

MEH



City of Chicago
Eugene Sawyer, Acting Mayor

January 21, 1988

[REDACTED]

Board of Ethics
Harriet McCullough
Executive Director

Case Number 87120.A

Sol Brandzel
Chair

CONFIDENTIAL

Mary Milano
Vice Chair

Dear [REDACTED]

Rev. Don Benedict
Margaret Carter
Angela Eames
Rev. A. Patterson Jackson
Marlene Rankin

You recently requested an advisory opinion to determine whether the Ethics Ordinance (Chapter 26.2 of the Municipal Code of Chicago) would allow you to participate in an inaugural flight between Chicago and [LOCATION W]. Based on a careful review of the circumstances surrounding this proposed trip, the Board of Ethics has determined that your acceptance of [AIRLINE K]'s offer to travel on its inaugural flight between Chicago and [LOCATION W] would not violate any provisions of the Ethics Ordinance. However, we must emphasize that this conclusion is based on the particular facts of this case -- i.e. the relationship between the trip to [LOCATION W] and your responsibilities as a representative of the City of Chicago in its sister-City agreement with [LOCATION W].

Suite 1320
205 West Randolph Street
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 744-9660

In a telephone conversation with a staff member of the Board of Ethics on January 4, 1988, you indicated that [AIRLINE K] has invited you and several other representatives of the Chicago [REDACTED] community to make a two day trip to [LOCATION W] leaving Chicago on [REDACTED] and returning on the [REDACTED] of that month. The airlines would furnish all expenses for travel and accommodations for the two day trip. The stated purpose of this trip is to dramatize the opening of a new link between Chicago and [LOCATION W] provided by [AIRLINE K]. In conjunction with this flight, [AIRLINE K] will host several events for members of the Chicago [REDACTED] community and public officials in [LOCATION W]. You have been invited to make this trip and participate in these events both in your capacity as President of [GROUP M] and [REDACTED]



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in your official capacity WITH [REDACTED]
the City of Chicago in its sister-City agreement with LOCATION W.

Section 26.2-4 of the Ethics Ordinance contains several provisions which are relevant to the acceptance of travel and hosting by City officials. Under these provisions, City officials and employees are prohibited from accepting: (1) gifts from anonymous donors (Section 26.2-4(a), attached); (2) gifts or benefits of any kind on the basis of some understanding that such gifts will influence an employee's or official's actions in City government (26.2-4(b), attached); and (3) gifts from persons who have an economic interest in a specific transaction with the City where the employee or official is in a position to substantially affect this transaction (26.2-4(c), attached). However, Section 26.2-4(d)(iv) of the Ordinance explicitly allows officials and employees to accept travel and other hosting expenses under the conditions that:

- (1) such expenses are not given anonymously or with an intent to influence the recipient's official actions as prohibited under subsections 26.2-4 (a) and (b);
- (2) the expenses are furnished in connection with a public event or ceremony;
- (3) the public event or ceremony is related to official City business;
- (4) the expenses are furnished by the sponsor of such public event; and
- (5) the expenses are reasonable.

The circumstances of your proposed trip seem to meet all of the conditions for acceptable hosting as outlined above. First, this is not an anonymous gift and the circumstances give no basis to infer any improper intention on the part of AIRLINE K [REDACTED] in extending this invitation. Secondly, these expenses are being furnished in connection with public events insofar as the trip involves ceremonies with other public officials and members of the Chicago [REDACTED] community aimed at reaffirming relations between the cities of Chicago and LOCATION W. and promoting further cultural exchange. Third, these public events are related to your duties as an alderman insofar as you are the official representative of Chicago's sister-City agreement with LOCATION W. Finally, the expenses which include travel and accommodations for two days and nights in LOCATION W. are being furnished by the sponsor

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of the events discussed and these expenses are "reasonable" in the sense that they do not exceed what is necessary to achieve the stated purposes of the trip.

Based on these considerations, and in view of your significant role in the [REDACTED] Community, the Board of Ethics concludes that it is permissible under the Ordinance for you to accept the invitation from AIRLINE K [REDACTED] in this instance. Please note however, that public officials may not accept hosting and travel expenses unless such benefits meet the conditions of "reasonable hosting" enumerated above.

We appreciate your inquiry. If you have further questions concerning this matter or any similar matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Board at 744-9660.

Sincerely,

S. Brandzel^{SH}
S. Brandzel
Chairman

JH/jh/[REDACTED]