

GENERAL

August 2, 1972

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Dear Miss Solomon: *EILEEN*

The President has asked me to respond to your recent letter, inquiring about representation of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands and the Canal Zone at our national political conventions and in the general election.

In 1952, Puerto Rico was given the status of free commonwealth, enabling it to send a non-voting delegate to the U. S. House of Representatives. Because there are active political organizations in Puerto Rico, they have been entitled for many years to membership on the Republican and Democratic National Committees and thus entitled to send delegates to the national conventions. The people of Puerto Rico do not, however, have the right to vote in Presidential elections.

Guam and the Virgin Islands are unincorporated Territories of the United States which were until 1970 administered by the Department of the Interior. At that time, both were given the right to elect their own Governors and they have developed active political parties which are represented in the national committees of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

The Canal Zone is under the jurisdiction of the United States by treaty with the Republic of Panama and has representation in the Democratic Party, but not the Republican Party, because there has been no local organization of Republicans there.

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I hope this information answers the questions raised in your letter and that you will want to participate in the political process both now and when you earn the right to vote at age eighteen.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,

Roland L. Elliott  
Deputy Special Assistant  
to the President

Miss Eileen Solomon  
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RLE:RNC:MAA:blh