

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 5, 1969

Mrs. Jane Tolmach

Oxnard, California 93030

Dear Jane:

The Congressional recess gave me my first opportunity to catch my breath since -- with your help -- I arrived in Washington. These first Senate months have been unbelievably hectic, and I've welcomed this chance to take stock, to reflect on the incredibly rewarding nature of life in the Senate and the sweeping significance of the issues that come to it, and to realize how much I owe to you and a few other Californians who did all the many things that needed doing in 1968 to insure that I would be in the Senate in 1969.

Most significant of all, of course, is the issue of war and peace -- the opportunity to press hard for extrication from Vietnam; to oppose and do battle with the forces that would escalate the war; and to look beyond Vietnam for the way to enduring peace. The Senate is assuming the leadership in Washington, in the nation, and, indeed, in the world itself, in challenging the assumption that reliance upon military might alone can produce or preserve peace.

Though we lost the ABM battle, a series of subsequent votes on amendments to the defense authorization bill have demonstrated that the Senate is determined to cut back on military spending to the maximum degree consistent with our security.

I've been in the thick of this battle -- one surprise has been the discovery that a freshman Senator doesn't have to sit silently but can speak and act at once -- while also spending a great deal of time on programs to insure that there will be no hardship in California, where we have so high a percentage of defense industries, when some of our resources are diverted from the arms race.

This should not be a problem, for the skills, talents and time of those in California and elsewhere now devoted to defense and war are perfectly suited and urgently needed to help us grapple with -- and overcome -- the vast problems we face at home.

This bears directly on the other matter of first significance in the Senate: the determination of a group of growing strength, now constituting a Senate majority or very close to it, to think through our values, to reallocate our resources for a stronger society and a sound economy, and to lead the way to a better and brighter human environment in our land and in all lands.

Thus, I and others in the Senate, Democrats and Republicans alike, are working together for new breakthroughs in the battle against pollution, poison, noise and congestion that threaten the quality of our lives. We are looking carefully at Administration proposals designed to deal with sickness, hunger, poverty and inequality, supporting them where we can and revising them where we must. We are seeking to protect education from unwarranted federal interference and intervention while assuring it increasing federal financial support. We expect, in the weeks immediately ahead, to see to it that tax reform -- perhaps better called tax justice -- spreads more fairly among all of us the burden of paying for what we do together through government and our society.

Happily, my committee assignments -- Labor and Public Welfare and Banking and Currency -- put me right in the middle of a great many of these issues. Even more happily, I have found that a Senator's realm of effectiveness is not limited by his committees. So, I've been able to become deeply involved in foreign and domestic matters not directly focused upon by my committees.

In the course of leading a Senate battle early in the year over the Job Corps, I talked with every Senator of both parties, and in the course of those and earlier and later visits and conversations, I found some common ground, some common interest, with almost every Senator. Every single Democrat supported me on at least one of three Job Corps roll calls, and many Republicans failed to only because they were opposing the Administration on ABM and didn't want to be against it on a domestic issue at the very same time.

I trust I have made it very evident that I'm enthusiastic about the Senate and what can be done in it, and that I am deeply grateful to you for the part you've played in all this by sending me here to represent you and our California.

I count on our staying in close touch in the days and years ahead. I'll tell you my thoughts every now and then, and I count on you to reciprocate. I want and need your advice and your counsel.

Ever yours,


Alan Cranston

*Are you getting the Party straightened
out?*