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H. H. WESTBAY
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 9, 1967

Dear Editor:

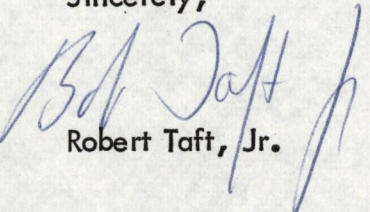
At the beginning of the 90th Congress, I introduced two bills to deal with problems arising from recent Supreme Court decisions concerning interrogation of the criminally accused. The first, H.R. 7384, would regulate interrogation practices of Federal law enforcement officers; the second, H.R. 7808, would do the same for interrogation by officers of the District of Columbia.

The debate on spiraling crime rates and law enforcement has been marked by extremes on both sides. Some critics of the court would sharply restrict the protections of the Bill of Rights. On the other hand, some groups criticize all attempts to provide workable rules, exhibiting little concern for the problems of law enforcement.

The need for the proposals stems from the confusion created by the Miranda case. I do not propose to overrule the case by statutory or constitutional change. The bills instead define an area for properly limited "on the scene" questioning on the one hand, and for fairness and protection during interrogation while in custody on the other. I believe it is a formula for protecting individual rights while setting clear and workable rules for interrogation.

Except for a vigorous minority report, the President's Crime Commission avoided these problems. The need for a Constructive Congressional proposal is evident. The suggestions embodied in the legislation introduced would strengthen our cherished concepts of liberty, while protecting the rights of society for effective law enforcement. If you would like copies of the bills and my testimony on them I would be glad to provide them.

Sincerely,


Robert Taft, Jr.