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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 5, 1980

WILLIAM B. BADER, STAFF DIRECTOR  
ALBERT A. LAKELAND, JR., MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

*waiting for word  
fr. Rosemary*

## ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Tsongas

FROM: Bill Bader *WLB*

SUBJ: H.R. 3956, a Private Bill on behalf of Hewson Ryan

You will recall that the Committee a week or so ago considered a private bill which would permit Hewson Ryan of Massachusetts to accept the office and the title of Honorary Consul of Honduras at Boston. On January 27, 1980, you wrote to Senator Church expressing your support for H.R. 3956, a House bill which provided Mr. Ryan with Congressional consent to take the position of Honorary Consul.

In a Foreign Relations Committee meeting, a number of questions were raised concerning the necessity of moving a private bill on such a matter. Briefly, the request from the State Department for such a bill originates in their position that a retired Foreign Service Officer continues to hold an office with the U.S. following his separation from the Service. As a result, any such person in order to take even the position of Honorary Consul must be relieved by "the Consent of the Congress" from the constitutional prohibition against accepting any office or title from a foreign government.

You will recall that a number of Senators asked why all this was necessary, how many Honorary Consuls there are in the U.S., etc. As a result of this minor tempest, the Committee decided not to move on this private bill.

For your information, I have requested opinions from the Department of State and the Congressional Research Service on the matter. I attach the State Department response and a memo prepared by Rosemary Jackson summing up what we know about this extraordinarily complicated matter.

After reading it all, do let me know whether you would like to pursue the matter at the Committee level or simply let it rest until next year.

Attachments