

*Lois Albright, a musician, teacher, and conductor with the Viennese Operetta Company of America, wrote that she believes in "private enterprise for everything whether it is art or not art."*

Miss Lois Albright  
New York, New York  
February 25, 1986<sup>41</sup>

Dear Miss Albright:

Your letter of January 20 has only just reached me so forgive the lateness of my reply. It does take a while for mail to make its way through the bureaucracy before reaching my desk.

Thank you for your kind and generous words. I'm most grateful. I must confess I'm somewhat in agreement with your views about our federal subsidies to the arts. I believe there is a place for government in encouraging art and in lending a hand to those who through no fault of their own are denied opportunity. On the other hand, like so many well-intentioned government programs there is no question but that we find ourselves paying (as you say) some to be lazy and some who make no contribution to the arts. We're trying to make some adjustments but as you can imagine we run into some roadblocks.

Incidentally we have the same problem with the needy. We are trying to limit our subsidies to the truly needy and remove from the rolls those who are not needy but are greedy.

Again, thank you for writing—I'm honored to receive a letter from one I so admire.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Reagan

## OTHER ISSUES

*Reagan responded to letters on many other issues over the years—right to work, civil service pay, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, homosexuality, school prayer, gun control, the death penalty, immigration and refugees, and illegal drugs.*

*David Denholm was executive assistant to the president of Californians for Right to Work. Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers union had been boycotting table grapes for years. Reagan was not initially an advocate of right-to-work laws, but later came to support them.*

Mr. David Y. Denholm  
Oakland, California  
September 22, 1970<sup>42</sup>

Dear Mr. Denholm:

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to comment and state my views with regard to "Right to Work."

First, the circumstances under which I made my statement were chosen because not only my opponent, but some of his supporters in much of the labor press were so blatantly misstating my position. You and I are in agreement about many things with regard to the rights of rank and file union members which must be protected. At the same time, however, my own experience as a union member, officer, and several times president, has convinced me these matters can be corrected within the union shop framework (you'll note I didn't say closed shop).

My union, the Screen Actors Guild, is a classic example of democratic unionism. There is no compulsory assessment for political funds, there is a secret ballot on policy matters and the constitution provides that if ever 50 percent of the members plus one decide not to have a union, it shall be dissolved.

My position regarding Chavez is well known; the workers must be allowed to vote by secret ballot as to whether they should have a bargaining representative and who or what that representative should be. There can be no morality in either the boycott or in employers and Chavez signing contracts unless and until the workers themselves have voted.

I'm sorry we can't see eye to eye on the cause you so ably support, but here again my own experience reminds me of advantages that were taken in our industry of some of the Taft-Hartley clauses in its early version. Our problem perhaps will always be that among men of good will, a few can't resist the occasional loophole.

Again, thanks.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Reagan

*Reagan reworked his draft of this letter with great care; there are many deletions and insertions. A comprehensive overview of issues involved in civil service pay, the draft letter reflects the development of Reagan's thinking on this issue as well as a possible answer to a specific correspondent.*

Draft on Civil Service Pay  
Circa 1974<sup>43</sup>

Dear —:

I know of no issue harder to resolve, or one that arouses more emotion, than that of proper pay scale for public servants. We swing between the token pay-

embarrassed by his sounding off the way he did. His hostess was a woman who has attacked California's mental health program for years, even under Brown.

California is spending more per patient than any major state in the field of mental health, but what is more important, we are number one in the percentage of patients who are returned to normal living. We have actually increased the ratio of nurses to patients and are considered the outstanding state in mental hygiene.

We have a feeling out here (I do definitely) that welfare is a failure. The aim of welfare should be to salvage people and make them able to take care of themselves. We can't do all we'd like to do because of federal restrictions, but we have started a pilot program in one city—Fresno. We've put all the welfare programs into one package under one director, and we've set it up to take welfare recipients in one end and carry them through screening, analysis of their problems, basic education if that's needed, job training, and finally independence by the way of jobs in private industry. In America today there are 458 different welfare and poverty programs, and the only result seems to be more people on the dole, not less.

That's the story. Now I'm off to Los Angeles.

All the best,  
Ron

*The friendship between Reagan and Wagner grew from that of a star and his fan to a politician and a supporter and then into something warmer. Here he suggests ways to help Wagner's elderly cousin in New York, and sympathizes about their mutual friend and former president of Reagan's international fan club, Zelda Multz, whose mother has died.*

Mr. and Mrs. Elwood H. Wagner  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
December 2, 1968<sup>30</sup>

Dear Lorraine and Wag:

Just a quick line before I take off for another Governors' Conference, and, I might add, a belated answer to your earlier letter. This is the first chance I've had to get to my personal correspondence.

Yes, our good friend Charlie Conrad has been reelected, I'm happy to say, and we now have a majority in the Assembly.

I particularly wanted to get this answer to you about the case of your elderly cousin. It is very difficult to know how each state and locality handles these problems. I could give you the answer for California but not for New York. So I've done the best I could. Attached is a whole list; depending on his neighborhood, you can find the name of the person you should contact.

Must run now. It was good to hear from you, although I was terribly sorry about the news of Zelda's mother.

Sincerely,  
Ronnie

*In early 1969, Southern California experienced the worst flooding in over 30 years. President Richard M. Nixon declared the state a disaster area in late January, and allocated millions in federal funds for rebuilding. Reagan reports that his house and ranch escaped disaster. He also says he will try to discreetly help his friend with troubles with the Internal Revenue Service.*

Mr. and Mrs. Elwood H. Wagner  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
March 24, 1969<sup>31</sup>

Dear Lorraine and Wag:

I know it's a long time since January 30th, and your letter has been on my desk, without answer, all that time. But then, as your letter indicated, I don't have to tell you that things have been going on out here.

Actually, we were most fortunate, personally, in the floods. Our home is apparently on solid rock, and all things considered, the ranch area came through just fine. We may learn, I'm afraid, if we're going into a wet cycle, that a lot of California has been built in the wrong place.

I was very interested in your story about the Internal Revenue Service. This is one good thing about the recent election. At least now, learning of things like this, I can pass the word to people who might be interested in doing something about it. It will always be done discreetly, have no fear.

It's a Monday morning and I'm hard at it. So I won't take any more time except to say thanks and best wishes.

Sincerely,  
Ron

*As he prepares to run for reelection as governor, Reagan gives his views on welfare, the Vietnam War, and Cesar Chavez, the Mexican-American labor organizer.*

Mr. and Mrs. Elwood H. Wagner  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
October 7, 1969<sup>32</sup>

Dear Lorraine and Wag:

I didn't mean to leave you in suspense, it's just that it's too early to commit as to whether you're running or not because to do so means you lose all that free television time.

You are right that I meant welfare is the most serious problem domestically. Vietnam of course is in a class by itself. Crime, basically, is the problem of local government and beyond that, state government. I think the Nixon administration has done a great deal through the Justice Department to remove some of the inhibitions that have been interfering with local law enforcement, and this basically is what we should count on from them. But welfare is getting to be not just an economic problem, but one of philosophy and morality. We're getting like ancient

Rome where being poor has become a career as they organize and demand their rights—so called. They become a potent factor as they did in Rome with politicians becoming demagogues in order to win their support.

On the Vietnam question, I can't help but feel that behind the scenes there are some power plays being worked and that Nixon has no intention of going on with the talking while our men are being killed beyond a certain point. I think he is giving every opportunity for the peace talks to work, but at a point in the not too distant future we'll deliver an ultimatum to Hanoi.

I'm sorry to hear about the Rabbi upholding the boycott. There has probably been more confusion and outright deception of good people on this one than on anything else. This is not a legitimate labor move. The farm workers in California are more protected and have higher pay and better working conditions than anywhere in the world. We are a model in that particular sense.

Chavez is attempting by blackmail to create a union without giving the workers themselves an opportunity to choose whether they want one or which one it should be. Thousands of Mexican-Americans in California are in opposition to Chavez and they are to be found working in the vineyards, making good money and utterly opposed to joining his union. Frankly, I'm a little disgusted with the clergy of every denomination who without making any effort to learn the truth, are continuing to consider this a kind of holy crusade.

Must get back to work now; I've been away too long.

Best regards,  
Ron

*In the midst of his reelection campaign, Reagan writes about his challenger, Assemblyman Jesse Unruh and the former mayor of Los Angeles, Sam Yorty. He also presents his views on gays serving in public office. Reagan had some experience addressing homosexuality in public life. During his first year as governor, two men were dismissed from his staff for allegedly participating in a homosexual ring.<sup>33</sup>*

Mr. and Mrs. Elwood H. Wagner  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
April 16, 1970<sup>34</sup>

Dear Lorraine and Wag:

It was good to hear from you, and I've put your letter to Boyarsky\* in the mail. I assumed that's what you wanted. I hope it scorches him good. It was a good letter, you certainly had most of the points right. You just have to assume he doesn't care for our philosophy.

In that connection, you asked why should a suspected homosexual represent a risk in state administration. I agree with you that the national viewpoint is one, of

course, based on the security risk—the possibility of blackmail or extortion using this information to get government secrets. Such a thing, of course, is not a threat at the state level, but I think we have to recognize they are still outside the law. While many people are suggesting more open recognition and a change in the laws, their tendencies do have them in violation and, therefore, if exposure comes, there would be a reflection on government.

I didn't see Anderson's column attacking Yorty, but it doesn't surprise me. Yorty is trying for a faction of the Democratic Party that is more moderate. Unruh, on the other hand, is lining up all the extremely left radical groups and this of course would endear him, I should think, to Anderson.

I don't know why my name was omitted from the Vietnam gift organization unless someone here simply notified them that now that I'm in this office, I have no restrictions as to the use of my name.

There are two newspapers I could suggest for campaign coverage. One would be the *Los Angeles Herald Express*, and I think just addressing that to Los Angeles, California, should reach them. The other would be the *Santa Monica Outlook*. And, again, I think that paper could be reached by simply addressing Santa Monica, California.

About the other address you wanted, the address of my headquarters, a state-wide headquarters has opened in Los Angeles. The address is 1250 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles 90029.

I have to get back to work now but, again, it was good to hear from you.

Best regards,  
Ron

*Governor Reagan writes that the Fresno Bee, published by the McClatchy family, is a socialist newspaper that has targeted him.*

Mr. and Mrs. Elwood H. Wagner  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
May 8, 1970<sup>35</sup>

Dear Lorraine and Wag:

Just a quick line as the pace grows hotter to answer your question about Patti. She graduates this June.

As to the other question about the enclosed editorial, you can assure your friend that the paper he's reading and will probably read as a resident of Fresno is the *Fresno Bee*. That paper is published by a family who inherited the paper from the founder. In his will he specified the paper must support all programs leading toward government ownership. In other words, the paper's philosophy is socialist. This particular paper, because of that, probably carries on the most uninterrupted the hardest, and the most dishonest campaign against me and my administration of any publication outside the *Daily Worker*. The matter of the will is not just even

\* Bill Boyarsky wrote for the *Los Angeles Times*.