

Possibly you might agree with us when we suggest that our international economic situation should best be viewed with a strong suspicion that the primary drain of U.S. gold reserves abroad is not via private citizens but due, mainly, to the various and sundry foreign expenditures of our government.

These are not days for Americans to be restrained by what could be construed by our international friends as being an isolationist policy. Many informal beneficial diplomatic relationships result by our travels abroad.

Please relay my point of view in this matter if and when it is discussed in Congress. And, naturally, I hope that you will agree with me.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

ALAN K. STONEX,

Councilman, City of Brighton, Mich.

ANN ARBOR, MICH., February 13, 1968.

HON. MARVIN L. ESCH,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

SIR: The proposed travel-restriction taxes must not be passed. I am vehement on this issue, not because I wish to go abroad, but because I have already been.

In 1955, my father, a professor at Michigan State University, took my mother, my three sisters and me to Florence, Italy. This was his long-awaited sabbatical, and we six lived on less than \$3000 that year. We went into debt, of course, but we have never doubted that it was the most enriching—the most profitable—experience of our lives.

I was ten, with the ten-year-old's provincial view of the world. What an extraordinary eye-opening experience it was for me! My parents enrolled us in an Italian school, and suddenly we became aware of a totally new system of education. We learned—fluently—a completely new language, encountered new ways of thinking, new customs, a new religion. For the first time, we saw real poverty: crippled children roaming the streets in search of food, pathetic families living in the still-unreconstructed shells of bombed-out buildings, deformed and half-clothed beggars huddled in corners.

We saw the splendors of Florence too—not many ten-year-olds have the chance to visit Dante's tomb, or see the David, or walk along the Ponte Vecchio. And best of all, we met the Italians; we ate their cuisine, we became their friends. We were, without intending it, our own private Peace Corps: not rich Americans spending a luxurious holiday, but middle class Americans learning about other people. We loved the Italians, and I think they loved us.

I cringe at the thought that today we should be asked to curtail such activity as "our patriotic duty." My father was not teaching that year and thus, like most private citizens, would not have been exempt from restrictive taxes. Whose loss would it have been if we had stayed at home? It would, ultimately, have been our country's. The good will we helped to build might have been infinitesimal, but collectively such tiny contributions may help establish world peace. I am now a teacher and I try to teach and live concern and compassion for other human beings to the 92 teenagers I see every day, and the 1100 or so with whom I come in contact. Suddenly the benefits of my experience are multiplied a hundred- and a thousand-fold.

We cannot erect an economic Berlin wall around ourselves. We must let ordinary, well-meaning middle class citizens build the bridges of understanding and peace that governments and treaties and ambassadors sometimes cannot.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. DONALD S. OWENS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
Ann Arbor, February 11, 1968.

Representative MARVIN ESCH,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN ESCH: . . . There is one feature about the proposed travel tax which I find extremely *unfair*: that is the proposal that teachers and students must be out of the country for more than 120 days in order to get the educational exemption. Many professors and graduate students doing serious research cannot afford to take a 120 day trip either because of expense or because of academic calendars. Many of them are, however, able to make serious research