

HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
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HOME ADDRESS:
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ENID, OKLAHOMA

PAGE BELCHER
FIRST DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

G. Lamm

MEMBER COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
MARY C. HIGGINS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 29, 1966

Dear Colleague:

I resent being called a "demagogue" by a cabinet officer simply because I happen to support the action of my committee and the House itself (in fact I've always resented any cabinet officer calling any Member of Congress a demagogue).

I hope you will find time to read the attached letter I wrote to Secretary Freeman in response to his charge that my efforts to recommit the Conference Report on H. R. 14929, the Food for Peace bill, is "an effort to demagogue an emotional issue in an election year." A copy of Secretary Freeman's letter of September 27 is also attached.

Sincerely yours,

Page
PAGE BELCHER
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

September 29, 1966

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Although not enjoying the courtesy of a letter from you, I have been furnished a copy of the letter you apparently sent to a number of House Members in which you refer to my attempts to stop the flow of supplies to the very people who are killing and wounding American troops in South Vietnam as "an effort to demagogue an emotional issue."

In contrast to the Secretary of State's letter which at least presented some logical, though rebuttable arguments, your emotional and irresponsible outburst against Mr. Findley and myself completely avoids the basic issues involved in this legislation.

For your information, the Findley rider to the 1967 Appropriations Act will remain in effect only for the life of the Appropriations Act, or until June 30, 1967. The Conference Report on H. R. 14929 would extend P. L. 480 for 18 months beyond that date. My position is that the ban on sales agreements with nations which send anything to North Vietnam should continue for the entire time of this extension of the Act.

There is in the present Act a ban on Cuban trade originally sponsored by a Member of this House who does not belong to my party. This ban was added to the law in 1964, and this year the House Committee on Agriculture rewrote it and included it in its bill together with a variety of "friendly nation" restrictions (over your objection I might add). I, therefore, fail to see why an effort now to cut off Castro from further trade and commerce is the "effort of a demagogue" when you obviously didn't think so (or say so) in 1964 or earlier this year when the House Agriculture Committee and the House itself (by a vote of 333-20) approved of this provision.

I cannot believe that this Congress would adjourn without taking action on P. L. 480, the Food for Peace program which has been of such great benefit to our farmers, our nation, and to millions of other people throughout the world.

It sounds silly to me to say that this great program, which was initiated by President Eisenhower and expanded by President Kennedy, would now be killed by this Congress simply because it doesn't permit help to North Vietnam or Cuba.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Page Belcher

PAGE BELCHER
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

C O P Y

C O P Y

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Washington

September 27, 1966

Dear Congressman:

The House is scheduled to consider the Conference Report on P. L. 480, H. R. 14929, on Thursday of this week.

I understand that either Congressman Belcher or Congressman Findley plan to offer a recommittal action in order to change the language dealing with trade to North Vietnam and Cuba. Such an amendment is not necessary since the language in the Conference Report more than adequately protects our Nation's interests and security.

Any effort to recommit at this stage is clearly an effort to demagogue an emotional issue as we approach an election. Furthermore, it would threaten the whole concept of P. L. 480 and our prospects for increased exports of farm commodities in the years ahead, since there is a distinct possibility that agreement on acceptable language could not be reached before P.L. 480 expires at the end of this year.

The present language in the Conference Committee Report would prohibit P. L. 480 sales agreements with countries which ship strategic materials to North Vietnam or Cuba. The Appropriation Act prohibits agreements with countries shipping anything to North Vietnam. Apparently when the latter was passed, it was restrictive enough for Congressman Findley. To go further than that now, to go so far as to deny P. L. 480 to countries that would send even Red Cross materials to Cuba (something which we do not ourselves forbid), would be damaging to the interests of our Nation.

In view of the above points and of the fact that at this time in the session delay may mean the defeat of a program that means so much to American farmers and to the hungry people of the world, I urge you to reject any motion for recommittal. I urge, instead, that you act quickly to insure final passage of the new program on which you have already made such an excellent contribution.

Secretary Rusk is sending a similar request to the House.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Orville L. Freeman



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

Honorable Carl Albert
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Carl:

The House is scheduled to consider the Conference Report on P.L. 480, H.R. 14929, on Thursday of this week.

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Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Quilley Freeman".