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Letter to Representative Robert H. Michel on Justice Department Action on the Trial of Representative Harold Ford
March 6, 1993

Dear Mr. Leader:

This is in response to the March 2 letter from you and four of your colleagues. In that letter you express concern about the process which led the Department of Justice to object to the impaneling of a virtually all-white jury brought in from Jackson, Tennessee to try Congressman Harold Ford in Memphis, Tennessee.

Please be informed that when the White House received inquiries concerning this jury issue, they were referred, at the direction of my Counsel, to the Department of Justice for whatever action the Department deemed proper. I have been informed by Counsel that the White House made no recommendation to anyone at the Department of Justice as to how this issue should be resolved.

The Acting Attorney General, Stuart Gerson (who, as you know, was a senior member of the prior Administration and will be leaving office when a new Attorney General is confirmed), has informed us that he personally made the decision to object to the impaneling of the jury and that he did so strictly on the merits. When he made his decision, Mr. Gerson wrote that he was motivated by "a desire to achieve a principle of fairness and uniformity that reflects on far more than this case" and his decision was based on an "[un]willing[ness] to say on behalf of the United States, that justice cannot be obtained from a Memphis jury or, indeed, from the jury in any city." I am attaching a copy of his written statement.

I have no reason to question this statement by Mr. Gerson or his explicit assurance that political considerations played no role in his decision.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release.

Remarks to the Legislative Conference of the National League of Cities
March 8, 1993

The President. Thank you very much, Mayor Fraser, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great honor for me to be here. This is a pretty rowdy bunch. [*Laughter*] A vital group, a group more interested in change than in more of the status quo, I think. I look around this audience today, and already, just walking in and looking in the crowd and saying hello to people here at the head table, I see people without whom I would not be standing here today. I thank those of both parties and those who run as independents for your support of this plan. And I say again what I always feel when I'm with a group of people from America's cities and small communities or from the States, and that is I feel very much at home.

A lot of times my friends ask me what's the difference from being President and having any other kind of job or the life you used to have. The following thing occurred to me the other day in the White House. I was down on the ground floor; I had been out running or something, and I was going back up to get ready to start the day's work. And a group of people were coming out who had been at a meeting there, at another meeting with other people. And I ran into them and stopped and shook hands with them. It was totally an impromptu thing. And this man who worked at the White House said, "Mr. President, I'm really sorry that you had to confront those people." And I said, "That's all right. I used to be one once." [*Laughter*] I look forward to being one again someday. [*Laughter*]

The work of this White House has been very much influenced by many of you in this group. And I assure you that you will be represented in the future. We have a strong intergovern-