade relationship between your country, Northern Ireland, and the border counties of the Republic.

Mr. Chairman, it was my intention to be with and lead the Irish delegation you are about to meet with to communicate personally just how important this initiative is for the economic future of Northern Ireland and the border counties. Following the recent Northern Ireland election however, the preparations within my political party for the forthcoming all party talks have foreclosed the possibility of my absence from Northern Ireland, even for one day. However, I look towards the very near future when we can meet and personally discuss this legislation as it begins its legislative journey through Congress.

I believe it is very important to communicate to you my personal commitment to do all in my power, both within the SDLP and inside the House of Commons, to support this endeavour. I am conversant with current UK reservations. Together with my parliamentary colleagues I shall endeavour to bring about a sea change in opinion within the current UK government. While the proposed legislation requires the efforts and goodwill from both London and Brussels, I see no barrier that cannot be overcome. This opportunity is simply too important to be allowed to flounder.

Mr. Chairman, the delegation you will meet with speak for me. They will ask you to assist in introducing this legislation immediately. That is my request. What you are being asked to consider will help to bring a new day to Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Move forward and we will be with you.

Kind regards,

JOE HENDRON, M.P.,
West Belfast.

NEWTOWNGORE, Co. LEITRIM.
May 28, 1996.

Hon. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As you know, there is currently pending for your consideration, draft legislation that would begin the legislative process of establishing a free trade area between the United States, Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Irish Republic. Because of your unstinting efforts to find imaginative ways for your country to assist in securing the peace and prosperity of Northern Ireland and the border counties, I can think of no one better situated to initiate and shepherd this important legislative effort.

The current legislative initiative that you are considering could, in my opinion, represent the key ingredient in bringing a severely disadvantaged area of this island into economic parity with other areas of the European Union. As you know, Northern Ireland and the border counties' area will lose

their EU Objective 1 status in 1999, when they reach 75 percent economic parity with the rest of the union. Attendant funding with that status will be reduced or eliminated. My fear is that there will always be that remaining 25 percent deficit that cannot be bridged absent our acquisition of an economic development tool to close and secure that gap. The proposed legislation before you will achieve that goal and interestingly, assist in achieving the EU's own internal policy of economic and social cohesion and parity.

Mr. Chairman, no area of the European Union has suffered the kinds of assaults on its people or the pressures on its economy as Northern Ireland and the border counties. There is simply no parallel with any other area in the EU. Standard, unimaginative responses to our current economic reality are likely to fall short. The legislation you are currently contemplating will give us a unique and powerful tool to regenerate and revitalize those areas of Northern Ireland and the border areas of the Republic that have been flattened by civil discord and neglected and forgotten because of geographic isolation and peripherality.

As I look at this initiative, I can state that I am aware of and conversant with the hurdles that will need to be cleared for this legislation to succeed in London, Dublin and Brussels. Innovative solutions will always be met with initial skepticism and doubt. However, my view is that there is no impediments this proposal presents that cannot be managed. As for myself, I can give you every assurance that I will do all in my power as a Member of the European Parliament to speed this initiative on its way in Strasbourg and Brussels. I am confident that I will be joined, shoulder to shoulder by my fellow MEPs from Ireland, North and South.

Mr. Chairman, on June 10th, 1996, representatives of all or nearly all political parties in Northern Ireland will begin talks to secure the future peace for Northern Ireland. The legislation you are considering could help guarantee the future prosperity of the region. My request to you would be that you introduce the legislation prior to commencement of all party talks to demonstrate that a successful conclusion to those talks can and will yield a brighter tomorrow. As you move this legislation forward, know that I and my colleagues will stand with you.

Best Regards,

JOHN JOSEPH MCCARTIN,
Member, European Parliament.

TOWER ONE CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Tower One/Tower East on the 25th anniversary of this outstanding multicultural senior housing facility. For a quarter of a century, the New Haven Jewish Federation Housing Corp. has given New Haven area seniors a place to call home in Tower One.

Tower One was a special concept 25 years ago, and is a model to this day. The many distinguished leaders and business people who have taken up the mantle of leadership have helped assure the building's continued renewal. Most important, Tower One is a measure of this community's sense of obligation to its retirees, our parents and grandparents.

Tower One's history illustrates its commitment to people. Through the years, the organization has been creative and innovative in its response to the needs of residents. In the late 1970's, Tower One focused mainly on providing necessities, such as serving meals, filling apartment vacancies, and making building repairs. However, the nature of public housing and the needs of the residents began to change and in response, the board implemented extraordinary reforms. A new management structure for the staff was created, additional committees were formed to help the board deliver social services and plan for the long term. Finally, a new executive director, Dorothy Giannini-Meyers, was named to inaugurate imaginative new programs that would allow residents to keep living independently. The result was the broad array of services now available to residents and the transformation of Tower One from an elderly apartment complex to a caring, close-knit, and involved community.

When we celebrate Tower One's 25th anniversary, we celebrate the values that make families and communities strong—the values that enable Tower One to create a true home for Connecticut's seniors. Tower One is a community where people have fun, where the help and support they need is available. Their religious faith is affirmed, even as they age beyond the rituals of family. We all understand that this is a community that affirms our unity and humanity.

I treasure the yearly opportunity I have to host a holiday party at Tower One because it gives me the chance to share in the holiday celebrations so dear to Tower One's residents. Most important, the seniors at Tower One are able to honor the religious and cultural traditions that keep them close to family and friends. It is truly a place where residents feel at home.

I sincerely congratulate all those at Tower One on this proud occasion. I know that Bob Bachman's leadership will enable Tower One to continue its development and growth. I congratulate Tower One on 25 great years and with it the same success in the future.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JEFFREY GARDERE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jeffrey Gardere was born in Manhattan on May 3, 1956. Although his parents were from the island of Haiti, he was raised in Brooklyn and attended Brooklyn Tech High School. While working full-time, he managed to obtain his bachelor of arts degree from the University of Rochester and, at age 27, received his doctorate in philosophy and psychology from George Washington University.

As a licensed clinician, Dr. Gardere rose from a staff psychologist for the Federal Bureau of Prisons to one of only two African-American chief psychologists. During his tenure, he was instrumental in designing the policy on psychological treatment for HIV-infected prisoners, participated in hostage negotiations at the Atlantic prison siege, and conducted witness protection relocation evaluations

throughout the United States. A focal point in Dr. Gardere's career has been the founding of the Rainbow Psychological Services 5 years ago. This culturally sensitive psychological health care program provides services for children, adults, and families in Brooklyn and the tristate area.

As a reorganized psychological expert on police brutality issues and posttraumatic stress disorder, Dr. Gardere has provided key evaluations and structural recommendations for a major lawsuit against the New Jersey State Department of Corrections. In addition, over the past few years, Dr. Gardere has taken his practice to the air waves, becoming a highly-sought-after media psychologist appearing on every major talk and news show on radio and television. Dr. Gardere is presently negotiating the publication of his book, "How to Raise Your Child in an Urban Jungle" with the St. Martens Press.

Despite his grueling schedule, Dr. Gardere has maintained his involvement in local and humanitarian issues for children and families. His efforts, to name a few, include: hosting gala benefits for nonprofit groups in his home and private clubs; providing mental health consultations for the treatment of Haitian minors in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and consulting with "KISS"—WRKS radio—initiatives on the mental health of African-Americans program.

Complementing his life's work, Dr. Gardere, a married father with two children ages 2 and 3, is a musician, singer, pianist, alto-sax player who has performed with Mickey Bass, John Hicks, Louis Haynes, and Hilton Ruiz. Dr. Jeffrey Gardere has won the respect of his peers and serves as an example of the best in our community. I am pleased to introduce him to my House colleagues.

CONGRESSIONAL REFORM

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, July 31, 1996, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

MAKING CONGRESS WORK BETTER

Early last year at the beginning of the 104th Congress, the House passed some significant reforms of the way it does business, some of which were useful and others of which were not. While additional reforms and rules changes should be considered now, I believe there are serious overriding problems in the House that affect its effectiveness, accountability, and public respect.

RECENT REFORMS

Several of the reforms passed last year to make Congress more open and accountable were based on the work of the bipartisan Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, which I cochaired. Significant reforms included streamlining the committee system, cutting staff, and opening up Congress to more public scrutiny.

One of the most significant reforms was congressional compliance, which requires Congress to live under the same laws we pass for everyone else, including workplace safety and labor laws. It simply makes no sense for Congress to pass a law and then exempt itself. In the 103rd Congress we passed congressional compliance for the House, and early in

the 104th that was extended by statute to the entire legislative branch. I am concerned about some of the delays this session in bringing Congress into full compliance, but overall this has been a worthwhile reform.

ADDITIONAL REFORMS

Certainly additional reforms are needed to address specific problems. I was particularly disappointed that the House leadership decided not to accept our Joint Committee recommendation to have private citizens help us investigate ethics complaints against Members of Congress. The difficulties the Ethics Committee has had this session show that the House simply cannot police itself without outside help, as charges against Speaker Gingrich and others keep being put off and are never resolved one way or the other. The addition of ordinary citizens to the process would force action on cases that could be held up indefinitely under the current system. A variety of professions—from lawyers to clergy—have moved away from self-regulation to involve outsiders; Congress should too.

We also need to better publicize special interest tax breaks hidden away in revenue bills; reduce our reliance on huge omnibus bills that allow Members only one up or down vote on a package containing hundreds of provisions; make sure House reform is taken up on a much more regular, ongoing basis; and expand the compressed congressional schedule which limits the time available for serious deliberation.

NEED FOR MORE BASIC CHANGES

But much more than this is needed. We need a serious reassessment of what has happened during this Congress.

One of the key tests of reform is whether it makes Congress a more effective institution—improving our ability to deliberate and pass legislation addressing our nation's challenges. On that test, the reforms have not worked particularly well.

The test is not whether we get something through the House, but whether we pass something that can also get through the Senate and be signed into law. Most Congress-watchers would say that the legislative accomplishments of the 104th Congress have been fairly meager, as Congress has failed to pass a balanced budget, campaign finance reform, Medicare reform, and many other items considered top priorities early on. This dissatisfaction with the accomplishments of the 104th is shared by the public. Despite reform, public confidence in Congress remains low.

OVERRIDING FACTORS

So what has happened? My basic view is that although we passed some significant reforms, they were simply overwhelmed by two other factors: the centralization of power by Speaker Gingrich and the increased partisanship of the 104th Congress.

CENTRALIZATION OF POWER BY SPEAKER

All of us who have been active in reform over the years have talked about the need to centralize more power in the office of the Speaker. But I believe this has been carried too far this Congress, with too many key policy decisions taken away from the committees and instead made behind closed doors by the leadership or by task forces set up by the leadership. For example, the bill to sharply cut back Medicare was basically written in the Speaker's office and proposed amendments to the Constitution have suddenly appeared on the House floor without any committee consideration.

This approach to the legislative process reduces accountability. It is largely a closed process. Most Members, and certainly most Americans, have no way of learning which Members are involved, which positions are

being considered, and which special interests are consulted or locked out. Many Members with significant expertise are simply shut out of the critical formative stages of a bill. Last year's reforms to open up committee deliberations make little difference if an important bill simply bypasses the committee altogether or is largely handled in secret by a leadership task force.

EXCESSIVE PARTISANSHIP

Secondly, I believe many of last year's reforms have been overwhelmed by the excessive partisanship of the 104th. Certainly some partisanship can be expected in the House, but in this Congress it has seemed excessive. As one observer put it, "Healthy competition between cohesive parties has degenerated into bombastic, mean-spirited, and often ugly confrontation." When the House becomes too negative, too bitter, too contentious—and there is plenty of blame to go around on both sides of the aisle—that clearly affects our ability to come together to pass legislation for the good of the country. Indeed it can be a much greater roadblock to effective governance than many of the procedures that were reformed early this Congress.

I believe that reducing the excessive partisanship of the House should be our number one priority. By every indication, whichever party controls the House next session will do so by a slim margin; we must learn to work together in a more bipartisan way if we want to get important legislation passed for the good of the country. That is something I will certainly work to bring about.

Fortunately Congress has a self-correcting mechanism for excessive partisanship. In recent weeks as Members have gone home to their districts and have heard from their constituents that they just don't like what they are seeing, the partisan tensions in Congress have been reduced. It is too early to see if this will continue, but it has been a positive and welcome development.

BIG BROTHER IN ATLANTA

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, on July 31, two Taiwanese students were arrested at the Olympic Games in Atlanta for waving the flag of the Republic of China on Taiwan during a ping-pong match.

Mr. Speaker, this defies both the American and the Olympic spirit, and the authorities who made the arrest ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Apparently, a citizen of the People's Republic of China, who happens to be chairman of the International Table Tennis Association, called the police and asked that the students be arrested.

Teaming up with this privileged member of the elite from a Communist country in order to snuff out the free speech of two individuals right here in America is a disgusting reminder of how far the so-called civilized world will go in order to appease the Communist bullies in Beijing.

What an ugly stain on the Olympics, Mr. Speaker.