

John

12 W. Read Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
April 15, 1968

The Honorable Spiro T. Agnew
Governor of Maryland
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Ted:

May I make a suggestion:

Senator Welcome uttered perhaps the wisest summation of last Thursday's meeting when she said that she guessed white people would never understand black people.

I believe that therein lies the real and truthful basis for a proper apology and eventual rapprochement with the leaders of the Negro community. For that, of course, is exactly what happened. Your estrangement of the black people was the result of miscalculation which must, of necessity, be born of misunderstanding.

This would be a proper admission, not a reversal, and if spoken sincerely, would mean more to the individuals involved than would any subsequent modifications of your policy or actions that would be read as either weaknesses or sops to try to regain favor.

There is nothing wrong, and everything right, in saying that the reaction to your statement of Thursday dramatizes the understanding gap that unfortunately exists between the races. And that, in this case, you must shoulder the responsibility and the guilt for not making the effort to understand the problems, the psychology and, indeed, the human nature of the people involved.

I would pledge, as I know you must feel, to make a better effort to grasp the dilemma of not only black leaders but of all the Negro people of Maryland. This is the failing of your speech on Thursday and it is a failing that can be candidly admitted without recriminations on either side. Knowing the qualities you have for self-criticism, I'm sure that such an action, public or private, will be met with restored goodwill.

*Alan
Please respond
to know how
you feel*

The Honorable Spiro T. Agnew
April 15, 1968

This comes not from the Robert Goodman Agency but from me, personally... one of those damned concerned citizens who is greatly troubled and distressed by the events of the last few days.

Please let me know if we can help.

Sincerely,



Ronald M. Wilner

RMW:alr

RECEIVED
APR 15 1968
DEPT. EXECUTIVE

April 23, 1968

Against

APR 30 1968

Dear Ron:

Your very thoughtful letter is much appreciated. I am sure you realize that I received a tremendous amount of advice since the controversial statement was issued over a week ago.

Contrary to the oversimplification and emotional reaction felt by so many Negroes, I am not a bigot; nor have I failed in my attempt to communicate and understand their needs. My six-year governmental record in civil rights attests to that. I said what I said because the reasonable moderate community, both white and Negro, cannot work in harmony while extremists on the fringes are urging them to kill each other.

In the event that you have not read the complete text of my statement, I enclose a copy.

Kind personal regards.

Sincerely,

Mr. Ronald M. Wilner
12 W. Read Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

STA:af:jb