

3-1972

Correspondence Between Roger J. Traynor and Paul
C. Reardon Regarding an Invitation to be the
Chairman of the National Press Council, 1972
March 21 - 1972 March 28

Roger J. Traynor

Paul C. Reardon

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SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

PAUL C. REARDON
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE

March 21, 1972

Dear Roger,

For quite a few months now I have been engaged in working with a Task Force established by the Twentieth Century Fund, the purpose of which was to investigate the desirability of the establishment of a National Press Council in the United States. The group includes some distinguished individuals indeed — Barry Bingham of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Richard Salant, head of CBS News, Lucy Benson, President of the National League of Women Voters, Jesse Unruh, whom you will know from California, John Oakes, Chief of the editorial page of the New York Times, and a number of others of equal caliber and distinction. During the course of our studies we have had come over the Director of the British Press Council to describe the functioning of that body and the success which has attended its efforts. The net result of the studies is that the Committee will recommend the establishment of the Council, and plans are already under way to provide for an appropriate funding through several foundations. The Reporter of the Task Force is Alfred Balk, a journalist of note and presently affiliated with the Columbia School of Journalism, and he has prepared a draft report. I think from what I have said that you will be able to perceive the nature and result of the work of this Task Force.

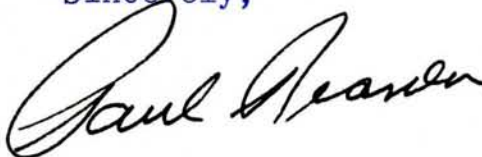
At the last meeting of the group in New York there was considerable discussion on those individuals who might best serve as initial members of a new Press Council. I am sure you remember that Lord Devlin undertook that responsibility in Britain and was largely instrumental in the successful launching of the new Council there. It was the concerted opinion of the Task Force members that an individual of equal prominence in this country and with the general background of a Lord Devlin should become the first Chairman of a Press Council here. I was thus instructed to write to you and ask you if you would not consider taking on this assignment, which can easily be worked into your schedule of activities.

I can assure you that this is an enterprise which has been carefully worked upon, which will have substantial backing, and which in operation should be most intriguing, particularly in the first stages. The purpose of this letter is to seek your support in accepting the post as Chairman of the new Council, and the second is to advise you that a great deal of information reflecting our labors over the months, the consultation with the representative of the British Press Council, and the work of the Reporter are available to you if your interest, as I hope it will, impels you to consider this invitation.

I should greatly appreciate hearing from you at your convenience that I may pass on your reactions to my colleagues on the Task Force.

With every best personal good wish, I am,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Weaver". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Honorable Roger S. Traynor
University of Utah
College of Law
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

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NNC
March 28, 1972

The Honorable Paul C. Reardon
Associate Justice
Supreme Judicial Court
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Dear Paul:

I have read with interest your letter of 21 March setting forth the plans you have been working on for some months with the Task Force established by the Twentieth Century Fund to establish a National Press Council in the United States. Since you write that the Task Force is about to recommend such a Council, I have given reflection to the invitation you have extended me to serve as its first chairman, so that I could respond before leaving for California, where I shall be for the rest of this week.

I am deeply appreciative of the honor of your committee's invitation and only wish I could respond affirmatively. At this writing, however, I have had to conclude that long-standing commitments will continue to preempt whatever time and attention I can give to extracurricular assignments.

May I nonetheless take this occasion to wish you and your committee every success for the Council you envisage and to assure you that even though I cannot assume the responsibility you propose, I shall follow with interest whatever constructive work the Council can bring to fruition.

Sincerely yours,

Roger J. Traynor

RJT:jml

The Honorable etc
Etc

AIRMAIL 18

Dear Paul:

I have read with interest your letter of 21 March setting forth the plans you have been working on for some months, with the Task Force established by the Twentieth Century Fund, to establish a National Press Council in the United States. Since you write that the Task Force is ~~now~~ about to recommend such a Council, I have given reflection to the invitation you have extended me to serve as its first ~~Chairman~~ chairman, so that I could respond before leaving for California, where I shall be for the rest of this week.

I am deeply appreciated ^{ive} of the honor of your committee's invitation, and only wish I could respond affirmatively. At this writing, however, I have had to conclude that long-standing commitments will continue to preempt ~~fully~~ whatever time and attention I can give to extracurricular assignments. ~~May~~ I nonetheless take this occasion to wish you and your committee every success ~~for you~~ ^{for} the Council ^{you} envisage, and to assure you that even though I cannot ^{assume the responsibility} ~~participate in it as you~~ ^{you} propose, I shall follow with interest whatever constructive work ^{the Council} it can bring to fruition.

Sincerely yours,

Royal G. Taylor