

John F. Kennedy

Massachusetts

Committees:

Foreign Relations  
Labor and Public Welfare  
Joint Economic Committee

UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington, D.C.

June 5, 1959

Mrs. Ruth Proskauer Smith  
110 East End Avenue  
New York 28, New York

Dear Mrs. Smith:

I have both your letters of recent date, and I regret very much that the press of legislative activities has precluded an earlier reply.

As you will see from the enclosed speech, I too have been concerned with the population explosion and I do believe that satisfactory means must be found to retard the growth of population, particularly in some areas of the world. I regret, as you do, that in many places in the United States -- and, I take your word for it, throughout the world -- the issue has become a religious one or, perhaps more accurately, an issue which concerns religious men and religious bodies.

Without minimizing the moral implications which many people see in the so-called birth control issue or minimizing the relevance of these considerations to political decisions, I nevertheless agree with you that consideration of legislation is essentially a political issue. I believe also that those who have no religious or moral scruples concerning the use of contraceptives should not be hampered in their freedom of choice.

I note that you will be in Washington next weekend. Unfortunately, my schedule on Friday, June 12, is thoroughly filled, and I am speaking in Maryland on the 15th. I am very sorry, therefore, that I will not have an opportunity to see you personally at that time, but I do hope you will feel free to write me and give me the benefit of your thoughts from time to time.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

John F. Kennedy (signed)

JFK/md

C  
O  
P  
Y