

TRAINING

June 1, 1961

First Letter
to
Department

The Honorable Roger W. Jones
Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration
The Department of State
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Jones:

The Foreign Service Women's Association has been concerned for many months about the lack of a training program for Foreign Service wives. To us, the training of wives going overseas is a necessity and a problem urgently requiring attention, if the United States is to be represented by them in the effective manner required.

Many new and challenging posts are now opening. The emerging status of women, particularly in the less developed countries, is bringing an intensification of Communist efforts aimed at these women. Traditional diplomatic methods are evolving and adapting to new situations. In view of these and many other complicating factors, special preparation for wives is imperative.

There is both precedent and authorization for training.

Until May 1960 there was a one-and-a-half day program in the Foreign Service Institute especially for wives, dealing chiefly with protocol.

The Foreign Service Act of 1946 was amended in 1960 to give authority to the Secretary of State to provide orientation and language training "to the extent that space is available" to wives of Government employees in anticipation of foreign assignment.

Under this Act, wives are now allowed to attend certain courses at the Institute on the space-available basis. The language classes, particularly for the "hard languages," are very often full. The orientation courses are specifically prepared for certain officers and staff personnel. They do not take into consideration the special problems of wives serving overseas. Moreover, a program of substance can hardly be conducted under the space-available limitation presently existing. It would seem that legislation without this restriction should be requested and passed.

We are well aware of the difficulties of setting up such a program and in making it available to the people who need it; therefore, we stand ready to offer any assistance we can. We feel, however, that the program should be officially prepared and administered by the Foreign Service Institute under imaginative and creative leadership. Naturally, many of the excellent existing facilities at the Institute would be incorporated into a well-planned and coherent program tailored for wives, embracing orientation, language, and area training.

Attached are statements supporting our request and suggestions concerning the program.

We hope that you will consider this letter as a formal request by our Association that the Department establish a serious and realistic program for Foreign Services wives.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. James M. Byrne
President

Attachments