

*JL/Melon*cc
September 17, 1974

Dear Mr. Dingell:

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that your September 11 letter to the President has been received. You may be assured it will be called to his attention as soon as possible. I am certain he will appreciate the forthright manner in which you set forth your views concerning his granting a pardon to the former President.



With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Max L. Friedersdorf
Deputy Assistant
to the President

The Honorable John D. Dingell
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

bcc: w/incoming to Philip Buchen - FYI
bcc: w/incoming to Stan Scott - FYI

sent

MLF:EF:VO:vo

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SEP 18 1974
CENTRAL FILES

JOHN D. DINGELL
16TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

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9-T

Com Nixon pardon comment

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

September 11, 1974

COMMITTEES:
INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE
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FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
AND THE ENVIRONMENT
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SMALL
BUSINESS
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ACTIVITIES OF REGULATORY AGENCIES
MIGRATORY BIRD
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Honorable Gerald R. Ford
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

BT

While I recognize that the power of the President to pardon persons charged with crimes against the United States under the Constitution is plenary and not subject to challenge or question in any other place, I find that words fail to adequately express my outrage at your action in pardoning Richard Nixon of any crimes which may have been committed by him during his tenure as President.

The delicate public confidence and trust in the government and our system of justice, which is so necessary to our whole system, has been gravely jeopardized by your action.

The public view that our system does indeed provide equal treatment under the law to all men regardless of their wealth, position, or station in life, has been gravely impaired by your action. I believe on the basis of information before me at this time that the ultimate action of the Executive Branch and the courts should not have resulted in the jailing of Richard Nixon. The unseemly spectacle of a former President of the United States in jail would benefit no one and would greatly demean the country and the Office of the Presidency.

But a pardon of Mr. Nixon at this time before the facts are in the hands of the public, whose trust he is charged with abusing, and before his indictment for any criminal charges, is most obviously premature.

Full investigation and full exploration of all facts relative to widely circulated criminal charges against not only Mr. Nixon but most of his close White House associates were publicly going forward and were being conducted in a careful, proper and judicial manner, calculated to arrive at public exposition of all facts. These sweeping investigations would have resulted not only in punishment of wrongdoers, but also in clearing the good names of any innocent persons swept up in this unseemly and unfortunate series of Watergate-related events.



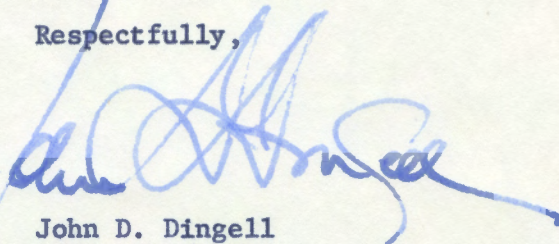
Your action has jeopardized these investigations and has raised grave doubts in the minds of our people as to the propriety of your actions and the fundamental fairness of our system of government. It is now widely believed the facts will not come out and that a whitewash has taken place. It is equally widely held that a fair trial for all of the other parties involved is now impossible.

Certainly juries are bound to infer that those charged with commission of criminal acts on behalf of Richard Nixon should not be punished when he has been pardoned before his guilt or innocence has in any fashion been made plain.

I believe that you now have a duty to publicly instruct all officers of the Executive Branch that the prosecution of all other persons involved in the Watergate matter is to go vigorously forward and to make and carry out a public commitment that all facts relative to the guilt or innocence of all participants in the Watergate affair, including facts relative to the actions of Mr. Nixon, are made public at the earliest time.

Your failure to take either of these steps will reinvigorate the call for impeachment of Mr. Nixon among our people as the only way of bringing out all the facts in this matter. Many of us thought Watergate was to be terminated by the resignation of Richard Nixon and his proper prosecution in conformity with law and the Constitution. It was not.

Respectfully,



John D. Dingell
Member of Congress

