

August 14, 1935

Senator Harry S. Truman,
Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D. C.

My dear Harry.

I keep reading in the newspapers that the President, soon after Congress adjourns, will start on his western trip. Some suggestion is that he will go to California by the southern route and will return by way of the Panama Canal. This, so the story goes, will be for the purpose of avoiding political complications.

If these newspaper stories are true, it will mean that he will not visit the National Convention of the American Legion. It seems to me that this would be poor political strategy. The President knows, or should know, that he is, at the present moment, immensely unpopular with the World War veterans. The smart thing, as I see it, would be for him to face them as he did in Chicago. If the President does not visit the National Convention at St. Louis this year, it will be extremely poor politics on his part to visit the National Convention next year when he will be actively campaigning for re-election. The charge will then be made that he passed up the Legion at St. Louis and is visiting the Legion in 1936 solely for political purposes. That would be extremely unwise from a political standpoint. If the President passes up the National Convention this year, then he should by all means pass up the Convention in 1936. I do not think he would want to miss the 1936 National Convention. At the 1935 and 1936 Conventions, the President will be given an opportunity to address influential men from all over the United States. No other convention will present such an opportunity.

The President should know that the veterans hold the balance of power in the United States. They control approximately ten million votes. It was this balance power that contributed largely to the President's success in the 1932 campaign. The veterans voted against Hoover and under present conditions, the big majority will vote against Roosevelt. To counteract this, it seems to me that it would be extremely wise for the President to address the opening session of the National Convention on Monday, September 23. As you know, I have been all over the State of Missouri and the President has lost a lot of ground in our old state. It would help us immensely in Missouri if the President should visit St. Louis in September.

So far as I know, the President has not made any statement to National Headquarters as to whether he expects to accept the Legion's Invitation to address the National Convention, but in my opinion, if you can see the President or his secretary, Mr. McIntyre or Mr. Farley, and explain the situation, I believe you could exert a tremendous influence in getting the President to visit the National Convention at St. Louis.

I am merely submitting the foregoing for your consideration and such action as you deem expedient.

With personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

WAK:VM