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Ellis Island

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR
ELLIS ISLAND CELEBRATION
SEPTEMBER 18, 1996**

Good evening and welcome to Ellis Island. I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person, but I am honored join from afar in this important celebration of Jewish American contributions to American life.

Tonight you are celebrating the culmination of a project that will not only help all Americans understand what it means to be Jewish in today's world, but also what it means to be American.

Frederick Brenner's work is at the center of this historic project. Seventeen years ago, he set out on a journey that took him to 35 countries around the world and into the lives of hundreds of Jewish men, women and children. His mission was to document the rich diversity of Jewish life as we approach the 21st century. His final stop was here in America, home to one of the world's largest and most vibrant Jewish communities.

The accomplishments and contributions of Jewish Americans to American life is immeasurable. In government, industry, entertainment, medicine, science, philanthropy and education, the Jewish Americans Frederick Brenner chose for his portraits played an invaluable role in shaping America in this century.

Each of you has been guided by passion, determination and courage, not only to reach your individual goals, but to set new standards and clear a straight path for those to come. As we prepare for the 21st century, every American will need to follow your admirable example: to take responsibility to make the most of the opportunities the new millennium will offer.

It is truly fitting that this celebration is held here, on Ellis Island, where so many families started their own American journeys. This place holds the dreams and memories of countless Americans who came here in search of opportunity and freedom. Many of your own families passed through these halls on their way to a better life. That is why, for me, this celebration is also a celebration of the diversity that has shaped our nation, and that is the source of our eternal strength.

I salute each of you for your accomplishments, and I salute Frederic Brenner for his grand vision. I hope you all have a wonderful evening. Thank you, and God Bless you.

*Love
Will make
America
proud
Thank you*

VIDEO REQUEST

Schedule Proposal

Date: April 4, 1997

ACCEPT	REGRET	PENDING
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TO: Stephanie Streett, Deputy Assistant to the President
and Director of Scheduling

FROM: Maria Echaveste, Assistant to the President and Director,
Office of Public Liaison

REQUEST: To accept the 1997 Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

PURPOSE: To acknowledge the value of the immigrant experience.

BACKGROUND: The Ellis Island Medal of Honor is sanctioned by Congress
and is dedicated to universal brotherhood. It was conceived
to pay tribute to the immigrant experience, remarkable
individual achievement, and the spirit that makes America
unique. The medal honors ethnic Americans from all
backgrounds for their outstanding professional and patriotic
contributions.

The Ellis Island Medal of Honor is given by the National
Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO). NECO works
to preserve the rights, heritage, and culture of all ethnic
groups and races.

The event could be an opportunity for the President to
continue the dialogue on unity and reconciliation, and
highlight his stand on the fair treatment of immigrant
communities in our nation.

Former medal recipients include five former Presidents:
Reagan, Bush, Carter, Ford, and Nixon. Other recipients
include several members of Congress, Nobel Prize winners,
and other outstanding American citizens.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION: None.

DATE AND TIME: Early evening, May 4, 1997.

DURATION: One Hour.

*Good thing
Policy
weaving*

LOCATION: Ellis Island, New York, NY.

PARTICIPANTS: Approximately 1,200 participants.

OUTLINE OF EVENT: To be determined.

REMARKS REQUIRED: Yes.

PRESS/MEDIA: To be determined.

VICE PRESIDENT'S
ATTENDANCE: Not required.

FIRST LADY'S
ATTENDANCE: Not required.

RECOMMENDED BY: Maria Echaveste
Marilyn DiGiacobbe

CONTACT: Marilyn DiGiacobbe x62721

ORIGIN
OF THIS PROPOSAL: Requested by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations.
Invitation letter and supporting letters attached.

DRAFT

Needs work! @

ELLIS ISLAND VIDEO

Thank you. I am especially honored to accept the 1997 Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Thank you officers, members and friends of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations for selecting me for this distinct award. I also commend NECO for the positive work you do on behalf of promoting unity in this nation.

I come from a place called Hope in Arkansas. Tonight you gather on an island which was the symbol of hope for tens of millions of immigrants who arrived in this nation to pursue a better life for themselves and their families. For so many in this nation, Ellis Island is the most enduring symbol of America.

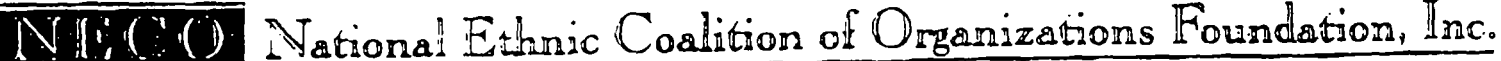
Immigrants have made this nation stronger in different periods in our history. This was based not only on people coming to America but once here contributing to making us a stronger and better nation.

We began this century with a strong wave of immigration to our shores. It appears we will end the century the same way. We have just learned from the Census Bureau that 24.6 million United States residents were born in other countries. This constitutes 9.3 percent of our population almost double the rate from 1970 and the highest percentage since the peak years around 1910. This demonstrates that the American dream is still very much alive for immigrants. Yet it is a dream that requires hard work to achieve. More than 22 percent of the foreign born arrive in America in poverty but within six years have risen out with only 5.8 percent receiving any public cash assistance.

As we examine the new numbers on immigration, we must ask ourselves an old question. Are we providing a good environment for immigrants? Are we as accepting and tolerant as we could and should be? For too many immigrants the climate in America is hostile—it is felt in their streets and the schools their children attend. It is also seen on the national level when critical benefits are suddenly terminated to the most vulnerable immigrants, the elderly and disabled. ^{children} Be assured that I am doing all I can to see to it that these lifesaving food stamp and SSI benefits are restored for these immigrants and I hope Congress will act in a bi-partisan spirit of compassion to do just that.

Tonight on Ellis Island we celebrate our diversity and the strength of the ties that bind us as Americans. We recognize that we are a beautiful but a sometimes fragile mosaic which is best nurtured when we work together as a people. We are strongest when we learn, when we teach, when we care and when we serve others, when we work as individual families and for the larger family called America. Thank you very much and may God bless America.

DRAFT



December 19, 1996

The Honorable William Clinton
President, United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Chairman of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO), it is my distinct privilege to invite you to receive the 1997 Ellis Island Medal of Honor to be awarded at our Annual Gala on May 4th on Ellis Island in New York.

NECO is an umbrella group representing the largest ethnic and heritage organizations in the United States. It is dedicated to universal brotherhood and to the advancement, protection, and encouragement of all ethnic groups and races. Its best known public activity is its sponsorship of the annual Ellis Island Medals of Honor awards. The medals were conceived to pay tribute to the immigrant experience, remarkable individual achievement, and, above all, the spirit that makes America unique among nations. Sanctioned by the United States Congress, medal recipients are listed in the Congressional Record.

Ellis Island honorees have included Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, and Richard Nixon. We are specifically interested in presenting this award to you to pay tribute to your extraordinary commitment to help bring the people of this nation together. Therefore, beyond awarding you the Ellis Island Medal, we also want to dedicate our 1997 Gala to a major theme of your Presidency—the importance of community in America today and tomorrow.

Your first term as President was distinguished by your own dedication to advancing these same goals. We know that you want to build on this during your second term to achieve your stated goal of "Building a Bridge to the 21st Century"—a bridge which must recognize the significance of the new ethnicity in our nation.

NECO, representing the largest ethnic and heritage organizations in the United States, with over five million family members, is dedicated to universal brotherhood and to the advancement, protection and encouragement of all ethnic groups and races.

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 Mrs. Mario M. Cuomo
 Mrs. Alfonso M. D'Amato
 Mrs. Christopher J. Dodd
 Mrs. Floyd M. Fike
 Mrs. Rudolph W. Giuliani
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 Bob Hope
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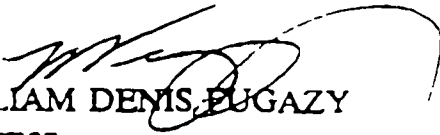
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Page 2

We fervently hope you will be able to come to Ellis Island to receive this award. You will have the opportunity to deliver a major address on issues related to immigration and America's future on the very site where millions of immigrants first entered the United States to gain a better life for themselves and their families. It will be a unique opportunity to honor the man who not only has the vision to lead us into the 21st Century but was also chosen by the American people to do so.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM DENIS BUGAZY
Chairman

WDF:jm

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3003

February 14, 1997

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20515

Handwritten:
X LA letter
to GFL
(Figueroa responds)
to President
FEB 24 AM 10:09

Dear Mr. President:

The National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO) serves as an umbrella group for 75 organizations that span the spectrum of ethnic heritage, culture and religion. It's purpose is to preserve ethnic diversity, promote equality and tolerance, combat injustice and bring about harmony and unity among all people. NECO raised more than \$1 million for the refurbishing of Ellis Island for its Immigrant Wall of Honor, where the landmark names nearly 200,000 immigrants to the United States. And last October, NECO was designated by New York City to organize the Celebration of Nations Parade commemorating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Annually, NECO presents the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. The medal honors ethnic Americans from all backgrounds for their outstanding professional and patriotic contributions. The medals were conceived to pay tribute to the immigrant experience, remarkable individual achievement, and the spirit that makes American unique among nations. Ellis Island is the visible landmark where millions of Americans first stood on American soil. Yours is a deep commitment to ongoing immigration and its' continued importance into the 21st century.

The May 4 Gala would provide you with an opportunity to address the importance of community and the need for our people to work together. The role of immigrants and the importance of the immigrant experience have been vital contributors to this country's success. Ellis Island honorees have included Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon. As well as Governor Mario Cuomo, Rosa Parks and Elie Wiesel to name a few.

As a past recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, I urge you to consider NECO's invitation to accept the Ellis Island Medal of Honor May 4. This medal stands as a visible symbol of American strength and unity.

Sincerely,


ROBERT TORRICELLI
United States Senator

THOMAS J. MANTON
11TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND FINANCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND POWER

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3207

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2235 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3207
(202) 225-3965

DISTRICT OFFICES:
48-12 QUEENS BOULEVARD
SUNNYSIDE, NY 11104
(718) 706-1400

2114 WILLIAMSBRIDGE ROAD
BRONX, NY 10461
(718) 931-1400

February 26, 1997

Handwritten:
X-6-1-1052
to C32
February 27/97

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

FEB 27 PM 3:57

Dear Mr. President:

As a past recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, I strongly urge you to accept the invitation of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations to receive the 1997 Medal on May 4th on Ellis Island. The Medal will be presented to you for your exceptional humanitarian efforts and extraordinary contributions to our country.

In addition to five United States Presidents, outstanding American citizens from all walks of life have received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which is dedicated to universal brotherhood. NECC stands against all biased and discriminatory practices and fights to preserve the rights, heritage, and culture of all ethnic groups and races. You have worked hard to uphold these goals as President, and this Medal would be a highly significant recognition of your work.

Our nation has been inspired with your call to the importance of community and the need for our nation to work more closely together. The role of immigrants and the importance of the immigrant experience have been vital contributors to our country's success. At a time when forces who seek to divide our nation are increasingly vocal, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor stands as a visible symbol of American strength and unity.

I hope you will give every consideration to this invitation.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature: Thomas J. Manton
Thomas J. Manton
Member of Congress

TJM:mb

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE ADDRESS INDICATED ABOVE

NICK J. RAHALL II
3d DISTRICT, WEST VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

RANKING DEMOCRAT,
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION
RAILROADS

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND LANDS
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-4803

February 14, 1997

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

My Dear Mr. President:

*HA defers to
Off
Congress (H)*

FEB 19 PM3:04

As a past recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, I strongly urge you to accept the invitation of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations to receive the 1997 Medal on May 4th on Ellis Island. The Medal will be presented to you as a result of your exceptional humanitarian efforts and extraordinary contributions to our country.

In addition to five United States Presidents, outstanding American citizens from all walks of life have received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which is dedicated to universal brotherhood. NECO stands as a bastion against all biased and discriminatory practices and fights to preserve the rights, heritage and culture of all ethnic groups and races. You have worked hard to achieve these goals as President, and this Medal would be a highly significant recognition of your work.

Our nation has been inspired with your call to the importance of community and the need for our people to work more closely together. It *does* take a village to raise a child. The role of immigrants and the importance of the immigrant experiences have been vital contributors to this country's success.

The May 4th gala would also provide you with an excellent opportunity to deliver a major address on issues related to immigration and America's future, since the event is held on Ellis Island. I recall the wonderful film footage about Ellis Island shown during your Inaugural Gala. Ellis Island is still the visible landmark where millions of Americans first stood on American soil. We know of your deep commitment to ongoing immigration, the immigrant experience in the 20th century, and its continued importance into the 21st. Sadly, there is a growing number in this nation raising their voices to advance divisiveness, polarization, and ethnic hashing.

At a time when forces who seek to divide our nation are ever present, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor stands as a visible symbol of American strength and unity. I hope you will give every consideration to this invitation.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,



NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress

2269 RAYBURN BUILDING, WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4803
(202) 225-3452

110 1/2 MAIN ST., BECKLEY, WV 25801-4698
(304) 252-5000

845 FIFTH AVE., ROOM 152
HUNTINGTON, WV 25701-2088
(304) 522-NICK

601 FEDERAL ST., ROOM 1005
BLUEFIELD, WV 24701-3033
(304) 325-8222

R K BUILDING, 45 WASHINGTON AVE.
LOGAN, WV 25601-3900
(304) 752-4934

101 NORTH COURT ST., P.O. Box 5
LEWISBURG, WV 24901-0005
(304) 647-3228

208830

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE HOLY SEE
Rome, Italy



February 24, 1997

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The President of the United States of America,
The White House,
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As a past recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, I strongly urge you to accept the invitation of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations to receive the 1997 Medal on May 4th on Ellis Island. The Medal will be presented to you as a result of your exceptional humanitarian efforts and extraordinary contributions to our country.

In addition to five United States Presidents, outstanding American citizens from all walks of life have received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which is dedicated to universal brotherhood. NECO stands as a bastion against all biased and discriminatory practices and fights to preserve the rights, heritage, and culture of all ethnic groups and races. You have worked hard to achieve these goals as President, and this Medal would be a highly significant recognition of your work.

Our nation has been inspired with your call to the importance of community and the need for our people to work more closely together. It does take a village to raise a child. The role of immigrants and the importance of the immigrant experience have been vital contributors to this country's success.

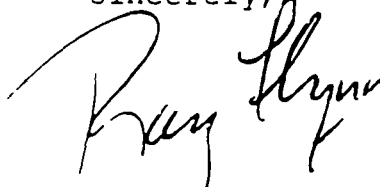
The May 4th visit would also provide you with an excellent opportunity to deliver a major address on issues related to immigration and America's future, since

WAD A 1000

the event is held on Ellis Island. I recall the wonderful film footage about Ellis Island that was shown during your Inaugural Gala. Ellis Island is still the visible landmark where millions of Americans first stood on American soil. We know of your deep commitment to ongoing immigration, the immigrant experience in the 20th century, and its continued importance into the 21st. Sadly, there is a growing number in this nation raising their voices to advance divisiveness, polarization, and ethnic bashing.

At a time when forces who seek to divide our nation are ever present, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor stands as a visible symbol of American strength and unity. I hope you will give every consideration to this invitation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Flynn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ray" and last name "Flynn" clearly distinguishable.

Raymond L. Flynn
United States Ambassador



JOSEPH L. BRUNO
PRESIDENT PRO TEM
MAJORITY LEADER

24 E 190

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY 12247

(518) 455-3191

February 20, 1997

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Clinton,

I would like to congratulate you on being named the 1997 recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. As a past recipient, I would also strongly urge you to accept the invitation of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations to receive the 1997 Medal on May 4th on Ellis Island.

In addition to five United States Presidents, several United States Senators and Congressmen, Nobel Prize winners, and outstanding American citizens from all walks of life have received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which is dedicated to universal brotherhood.

The role of immigrants and the importance of the immigrant experience have been vital contributors to this country's success. The Ellis Island Medal of Honor was created by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations in 1986 to honor the struggle, sacrifice and success of our ancestors who built this country.

Remembering the film footage about Ellis Island which was shown at your Inaugural Gala, I know that you recognize the importance of Ellis Island as the visible landmark where millions of Americans first stood on American soil.

Again, congratulations on your achievement, and I hope that you will give every consideration to this invitation.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH L. BRUNO

50, 075
GUY I. VELELLA
SENATOR 11TH DISTRICT
SENIOR ASSISTANT
MAJORITY LEADER

CHAIRMAN
INSURANCE COMMITTEE
MEMBER COMMITTEES ON
CIVIL SERVICE & PENSIONS
CODES
EDUCATION
FINANCE
JUDICIARY
LABOR
RULES



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

PLEASE RESPOND TO

SENATE OFFICE:
☐ ROOM 915
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
TEL: 518-455-3264
FAX: 518-426-6951

☒ DISTRICT OFFICE:
2019 WILLIAMSBURGH RD.
BRONX, NY 10461
TEL: 718-792-7180
FAX: 718-792-3924
914-969-2210

February 20, 1997

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

As a past recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, I strongly urge you to accept the invitation of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations to receive the 1997 Medal on May 4th on Ellis Island. The Medal will be presented to you as a result of your exceptional humanitarian efforts and extraordinary contribution to our country.

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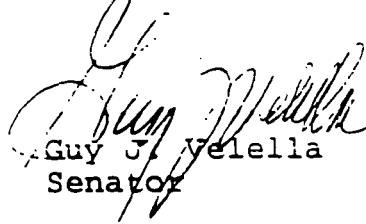
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President William J. Clinton
Page 2

At a time when forces who seek to divide our nation are ever present, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor stands as a visible symbol of American strength and unity. I hope you will give every consideration to this invitation.

Sincerely,



Guy J. Velella
Senator

GJV/rlk