

August 14, 2002

Ms. _____
Willits, California 95490

Dear _____:

Thank you for writing to me regarding the International Criminal Court (ICC). I appreciate hearing from you.

The United Nations Diplomatic Conference in Rome concluded five weeks of negotiations regarding this issue in July of 1998 and adopted an agreement to establish a permanent ICC. Of the more than 160 nations that participated in the Rome Conference, 120 nations voted to adopt the statute, seven nations voted against it and 21 nations abstained. The United States rejected the final document primarily because of the broad jurisdictional powers granted to the Court.

The Court's powers would include the authority to prosecute people from countries that do not sign and ratify the treaty. Therefore, opponents of the Court feel that Americans stationed on foreign soil might be likely candidates for frivolous or politically motivated legal actions. Advocates claim that the Treaty has sufficient safeguards to limit the Court's jurisdiction.

Although former President Clinton signed the Treaty shortly before leaving office, the United States Senate must ratify the Treaty. President Bush recently reversed President Clinton's decision and announced his intention to withdraw from the procedures establishing the ICC.

An amendment offered to the Fiscal Year 2003 Defense Authorization Act would have prohibited U.S. funds from being used for any ICC activities. I voted against this amendment. Although I have concerns regarding the protection of Americans' constitutional rights under such an international judicial body, I do not think that we should prohibit funding from being used at this time if U.S. advisors or funding could help to develop the court in a way that would be acceptable to the United States.

Again, thank you for your letter. Please contact me again on issues of importance to you.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress
<http://www.house.gov/mthompson>