



441 Freedom Parkway NE  
Atlanta, GA 30307

<http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov>

## **Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs: A Guide to Its Records at the Jimmy Carter Library**

### **Collection Summary**

Creator: Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

Title: Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

Dates: 1977 - 1981

Quantity: 103.75 linear feet (60 linear feet 5 linear inches open for research), 138 containers

Identification:

Accession Number: 80-1

National Archives Identifier: 583400

Scope and Content:

The Records of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

The records include newspaper clipping, memos, reports, correspondence, briefing books, speeches, testimony, calendars, telephone logs, itineraries, invitations, and press materials. The material reflects the efforts of the Carter Administration to serve the interests of American consumers. The collection contains the papers of the Director, Esther Peterson, who served as the Special Assistant advising the President, and other members of the office staff. These materials describe the daily operation of the office and its work in the area of consumer affairs both nationally and internationally.

Creator Information: Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

The Office of Consumer Affairs was created by Executive Order 11583 on February 24, 1971. It was formed as an Office within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). During the Carter administration, Esther Peterson was director and served as the Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. This office advised the President on the analysis and coordination of Federal activities in the area of consumer affairs and recommended solutions for improving the effectiveness of governmental consumer programs. In addition, the office handled numerous consumer complaints submitted by American citizens. The Special Assistant served as a consumer spokesperson and advocate on the President's personal staff, along with helping to promote and pass consumer legislation. Other members of the office included Midge Shubow, Jean Perwin, and Ed Cohen.

[Biographical information](#) on key office personnel is located at the end of the finding aid.

Restrictions:

Restrictions on Access: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with applicable executive order(s), which governs National Security policies, applicable statutes/agency restrictions, and material which has been closed in accordance with the donor's deed of gift.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction: Copyright interest in these papers has been donated to the United States Government. Some of the records may be subject to copyright restrictions (i.e. newspapers, publications, etc.). Researchers should contact the publisher for further information.

Related Material:

Related materials in this repository: White House Central File, Subject Files - Department of Health, Education and Welfare (FG 22), White House Central File, Subject Files - Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Consumer Affairs (FG 22-2), Exit Interview: Esther Peterson

Related materials in other repository: Records of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Consumer Affairs held by NARA

Separated material: Various audio-visual materials have been transferred to the Library's Audio-Visual Department. Separation of these items from the textual materials is noted by the placement of transfer sheets within the appropriate folders.

Index Terms:

Limited to major topics under each category  
Persons: Esther Peterson

Organizations: Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), American National Metric Council, Federal Trade Commission, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United States Office of Consumer Affairs

Subjects: Consumer affairs, food, automobiles, business, consumer product safety, economy, education, elderly, energy, exports, health care, housing, hunger, inflation, and legislation

Places: Japan, Korea

Types of Material: Newspaper clipping, memos, reports, correspondence, briefing books, speeches, testimony, calendars, telephone logs, itineraries, invitations and press materials

Administrative Information:

Preferred citation: [Type of Document], [Names of Sender and Recipient or Title of Document], [Date], [Collection Title], [Series Title], [Folder Title], [Box Number], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Acquisition information: These historical materials were received under provisions of the instrument of gift that Jimmy Carter signed January 31, 1981.

Processing information: The first series of the collection was opened in 2015. The open dates are indicated in the series descriptions.

Preservation information: Some items have been transferred to the Library's Audio-Visual Department for preservation.

System of Arrangement:

The Records of the Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs are divided into four series:

<b>Series Title</b>	<b>National Archives Identifier</b>
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Subject Files</a>	585989
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Briefing Book Files</a>	20739645
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Speeches/Testimony Files</a>	20739646
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Correspondence Files</a>	20739647
<a href="#">Jean Perwin's Subject Files</a>	586006
<a href="#">Michael Kerr's Subject Files</a>	586002
<a href="#">Midge Shubow's Subject Files</a>	586000
<a href="#">Ed Cohen's Subject Files</a>	586004

**Detailed Description of the Collection**

[Esther Peterson's Subject Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 1-69. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, lists, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, resumes, and press materials. Topics include energy, farming, food, consumer complaints, health, housing, inflation, and legislation. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

[Esther Peterson's Briefing Book Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 70-75. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains the contents of various briefing books used in presentations and meetings. The briefing books deal with issues of consumer interests both nationally and internationally. The material consists of reports, lists, fact sheet, and memos. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

[Esther Peterson's Speeches/Testimony Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 76-97. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains newspaper clippings, itineraries, speeches, testimonies, invitations, correspondence, memos and

drafts of speeches. The material has been arranged with subject folders followed by dated speech materials. The subject folders are arranged alphabetically by folder title, the dated speech materials arranged chronologically.

### **[Esther Peterson's Correspondence Files](#)**

Scope and Content: Containers 98-119. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains letters, correspondence, and postcards. The material consists of public mail and official correspondence. The material is arranged by type of correspondence and chronologically there under.

### **[Jean Perwin's Subject Files](#)**

Scope and Content: Containers 120-124. This series was opened in October 2017. The series contains correspondence, legislation, congressional records, newspaper articles, promotional material, surveys, memoranda, and court cases. Topics include inflation, price ceilings, government spending, antitrust laws, coupons, credit privacy, diplomatic immunity, patents and comparison shopping. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

### **[Michael Kerr's Subject Files](#)**

Scope and Content: Containers 125-128. This series was opened in October 2017. The series contains correspondence, legislation, reports, studies, newspaper articles, memoranda, promotional materials, and congressional records. Topics include citizen participation in governmental proceedings, agency regulation reform, and consumer controversies resolution. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

### **[Midge Shubow's Subject Files](#)**

Scope and Content: Containers 129-138. This series was opened in November 2017. The series contains articles, correspondence, press releases, transcripts, legislation, and public mail. Topics include the consumer protection agency bill, advertising, administration, inflation, food labelling, diet, consumer education, corporation ethics, and taxes. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

### **[Edward \(Ed\) Cohen's Subject Files](#)**

Scope and Content: Containers 139-183. This series was opened in 2018. The series consists of correspondence, memorandum, reports, briefing books, testimony, telephone logs, proposals, appropriations, drafts and publications. Topics include H.R. 6118 Consumer Protection Act, class action legislation, Product and Safety Commission, Cooperative Bank Files (COOP) and Consumer Advocacy Program. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

[Return to series list](#)

## Container List

### Esther Peterson's Subject Files

#### **Container 1**

Abortion  
ACTION  
Administrative File  
Advertising  
Advertising Cases [1]  
Advertising Cases [2]  
Advertising (Children's)  
Advocates  
Agricultural Council of America  
Air Travel  
Airline Deregulation  
American Automobile Association  
American Consumer Association  
American Council of Life Insurance  
AFL-CIO  
American Home Economics Association

#### **Container 2**

American National Metric Council [1]  
American National Metric Council [2]  
AT and T Issues  
Anti-Inflation Memos/Reports  
Appropriate Community Technology - 1979 Fair Conference to Feature Model Community  
Article on People Power - The New Republic  
Article on People Power - Ralph Nader  
Australia  
Auto Policy  
Auto Repairs  
Auto cap (Rich Cuffe at Office of Consumer Assistance)  
Autographs for Drug and Grocery Chain Manufacturers  
Automobile Owners Action Council  
Automobiles  
Background Materials  
Backhauling

#### **Container 3**

Banking and Credit  
Belgium  
Bills  
B'nai B'rith Women

Brazil  
British  
Budget - USOCA [1]  
Budget - USOCA [2]  
Budget - USOCA [3]  
Bumpers Amendment  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms  
Business  
Business [A and P Groceries]

#### **Container 4**

Business or Organization - A  
Business or Organization - B  
Business or Organization - C [1]  
Business or Organization - C [2]  
Business or Organization - C [3]  
Business or Organization - D  
Business or Organization - E

#### **Container 5**

Business or Organization - F  
Business or Organization - G  
Business or Organization - H  
Business or Organization - I  
Business or Organization - J  
Business or Organization - K  
Business or Organization - L  
Business or Organization - M  
Business or Organization - N [1]  
Business or Organization - N [2]  
Business or Organization - N [3]  
Business or Organization - O

#### **Container 6**

Business or Organization - P  
Business or Organization - R  
Business or Organization - S  
Business or Organization - T  
Business or Organization - U  
Business or Organization - V  
Business or Organization - W  
Business or Organization - Y  
Business or Organization - Z  
Business Roundtable  
Business Speech Material

Buying Alert  
Cabinet Memorandum  
Campaign [Anderson/Lucy]

**Container 7**

Campaign (Carter Record)  
Campaign 1978 - Congressional  
Campbell, Wallace (Inflation Paper)  
Canada  
Candidates for Committee  
Care Labeling  
Carter/Mondale Campaign - Briefing - Travel Policy  
[Carter Speaks on the] Environment  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Chamber of Commerce XR-NC Citizen's Association File  
Child Nutrition  
Child Nutrition Amendment 1978  
China  
Cholesterol  
Chrysler Issue  
Citizen Travel  
Civil Aeronautics Board  
Civil Rights Reorganization - Equal Pay Act  
Civil Service Reform  
Class Action (Ed Cohen's File)  
Clearance Requests and Notice for Consumer Action Update  
Clearances [White House Gate Lists] [1]

**Container 8**

Clearances [White House Gate Lists] [2]  
Clippings [1]  
Clippings [2]  
Clippings - Buying Alert  
Clippings - Consumer's Resource Handbook  
Clippings - "Dear Consumer"  
Clippings on Esther Peterson  
Cocoa Agreement - International Agreement  
Comments on Buying Alert  
Comments on Handbook  
Common Cause  
Communications [1]  
Communications [2]

**Container 9**

Community Nutrition Institute

Community Nutrition Institute Report  
Competition  
Congratulations by Esther  
Congratulations to Esther  
Congress Watch  
Congressional Comments on Handbook  
Congressional “Thank You’s” - Legislation  
[Consumer Affairs] Briefing Packages  
[Consumer Agency Legislation]  
Consumer Complaints A-E  
Consumer Complaints F-G  
Consumer Complaints H [1]

### **Container 10**

Consumer Complaints H [2]  
Consumer Complaints I-M  
Consumer Complaints N-S  
Consumer Complaints T-Z  
Consumer Complaints about Energy  
Consumer Complaints [Talking Points]  
Consumer Controversies

### **Container 11**

Consumer Coordinating Committee  
Consumer Education  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Groups  
Consumer Information Center  
Consumer Involvement in Federal Agencies - Study by Mike Kerr  
Consumer Issues  
Consumer Law Center, Boston, Massachusetts  
Consumer Message

### **Container 12**

Consumer Price Index Data, 1978 [1]  
Consumer Price Index Data, 1978 [2]  
Consumer Product Safety Commission [1]  
Consumer Product Safety Commission [2]  
Consumer Protection - Public Safety  
Consumer Resource Handbook  
Consumer Tips/Information  
Consumer Wrap-Up, 1978  
Consumerism at the State Level  
Consumers for Carter/Mondale  
Consumer’s Complaint Report

**Container 13**

Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities (COIN)  
Consumers Union  
Consumers for World Trade "Of Consuming Interest"  
Co-Op File  
Copper Statistics  
Corporate Abuses  
Coupons  
Coupons  
Credit Control Act of 1969 - Meeting with National Consumer Finance Association  
Credit and Insurance  
Credit - Women  
Daily Calendar Sheets, 12/77 - 12/78 [1]  
Daily Calendar Sheets, 12/77 - 12/78 [2]  
Daily Calendar Sheets, 1979 [1]

**Container 14**

Daily Calendar Sheets, 1979 [2]  
Daily Calendar Sheets, 1980 [1]  
Daily Calendar Sheets, 1980 [2]  
Daily Planner, 1977  
Daily Planner, 1978  
Daily Planner, 1979  
Daily Planner, 1980

**Container 15**

Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1977 [1]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1977 [2]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1978 [1]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1978 [2]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1978 [3]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1979 [1]

**Container 16**

Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1979 [2]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1979 [3]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1980 [1]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1980 [2]  
Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1980 [3]

**Container 17**

Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1980 [4]  
Danforth Amendment  
Danforth, Sen. John C.

Davis - Bacon [Act]  
“Dear Consumer” Columns  
Democratic National Committee  
Denmark  
Dennenberg, Herb [Food Labeling]  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Energy [1]

### **Container18**

Department of Energy [2]  
Department of Health, Education and Welfare [1]  
Department of Health, Education and Welfare [2]  
Department of Health, Education and Welfare [3]  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Department of Justice  
Department of Labor  
Department of State  
Department of Transportation  
Department of Treasury

### **Container 19**

Deregulation  
Designations (Personnel to Committees, etc.)  
Directory of Federal Consumer Offices  
Division Director’s Weekly Meeting  
Domestic Policy Staff Weekly Reports  
Doxycycline [1]  
Doxycycline [2]  
Drug Letters and Replies  
Drugs (Over the Counter) - Generic  
Drug Price Ceiling  
Drug Problems  
Drug Stores  
Economy - Banking  
Economy - Credit  
Economy - Electronic Transfer of Funds (ETF)

### **Container 20**

Economy - General  
Economy - Inflation  
Economy - Price Index [Empty]  
Education - Consumer [1]  
Education - Consumer [2]

Education - Consumer Catch-Up  
Education - Other Than Consumer  
Elderly [1]  
Elderly [2]

### **Container 21**

Elderly [3]  
Elderly [4]  
Electric Power via Gas, Oil, etc, for Home and Industry  
Emerging Issues  
Energy  
Energy - Anti-Trust  
Energy Bill and Policy [1]  
Energy Bill and Policy [2]  
Energy Bill and Policy [3]  
Energy Conservation Program  
Energy - Consumer Group Meeting, 4/78

### **Container 22**

Energy - Consumers  
Energy - Foreign Tax Credit  
Energy - General  
Energy - General and Miscellaneous [1]  
Energy - General and Miscellaneous [2]  
Energy - General and Miscellaneous [3]  
Energy - President's Program  
England

### **Container 23**

Environment  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
Erwin, Nancy - Chron Files, 1979  
Erwin, Nancy - Fiscal Year, 1979 Travel  
Europe  
Examination of President's Commission on the Status of Women  
Executive Order  
Executive Order 12160  
Executive Order Related Clips  
Export Controls [1]

### **Container 24**

Export Controls [2]  
Export - Ed Heiden's Recommendations  
Export of Hazardous Products - Miscellaneous [1]

Export of Hazardous Products - Miscellaneous [2]  
Exports  
Eyes  
Families  
Farming - Herschel Ligon's Proposal  
Farming - Related Issues  
Feasibility Study to Improve Handling of Consumer Complaints  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Federal Communications Commission  
Federal Consumer Laws [Empty]  
Federal Energy Regulation (Seabrook)  
Federal Information Center

### **Container 25**

Federal Information Centers  
Federal Paper Work Commission  
Federal Record on United States Office of Consumer Affairs (USOCA)  
Federal Reserve System  
Federal Trade Commission  
Federal Trade Commission - Background Material  
Federal Trade Commission - Testimony  
Federal Trade Commission - Travel Memos [1]  
Federal Trade Commission - Travel Memos [2]

### **Container 26**

Federal Trade Commission - Travel Memos [3]  
Federal Trade Commission - Travel Memos [4]  
Federal Trade Commission - Travel Memos [5]  
Federation of Organizations for Professional Women Affiliate List, 5/77  
Feed Grain and Other Commodity Policy  
Feed Grains, 1979  
Feed Grains and Reserves, 1980  
Finance - Savings and Loan Branching  
Financial Institutions  
Flammable Fabrics [Empty]  
Flammable Fabrics - Furniture  
Flammable Fabrics - Tris

### **Container 27**

Food - Additives  
Food and Agriculture Organization - Background Material  
Food and Agriculture Organization - Draft Copies of Speech  
Food and Agriculture Organization - Memorandums  
Food and Agriculture Organization - Nutrition Meeting Notebook

Food and Agriculture Organization - Peterson's Remarks and Background Material, Rome, Italy, 3/6/78

Food and Agriculture Organization - World Food Committee

Food - Bank

Food - Cereal

Food - Coffee

Food - Consumers

Food - Drug Administration [1]

### **Container 28**

Food - Drug Administration [2]

Food - Editors

Food - Editor's Conference, 6/11/79

Food - General

Food - Generic

Food - Ice Cream

Food - Labeling [1]

Food - Labeling [2]

Food - Labeling [3]

### **Container 29**

Food - Labeling [4]

Food - Labeling Issue

Food - Marketing Institute

Food - Meat Grading

Food - Meat Imports Pricing

Food - Miscellaneous [1]

Food - Miscellaneous [2]

Food - Nitrites

### **Container 30**

Food - Nutrition [1]

Food - Nutrition [2]

Food - Nutrition [3]

Food - Nutrition [4]

Food - Nutrition [5]

Food - Nutrition [6]

Food - Packaging

### **Container 31**

Food - President's Meeting

Food Prices

Food Processors (Household Items) [1]

Food Processors (Household Items) [2]

Food Processors Meeting - Miscellaneous

Food Regulation - A Case Study of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA and Federal Drug Administration FDA  
Food - Restaurants  
Food - Safety  
Food - Sugar [1]  
Food - Sugar [2]

**Container 32**

Food - Technology  
Footwear [1]  
Footwear [2]  
Footwear [3]  
Footwear - Imports - American Selling Price and Tariffs  
Foreign Countries  
Franchises  
Fraud - Consumers  
Funerals  
Gasoline  
General Policy Memos [1]

**Container 33**

General Policy Memos [2]  
General Service Agency Consumer Package  
General Services Administration  
Geneva College - Stuart Lee File  
Germany  
Giant Foods, Inc. [1]  
Giant Foods, Inc. [2]  
Giant Foods Promos

**Container 34**

The Global 2000 Report to the President  
Global 2000 Report to the President: Technical Report, Volume 2 [Publication]  
Grain - Target Prices  
Grocery Chains [1]  
Grocery Chains [2]

**Container 35**

Hanover Brands, Inc.  
Hazardous Wastes [Superfund]  
Health  
Health Care  
Health Care -Hospital Cost Containment  
Health Care - Hospital Costs  
Health - Cosmetics

Health - Drugs  
Health - Infant Formula Controversy  
Health - Insurance (National)  
Herb Planbeck and Associates  
High Carbon Ferrochrome [1]  
High Carbon Ferrochrome [2]  
High Carbon Ferrochrome [3]  
History of Consumerism  
Hospital Cost Containment

**Container 36**

Household Budget Costs  
Housing [1]  
Housing [2]  
Housing [3]  
Housing - Insulation  
Housing - Local Action  
Howard University  
Human Rights  
Hunger and Malnutrition [1]

**Container 37**

Hunger and Malnutrition [2]  
Hunger and Malnutrition [3]  
Hunger and Malnutrition [4]  
Illinois Brick  
Imports  
India  
Inflation  
Inflation - Agency Materials [Empty]  
Inflation - Anti-Inflation Activities  
Inflation - Basic Necessities  
Inflation - Consumer Meetings  
Inflation - Consumers  
Inflation - COIN  
Inflation - Esther Peterson's Working Files

**Container 38**

Inflation - Food Prices  
Inflation - Forecasts  
Inflation Letters [1]  
Inflation Letters [2]  
Inflation Letters [3]  
Inflation "Lock" File  
Inflation - Macro Issues

Inflation Materials  
Inflation - Meetings  
Inflation - Response to Message, 4/11/78  
Inflation Work Group Meeting  
Information Requests  
Insurance  
Intern Programs  
Internal Revenue Service  
International Trade - Miscellaneous

**Container 39**

Interns  
Interstate Commerce Commission [1]  
Interstate Commerce Commission [2]  
Interstate Commerce Commission (Suspension of Household Mover-Reasonable Dispatch Rules)  
Invitations Declined - A [1]  
Invitations Declined - A [2]  
Invitations Declined - B  
Invitations Declined - C [1]

**Container 40**

Invitations Declined - C [2]  
Invitations Declined - C [3]  
Invitations Declined - D  
Invitations Declined - E  
Invitations Declined - F  
Invitations Declined - G  
Invitations Declined - H  
Invitations Declined - I  
Invitations Declined - J  
Invitations Declined - K  
Invitations Declined - L

**Container 41**

Invitations Declined - M  
Invitations Declined - N [1]  
Invitations Declined - N [2]  
Invitations Declined - O  
Invitations Declined - P  
Invitations Declined - R  
Invitations Declined - S  
Invitations Declined - T  
Invitations Declined - U  
Invitations Declined - V

**Container 42**

Invitations Declined - W

Invitations Declined - Y

Israel

Issue Involvement Memorandum [1]

Issue Involvement Memorandum [2]

Issue Memorandums from United States Office of Consumer Affairs (USOCA) Staff [1]

Issue Memorandums from USOCA Staff [2]

**Container 43**

Issue Memorandums from USOCA Staff [3]

Issue Memorandums from USOCA Staff [4]

Issue Memorandums from USOCA Staff [5]

Issue Memorandums from USOCA Staff [6]

Issue Memorandums from USOCA Staff [7]

**Container 44**

Jacoby, Amy - Travel Vouchers

Japan/Korea [1]

Japan/Korea [2]

Japan/Korea [3]

Japan/Korea [4]

Kennedy Library

Labeling - Non-Food

Labor

Ladimer, Irving

Legislation - Civil Service Reform [EMPTY]

Legislation - Consumer Bill H.S. 9718

Legislation - Equal Rights Amendment

**Container 45**

Legislation - General

Legislation- House [1]

Legislation- House [2]

Legislation - 96<sup>th</sup> Congress

Legislation - Senate [1]

Legislation - Senate [2]

Legislation - Steiger Amendment (Taxes)

Legislation - Who's Running Congress? [1]

Legislation - Who's Running Congress? [2]

**Container 46**

Leonard, Rodney E. [1]

Leonard, Rodney E. [2]

Leonard, Rodney E. [3]

Letter to Honorable Charles A. Vanik - Sugar Agreement, 3/80  
Letters to the Food Industry  
Letters Relating to People Power  
Letters to Senators - Danforth Amendment

**Container 47**

Life Insurance  
List - Addresses  
Low Income Consumer Conference  
Magazines - Newsweek Coupon Replies  
Magrabi, Francis  
Mail Orders  
Marketing Orders  
Meat Material [Imports]  
Media Market  
Memorandum to the President  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1977  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1978 [1]  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1978 [2]

**Container 48**

Memorandum for White House Staff, 1979 [1]  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1979 [2]  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1979 [3]  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1980 [1]  
Memorandum for White House Staff, 1980 [2]  
Mergers and Acquisitions/Anti-Trust/Trade Laws  
Metals and Other Minerals

**Container 49**

Metric [1]  
Metric [2]  
Metric [3]  
Metric - Gasoline Pump  
Mexican Natural Gas  
Miscellaneous  
Miscellaneous Meetings Completed  
Miscellaneous Tapes  
Mobil Homes  
Monopolies - Food Business  
Mormon File  
Moving - Household  
Nader, (Ralph)

**Container 50**

## Names and Addresses - Political

National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity  
National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) Chain Drug Store Members  
National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators  
National Association of Federal Credit Unions  
National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates  
National Automotive Dealers Associations  
National Bureau of Standards [Empty]  
National Center for Resource Recovery  
National Coalition for Consumer Representation  
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy  
National Consumers League [1]  
National Consumers League [2]  
National Consumers League [3]  
National Consumers League - Hospital Cost Containment  
National Credit Union Administration

## **Container 51**

National Farmers Union  
National Institute of Education  
National Institutes of Health  
National Journal Article  
National Retired Teachers Association and American Association of Retired Persons  
National Science Foundation  
National Transportation Safety Board  
National Women's Political Caucus  
Netherlands  
New Directions  
The New Republic  
Newspaper Clippings on Food Price Ceiling  
Newspapers - Washington Post  
Newspapers - Washington Starr  
95<sup>th</sup> Congress Summary  
Nitrites  
No Fault [Insurance]

## **Container 52**

Nominations  
Norway  
Nuclear Power  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
Offers of Assistance  
Office of Consumer Affairs Fact Sheet  
OCR [Office of Consumer Representation] Bill  
OCR History [1]

OCR History [2]  
“Of Consuming Interest”  
Offers of Assistance  
Office of Consumer Affairs Fact Sheet  
Office of the Federal Register  
Office of Management and Budget  
Office [Newspaper] Clips

### **Container 53**

Office of Technology Assessment  
Oil, Gas and Coal [1]  
Oil, Gas and Coal [2]  
Olympic Games  
Operation Overcharge  
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development [1]  
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development [2]  
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development [Committee on Consumer Policy] [1]  
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development [Committee on Consumer Policy] [2]

### **Container 54**

Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development [Committee on Consumer Policy] [3]  
Panama Canal  
Parking Permits  
People Power  
Peterson, Esther  
Peterson, Esther - Personal, 3/78-6/78  
Peterson, Esther - Personal, 7/78- 9/78  
Peterson, Esther - Personal, 10/78-12/78  
Pharmaceuticals  
Political  
Political Leave  
Polls - General and Miscellaneous  
Polls - Harris  
Presidential Messages  
[President’s] Commission on the Agenda for the Eighties  
President’s Memo to Heads of Departments and Agencies, 4/27/78

### **Container 55**

[Press - Articles] 7/78 and Before  
[Press - Articles] 8/78  
[Press - Articles] 9/78  
[Press - Articles] 10/78  
[Press - Articles] 11/78  
[Press - Articles] 12/78  
[Press - Articles] 1/79

Press - Articles about Esther Peterson  
Press - Articles by Esther Peterson [1]  
Press - Articles by Esther Peterson [2]

### **Container 56**

Press Clips - ON ALERT  
Press - Contacts, General  
Press - Esther Peterson's Press Releases  
Press - General  
Press - Lists  
Press - Magazines  
Press - Newspapers  
Press - President Carter's Consumer Message  
Press - President Carter's Remarks  
Press - Presidential Issues  
Press - Radio  
Press - Releases  
Press - Releases and Leaflets  
Press - Speech Material

### **Container 57**

Press - Television  
Press - Television Consumer Survival Kit  
Press - Trade Magazines and Newspapers  
Press - USOCA Press Releases  
Press - White House Briefing  
Press - White House News Other Than Esther Peterson  
Press - White House News Summary  
Press - White House Press Releases  
Press - White House [Subject Background] Report  
Price Monitoring  
Price Monitoring Fact Sheet  
Privacy  
Public Citizen - Ralph Nader  
Public Citizen - Speech by President Carter  
Public Liaison  
Public Opinion  
Public Participation Departments and Agencies [1]

### **Container 58**

Public Participation Departments and Agencies [2]  
Public Participation - Ed Cohen's Files [1]  
Public Participation - Ed Cohen's Files [2]  
Public Participation - General  
Public Participation - President's Memo Order L2044, 5/16/79

Publications - Consumer News Weekly  
Publications - A Consumer's Shopping List of Inflation-Fighting Ideas  
Publications - Of Consuming Interest [1]  
Publications - Of Consuming Interest [2]  
Publications - General and Miscellaneous [1]

### **Container 59**

Publications - General and Miscellaneous [2]  
Publications - General and Miscellaneous [3]  
Publications - Indexes of Some  
Publications - Inflation Fighting Guide  
Publications - Self-Help Inflation Guide  
Radio Deregulation Clips  
Railroads  
Reagan, [Ronald]  
Rebuilt Automobile Parts for Cars  
Recommendations  
Recycling Resources  
Regulations  
Regulatory Cost  
Regulatory Reform  
Remarks of the President  
Reorganization of Regulatory Agencies  
Resource Handbook  
Restaurants

### **Container 60**

Resumes [1]  
Resumes [2]  
Resumes [3]  
Resumes - A and B  
Resumes - C and D  
Resumes - E and F  
Resumes - G and H [1]

### **Container 61**

Resumes - G and H [2]  
Resumes - I and J  
Resumes - K and L [1]  
Resumes - K and L [2]  
Resumes - M and N  
Resumes - O and P  
Resumes - Q and R

### **Container 62**

Resumes - S and T [1]  
Resumes - S and T [2]  
Resumes - S and T [3]  
Resumes - U and V  
Resumes - W and X  
Resumes - Y and Z  
Resumes - Public Relations - Sara Bassett  
Resumes - Public Relations Types

### **Container 63**

Roosevelt, Eleanor [Val-Kil Retreat/Conference Center]  
Rural American Women  
Rural Issues [Empty]  
Saccharin Study  
Sarah Weddington's Office [Resume]  
Schlesinger file  
Schlesinger Library  
Securities Exchange Commission  
Security TITLE Company  
Self-Help Inflation Fighting Projects  
Senior Staff Meetings (White House)  
Shine [Meeting]  
Shubow, Midge - Chronological File, 1979 [1]  
Shubow, Midge - Chronological File, 1979 [2]  
Small Business Administration  
Small Business White House Conference  
Social Security  
Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP)  
Solar [Energy]  
Solar and Wind Power [1]

### **Container 64**

Solar and Wind Power [2]  
Speaking Engagement Schedule  
The Special Interests and the FTC Editorial Comments  
Standards  
Standards -Department of Commerce - Howard Forman  
State of the Union  
State of the Union Message, 1979  
Steel Imports  
Stop and Shop Companies  
Sugar  
Sun Day  
Supermarkets

**Container 65**

Sweden  
Switzerland  
Tax Reform  
Technical Assistance Research Program (TARP) Technical Assistance Research Program  
TARP [Report]  
Telephone Calls, 1977 [1]  
Telephone Calls, 1977 [2]  
Telephone Calls, 1977 [3]  
Telephone Calls, 1977 [4]  
Television - Good Morning America  
Television - Panorama  
Thank You Notes

**Container 66**

Think Tank [Session]  
Three Mile Island Accident  
Toxic Shock Syndrome  
Toxic Substances  
Toys  
Transportation  
Transportation Committee - Economic Revitalization  
Travel Vouchers [A] [1]  
Travel Vouchers [A] [2]  
Travel Vouchers [A] [3]  
Travel Vouchers [B] [1]  
Travel Vouchers [B] [2]

**Container 67**

Unit Pricing  
United States Conference of Mayors  
United States Metric Board  
United States Office of Consumer Affairs (USOCA)  
USOCA Fact Sheet, 12/79  
United States Postal Service  
UPC (Universal Product Code)  
Urban Policy  
Utilities  
Utilities - CWIP  
Utility Oil Backout [Legislation]  
Value Added Tax  
Vice President

**Container 68**

Voluntary Price Ceiling

Votes - Legislation  
Voting Record  
Warranties  
Weekly Calendar 1977  
Wheat, 1979  
Wheat, 1980  
White House Conference on Aging  
White House Energy Conservation Efforts  
White House Fellowship file  
White House Information Center  
White House Memos  
White House Office of Administration [1]

### **Container 69**

White House Office of Administration [2]  
White House Press Office Background Report  
White House Weekly Mail Report  
Women [1]  
Women [2]  
Women [3]  
Women [4]  
Working on Farm  
World Hunger

[Return to series list](#)

### **Esther Peterson's Briefing Book Files**

#### **Container 70**

Ad Hoc Working Group on a Hazardous Substance Export Policy Briefing Book  
Agency for Consumer Advocacy Briefing Book  
[Agency Consumer Affairs Offices] - Michael Kerr (Public Participation)  
Agency Consumer Programs Evaluation Briefing Book  
Briefing Book - Inflation  
Briefing Papers for Food Processors Meeting

#### **Container 71**

Budget Briefing, 1981 [OCA] [1]  
Budget Briefing, 1981 [OCA] [2]  
Business and Consumer Briefing on Public Works, 8/17/78  
Congressional Referral Handbook Briefing Book  
Consumer/Citizen Involvement [1]  
Consumer/Citizen Involvement [2]  
Consumer Complaint Guidelines [1]

### **Container 72**

Consumer Complaint Guidelines [2]  
Consumer Coordinating Council Briefing Book  
Consumer Involvement in Federal Agencies  
Consumer Privacy  
[Consumer Protection Act] H.R. 7915 Briefing Book  
[Consumer Protection Act of 1977] H.R. 6118 Hearing Briefing Book  
[Consumer Protection Act of 1977] S. 1262 Hearing Briefing Book

### **Container 73**

Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities Briefing Book  
COOP Bank Briefing Book  
Executive Order 12160 - Federal Consumer Program Briefing Book  
Federal Consumer Programs Briefing Book  
Federal Trade Commission Authorization Legislation - Background Information Briefing Book  
Food Processors - Briefing Book  
Food Processors Meeting - Memos [1]

### **Container 74**

Food Processors Meeting - Memos [2]  
Food Processors Meeting - Press  
Food Processors Meeting - Telegrams  
Hazardous Products Briefing Book  
Hazardous Substances  
Inflation Notebook  
Inflation Policies Briefing Book  
Meeting with Secretary Harris, 3/20/80 - Briefing Book  
Office of Consumer Affairs Briefing Book

### **Container 75**

OECD Consumer Policy Committee - U.S. Document Book for U.S. Delegates  
OECD Consumer Policy Committee - U.S. Position Briefing Book  
Presidential Campaign 1980  
Report of the President's Advocacy Committee for Women 1980 Briefing Book  
Survey Task Force on Consumer Citizen Involvement Briefing Book  
Trucking Deregulation

[Return to series list](#)

### **Esther Peterson's Speeches/Testimony Files**

#### **Container 76**

Book [of Speeches] 1, Prior to 4/77  
Book [of Speeches] 2, 4/77-5/77  
Book [of Speeches] 3, 5/77-8/77

Book [of Speeches] 4, 9/77 [1]  
Book [of Speeches] 4, 9/77 [2]  
Book [of Speeches] 5, 2/78-7/78 [1]

### **Container 77**

Book [of Speeches] 5, 2/78-7/78 [2]  
Book [of Speeches] 6, 8/9/78-2/8/79 [1]  
Book [of Speeches] 6, 8/9/78-2/8/79 [2]  
Book [of Speeches] 7, 2/23/79-7/25/79 [1]  
Book [of Speeches] 7, 2/23/79-7/25/79 [2]

### **Container 78**

Book [of Speeches] 8, 8/3/79-4/18/80 [1]  
Book [of Speeches] 8, 8/3/79-4/18/80 [2]  
Miscellaneous Meetings Completed  
Speaking Engagement Schedule  
Speeches Declined - Alabama  
Speeches Declined - Arizona  
Speeches Declined - California  
Speeches Declined - Colorado  
Speeches Declined - Connecticut  
Speeches Declined - District of Columbia  
Speeches Declined - Florida  
Speeches Declined - Georgia  
Speeches Declined - Idaho  
Speeches Declined - Illinois  
Speeches Declined - Indiana  
Speeches Declined - Louisiana  
Speeches Declined - Maryland  
Speeches Declined - Massachusetts

### **Container 79**

Speeches Declined - Michigan  
Speeches Declined - Minnesota  
Speeches Declined - Nevada  
Speeches Declined - New Jersey  
Speeches Declined - New Mexico  
Speeches Declined - New York  
Speeches Declined - North Carolina  
Speeches Declined - North Dakota [Empty]  
Speeches Declined - Ohio  
Speeches Declined - Pennsylvania  
Speeches Declined - Rhode Island  
Speeches Declined - South Carolina [Empty]  
Speeches Declined - Tennessee

Speeches Declined - Texas  
Speeches Declined - Utah  
Speeches Declined - Virginia  
Speeches Declined - Washington  
Speeches Declined - West Virginia [Empty]  
Speeches Declined - Wisconsin  
Speeches by Esther Peterson, 1978  
Speeches by Esther Peterson, 1979  
Speeches by Esther Peterson, 1980  
Speeches, 1977

### **Container 80**

Speeches 1978 [1]  
Speeches 1978 [2]  
Speeches 1979  
Testimony - Export of Hazardous Products  
Testimony - Hazardous Substances - Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade Committee  
London, England, 3/3/77  
Washington, D.C. - White House Press Conference, 4/6/77  
Consumer Education and Information, 4/15/77  
Washington, D.C. - Commerce Department (Meeting on Agency for Consumer Advocacy) 4/15/77  
Hood College, 4/19/77  
Testimony Committee on Government Affairs, 4/19/77  
Testimony, Eleanor Roosevelt Site, 4/19/77  
Testimony Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security, 4/20/77  
Washington, D.C. - Food Marketing Institute Meeting, 4/20/77  
Meeting with Congressional Affairs People, 4/21/77  
Denver, Colorado - American Council on Consumer Interests, 4/22/77  
Palm Beach, Florida, 4/25/77  
Palm Beach, Florida - Food Update '77 - Food and Drug Law Institute, 4/25/77  
Chicago, Illinois - American Butter Institute / National Cheese Institute, 4/26/77  
Boca Raton, Florida - Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, 4/27/77  
Washington, D.C. - White House Correspondents, 4/30/77  
Dallas, Texas - Food Marketing Institute Meeting, 5/1/77

### **Container 81**

Washington, D.C. - American Retail Federal Annual Meeting, 5/4/77  
Washington, D.C. - Public Policy Forum, Inc. at George Washington University, 5/4/77  
Washington, D.C. - American Meat Institute, 5/9/77  
Washington, D.C. - Steelworkers of America, 5/9/77  
Boston, Massachusetts - Good Day (Cancelled) 5/10-11/77  
Washington, D.C. - Women's National Democratic Club, 5/12/77  
Washington, D.C. - Harris Poll Survey Press Meeting, 5/16/77

Washington, D.C. - Washington Interreligious Staff Council, 5/18/77  
Washington, D.C. - White House Meeting of Democrats, 5/19/77  
Washington, D.C., EOB - Editor's Briefing, 5/20/77  
Portland, Maine - Maine Media Women, 5/21/77  
New Orleans, Louisiana - National Center for Resource Recovery (Board Meeting) (Cancelled) 5/24/77  
New York, New York - Lou Harris Seminar, 5/24/77  
Washington, D.C. - Public Relations Society of America, 5/24/77  
Washington, D.C. - Today Show, 5/24/77  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - AFL-CIO, 5/26/77  
White House Briefing, 6/1/77  
F Street Club Speech, 6/2/77  
Washington, D.C. - Women's Equity Action League, 6/2/77  
Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union at Sheraton Americana Hotel, 6/10/77  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute Students, 6/21/77  
F Street Club Speech, 6/22/77  
Editor's Briefing, 6/24/77  
Vermont Press Conference, 6/27/77  
Boston, Massachusetts - American Home Economists Association, 6/28/77  
St. Louis, Kansas City and Denver, 7/6-10/77  
Roosevelt Room, White House - National Cannery Association, 7/12/77  
New York, New York - Pep Rally at World Trade Center, 7/13/77  
District of Columbia Society for Nutrition Education, 7/14/77  
Dallas, Texas - National Conference on Weights and Measures, 7/20/77  
Jonesboro Arkansas - Arkansas State University, 7/22/77

## **Container 82**

Salt Lake City Utah - Delta Kappa Gamma Society at International Hotel, 7/23/77  
Los Angeles, 7/24-25/77  
Seattle, Washington - Credit Union, 7/26/77  
D.C. Community Nutrition Institute, 7/28/77  
Cambridge, Massachusetts - Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 7/28/77  
Federal Energy Administration Energy Meeting, 7/29/77  
Testimony, Nutrition Oversight Committee, 8/3/77  
Testimony, Portland Oregon, Commission on Federal Paperwork, 8/8-9/77  
Indianapolis, Indiana - Congressman Fithian/Esther Peterson Forums, 8/10-11/77  
Baltimore, Maryland State and D.C., AFL-CIO, 8/31/77  
Williamston, Massachusetts - Williams College, 9/9-10/77  
Airbag Hearings, 9/12/77  
Attorneys General Discussion, 9/13/77  
Washington D.C. - Newsweek Forum on Emerging Issues, 9/14/77  
Auto Passive Restraint Information and Action Meeting, 9/15/77  
Newsweek and Public Affairs Council, 9/16/77  
Washington D.C., EOB - Out of Town Editors, 9/16/77  
Washington D.C. - Coalition of Labor Union Women, 9/17/77

Bal Harbour, Florida - Allied Industrial Workers of America, 9/19/77  
Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Bill Signing at White House, 9/20/77  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Press Club Awards, 9/20/77  
White House Breakfast with Congressmen on Agency for Consumer Protection, Strategy,  
9/20/77  
Testimony, Senate Airbag Hearing, 9/21/77  
Testimony, Electronic Transfer of Funds, 9/22/77  
Agency for Consumer Protection Strategy Meeting (Empty) 9/23/77  
Boston, Massachusetts - Stop and Shop, 9/24/77  
Testimony, Electronic Fund Transfer Consumer Protection Act, 10/3/77  
Testimony, Gas Deregulation, 10/3/77  
New York, New York - Stan Cohen's Luncheon/Columbia University, 10/5/77  
Norfolk Speech, 10/5/77  
Washington D.C. - White House Breakfast with Republican Congressmen on Agency for  
Consumer Protection Legislation, 10/6/77

### **Container 83**

Washington, D.C. - Paper Converters Association, 10/11/77  
Legislative Assistants Meeting, 10/13/77  
National commission on Confidentiality of Health Records (Cancelled) 10/13/77  
Speaker's Meeting with Freshmen and Sophomores, 10/13/77  
Washington D.C. - Steelworkers Meeting, 10/13/77  
Mt. Vernon, New York - Consumer's Union Annual Meeting, 10/15/77  
Washington, D.C. - D.C.'s Women's National Democratic Club, 10/17/77  
Washington, D.C. - Interreligious Social Council, 10/17/77  
Washington, D.C. - British Luncheon, Director General of Fair Trading [Empty] 10/19/77  
New York, New York - National Council of Women of the U.S.A. (Cancelled) 10/20/77  
Hammond, Indiana - Hammond Jackson Women's Club, 10/23/77  
Cabinet Room, White House - Columnists Briefing, 10/28/77  
Detroit, Michigan - Adult Education Association of the United States, 10/29/77  
Jacqueline Kennedy Garden Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, 11/2/77  
Cincinnati, Ohio - 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting National Council of Social Security Management  
Association (Cancelled) 11/3/77  
Washington, D.C. - National Warranty Upstate Conference (Cancelled) 11/3/77  
Washington, D.C. - Women in Business Seminar (Cancelled) 11/3/77  
Washington, D.C. - Office of Consumer Education Health, Education, and Welfare, 11/10/77  
Atlanta American Marketing Association (Cancelled) 11/14/77  
New York City Society of consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP) 11/14/77  
Atlanta, Georgia - Metric Council Board Meeting (Cancelled) 11/16/77  
Fairfax, Virginia - National Council of Jewish Women, 11/16/77  
Houston, Texas - International Women's Year, 11/18-19/77  
The Hague, Europe, 11/20-24/77  
National Consumer League Reception, Herb Block Presentation to Esther Peterson, 12/1/77  
Washington, D.C. - National Consumers League Reception, 12/1/77  
Washington, D.C. - Chemical Specialists Manufacturing Association, 12/5/77

Washington, D.C. - Food and Drug Las Institute, 12/13/77  
Washington, D.C. - International Women's Year, White House w/President, 12/14/77

#### **Container 84**

Washington, D.C. - American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, 12/15/77  
Trenton, New Jersey - Women's Council, 12/19/77  
Meeting at Esther Peterson's House, "Think Tank" Session on Consumer Priorities, 12/20/77  
Edie Fraser International Club, 1/11/78  
Consumer Leaders Meeting with Esther Peterson and President, 1/18/78  
Consumer Federation of America, 1/20/78  
Washington D.C. - Washingtonian Award, 1/20/78  
White House Breakfast with Agency Consumer Heads, 1/24/78  
Out of Town Editors Meeting, 1/27/78  
European Community, 1/30/78  
Auto cap Meeting, 1/31/78  
Community Nutrition Institute, 2/78  
Briefing on Office of Consumer Representation, 2/1/78  
Fidelity AM Bank Shares, 2/1/78  
New York, New York - Cooperatives Extension's Food Policy Conference, 2/2/78  
Colorado Springs, Colorado - Food Industry Convention (Cancelled) 2/6/78  
Washington D.C. - Good Morning America Show (Cancelled) 2/7/78  
Rosslyn, Virginia - Planning Executives Institute Seminar (Tina Hobson) (Cancelled) 2/8/78  
Dr. Martin Floch Meeting, Nutrition Today, 2/13/78  
Washington D. C. - Journalism Center, 2/15/78  
Bob Landon, Vice President Glenby International Marketing, 2/16/78  
Consumerists Briefing on Economic Package, 2/16/78

#### **Container 85**

Rochester, New York - Rotary Club, 2/21/78  
Breakfast at White House Mess with Legislative Types, 2/23/78  
Washington D.C. - Rural American Women, 2/24/78  
Carolyn Karp, 3/1/78  
Laurel, Maryland - Consumerism in the Administration, 3/2/78  
Huegren Visit, International Council of Swedish Industry (Cancelled) 3/2-3/78  
Rome, 3/4-11/78  
National Issue Seminar B-338 (Cancelled) 3/10/78  
Consumer Energy Meeting, 3/14/78  
Scottsdale, Arizona - FMI Advertising Executives Conference, 3/20/78  
Philadelphia, PA - Temple University, 3/23/78  
Yale Political Union (Cancelled) 3/27/78  
Akron, Ohio - 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women's Day (Cancelled) 3/28/78  
Washington, D.C. - Consumer Information Energy Briefing, 3/30/78  
United States Metric Board, Swearing-In Ceremony, Vice President's Office, 3/31/78  
Metric Council Atlanta Hyatt Regency (Did Not Attend) 4/4/78  
Joan Schuknecht, Yankelovich, Shelley and White, 4/7/78

Cedar Rapids, Iowa - workshop on Federal Services for Iowa Women (Cancelled) 4/8/78  
Esther Peterson Scholarship, Howard University, 4/12/78  
State Department Meeting - Rome De Briefing, 4/12/78  
Testimony, Nutrition [H.R. 11761] 4/12/78  
Hartman, New York - American Assembly, Columbia University, 4/14/78

### **Container 86**

Interagency Council on Citizen Participation Meeting, 4/19/78  
Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Setting, 4/19/78  
Washington Institute for Women in Politics, 4/25/78  
Esther Peterson Press Conference, President's Memo to Department and Agency Heads, 4/27/78  
Milwaukee Sentinel, 5/1/78  
Sun Day Press Conference, 5/2/78  
J.B. Colorado ACTION, 5/4/78  
National Center for Resource Recovery Board of Director's Meeting, 5/4/78  
Tokyo Bar Association, 5/6/78  
Madison, Wisconsin - Helen Nelson, 5/10/78  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 5/13/78  
Senior Citizen Intern Program, 5/16/78  
Syracuse, New York, Midge Shubow, 5/17-22/78  
W.R.J. Reynolds Representatives, E. Edie Fraser, 5/18/78  
Salt Lake City, Utah - Westminster College, 5/26/78  
American Council of Life Insurance, 6/5-6/78  
Dallas, Texas - Institute of Food Technology (Cancelled) 6/6/78  
Washington, D.C. - Mt. Vernon College, 6/6/78  
Washington, D.C. - Consumer Affairs Workshop, Congressman Maguire, 6/12/78  
Capitol Hilton - Women in Rural Electrification, 6/14/78  
Export - Hazardous Products Statement, 7/11/78  
Export Hearing, 7/11/78  
National Conference on Weights and Measures, 7/12/78  
Esther Peterson Meetings, 7/13/78  
Summer Internship Program for Congressman Newton Steers, 7/14/78  
Subcommittee on Health - Labeling Hearing, 7/18/78  
Interagency Council on Citizen Participation Membership Meeting Room 2230 Department of Transportation, 7/20/78  
Dispute Resolution Act, 7/21/78  
Future Business Leaders of America, 8/1/78  
Subcommittee on Nutrition Senate Agriculture Committee, 8/9/78  
Good Morning America, 8/10/78  
Brigham Young University Washington Seminar, 8/16/78  
Briefing Notes for Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, 8/17/78  
Economic Regulatory Administration U.S. Department of Energy, 8/22/78  
Meridian, Mississippi Annual Labor Management Services, 8/24/78  
Long Beach, California - Retirement Fair for Congressman Hannaford, 8/26/78  
WTTC Channel 5, Food Labeling, 8/28/78

National Town Hall Meeting (Cancelled) 8/31/78

**Container 87**

New York, New York - Second National Conference on Standards in Solar Energy, 9/14/78

Corning, New York - Action Line Conference, 9/18/78

Washington, D.C. - United States League of Savings Association Lawyers Club, 9/19/78

Hartford, Connecticut - State of Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, 9/21/78

Raleigh, North Carolina - North Carolina Consumer Council, 9/23/78

Meridian, Mississippi - Annual Labor Management Services, 9/25/78

Mississippi State University Commission on the Status of Women, 9/26/78

Houston, Texas - American Automobile Association, 9/27/78

Subcommittee on Dairy and Poultry Committee on Agriculture, 9/28/78

Washington, D.C. - National Conference on Citizen Participation, 9/30/78

Dallas, Texas - Southern Methodist University, 10/4/78

Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Washington Hilton Hotel Keynote Speaker, 10/5/78

Albany, New York - University of the State of New York, 10/17/78

Washington, D.C. - Cooperative League of the USA Co-Op Forum, 10/24/78

**Container 88**

California Consumer Affairs Association, 10/25/78 [Empty]

Food Labeling Hearing, 10/25/78

St. Paul, Minnesota - Office of Consumer Service Conference, 10/26/78

Amsterdam, Netherlands - World Conference on Vegetable Food Protein (Cancelled) 10/29-11/3/78

St. Louis, Missouri - Inflation Workshop, 11/1/78

Hartford, Connecticut - Inflation Workshop, 11/8/78

Meeting with Consumer Leaders, 11/9/78

Columbia University Club Lunch Speaker International Club, 11/13/78

National Council on the Aging, Inc., 11/14/78

Washington, D.C. - National Citizen Participation Council, 11/14/78

Baltimore, Maryland - John Hopkins University, 11/15/78

Washington, D.C. - American Civil Liberties Union, - Roger Baldwin, 11/15/78

Agricultural Outlook Conference for 1979, 11/16/78

Subcommittee on Consumer Committee on Commerce Science and Transportation, 11/21/78

Salt Lake City, Utah - National Family Week with President Carter, 11/27/78

Bangor, Maine - Northeast Combat Dinner Meeting (Cancelled) 12/2/78

Press Conference on Troubled Asset Relief Program Report, 12/7/78

Memphis, Tennessee - Democratic Party's Mid-Term Conference, 12/8-10/78

Washington, D.C. - Telecommunications Conference, 12/11-28/78

Baltimore, Maryland - People Are Talking, 12/18/78

COIN Meeting with President in Cabinet Room, 12/19/78

Public Interest Law - 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade, 1/3/79

Utah-Idaho Farmer's Union Annual Convention, 1/11/79

Atlanta, Georgia - Advertising Law Conference of the University of Alabama, 1/26/79

Statement before the House Appropriations Hearing, 2/6/79

**Container 89**

Consumer Assembly Meeting, White House Reception, 2/7-9/79  
Archer-Daniels-Midland Sweeteners Meeting (Martin Andreas) 2/14/79  
Close-Up Students, New Orleans and Arizona Freer Gallery, 2/15/79  
Arlington, Virginia- Northern Virginia Press Club, 2/23/79  
Washington, D.C. - Radcliffe Centennial Symposium, 3/3/79  
Washington, D.C. - Inter-Agency Consumer Complaint Meeting, 3/8/79  
Birth Centennial of Dr. E.V. McCullum, National Academy of Science, 3/9/79  
White House Fellows President's - Commission on White House Fellowships, 3/15/79  
National Academy of Science Report of Food Additives, 3/23/79  
Boston, Massachusetts - Americans for Energy Independence and State Labor Council, AFL-CIO Boston, 3/26/79  
Energy Options Briefing, 3/28/79  
Testimony Submitted - Amtrak Route, 3/28/79  
St. Louis, Missouri - National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, 3/29/79  
National Consumer League Dinner, 4/3/79  
Washington, D.C. - American National Metric Council, 4/4/79  
White House Family Theater - Breneau College Alumnus, 4/6/79  
Washington, D.C. - AFL-CIO Conference on Prices at Sheraton Park Hotel, 4/9/79  
San Francisco, California - Western Conference on Inflation, 4/18/79  
McMinnville, Oregon - Linfield College, 4/19/79  
Consumer Meeting with Stu Eizenstat, 4/23/79  
Clara Berger's 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday - Women's National Democratic Club, 4/24/79  
Washington, D.C. - Consumer Education Fair, 4/25/79  
Mt. Kisco, New York - Silver Springs Center, "The Dollar Problem", 4/30/79-5/2/79  
Sweden, 5/1-7/79  
Department of Transportation's (DOT) Conference on Transportation and the Consumer, 5/8/79

**Container 90**

Jackson, Mississippi - National Caucus on the Black Aged, Inc., 5/14/79  
Washington, D.C. - Trucking Regulations and Consumer Prices Symposium, 5/17/79  
Troy, New York - Russell Sage College, 5/19/79  
Syracuse University - Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship, 5/21/79  
New Haven, Connecticut - WELI Radio 960's Call for Action Annual Meeting, 5/25/79  
Washington, D.C. - National Consumer Conference Keynote, 5/31/79  
Consumer and Environmental Report Meeting w/President in Cabinet Room, 6/1/79  
Troubled Asset Relief Program Interagency Task Force, 6/6/79  
Testimony on Dispute Resolution Act, H.R. 2863, 6/7/79  
Food Editor's Conference, 6/11/79  
Food Editor's Workshop, 6/11/79 [1]  
Food Editor's Workshop, 6/11/79 [2]  
Anti-Inflation Task Force, 6/18/79  
Testimony - Household Goods Moving Industry and the Consumer, 6/19/79  
Testimony on Moving Household Goods, 6/19/79  
Co-Op League of U.S. Briefing, 6/21/79

Public Hearings on the FTC Proposed Rulemaking, 6/25/79  
Executive Committee National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates, 6/28/79

### **Container 91**

FTC Interagency Council on Citizen Participation, 6/28/79  
Nationwide Conference - Federal Information Center General Services Administration (GSA) 6/28/79  
State Utility Meeting with Kahn, 6/28/79  
University of Massachusetts President's Advisory Council, 6/29/79  
House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee Auto Warranty and Repair (Cohen) 7/10/79  
Subcommittee on Financial Institutions - Senate Committee on Banking (Leonard) 7/18/79  
[Empty]  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Automotive News World Congress, 7/25/79  
Energy Impact on and Assistance for Poor People's Program, 8/7/79  
Jacob Potofsky's Funeral Service, 8/9/79  
Operative Plasterer's and Cement Mason's International Association, 8/15/79  
Energy Speech for Steel Workers, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 8/26/79  
Greater Youngstown AFL-CIO Council Memorial Scholarship Awards, 9/9/79  
National Frozen Food Association, 9/11/79  
Federal Faculty Fellows American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, 9/12/79  
White House Fellow Creative Initiative, 9/12/79  
Department of Agriculture Press Conference - Meat and Poultry Inspection Procedures, 9/13/79  
Dedication - Services Resource Center, Lakewood, Colorado, 9/14/79  
FTC Public Support Sent by Peterson, 9/14/79 [Empty]  
Industrial Union Department - AFL-CIO, 9/18/79  
Luncheon Speaker - WNDC and Receive Outstanding Democratic Woman Award, 9/27/79  
Nutrition Education Conference - Science and Technology, 9/28/79  
Announcement of the Administrations Privacy Initiatives, 10/2/79  
National Council of Jewish Women Coalition Committee, 10/3/79  
Louisiana Consumer League, 10/10/79 [Empty]  
Testimony- Household Goods Transportation Act of 1979, 10/11/79

### **Container 92**

Utah Education Association, 10/11/79  
Wharton Graduate Students (Women's Association and Public Management Clubs) 10/15/79  
Consumer Complaint Handling TARP Report, 10/16/79  
Colston Warne's Dinner, 10/19/79  
Consumer Awareness Seminar, 10/22-23/79  
"Over Easy" - Grace B. Hanks, 10/24-27/79  
Roast of Commissioner Mike Pertschuk, 10/30/79  
Taking Care - Health Information Program Press Conference, 10/30/79  
FTC's Funeral Rule, 10/31/79  
National Auto Dealers Association Press Conference, 10/31/79  
Belgian Consumer Board, 11/1/79  
Institute of Politics - Howard University, 11/5/79

Edison Electric Institute Address, 11/12/79  
Council of Jewish Federation, Inc. 11/14-18/79  
Virginia Statewide Conference - Eating System, 11/27/79  
91<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention and Regulatory Symposium, 12/4/79  
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Paris, 12/4/79  
Beirut - USICA, Paris - OECD, 12/14/79

### **Container 93**

Oregon's Women's Political Conference, 1/12/80  
University of Oregon (no action taken) 1/14/80  
National Citizens Participation Council, 1/18/80  
FIC Florida Project, 1/23/80  
Transportation Research Board, 1/24/80  
Moore County Democratic Women, 1/26/80  
George Washington University Informal Discussion "Drugs and the Consumer", 2/2/80  
Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) - USDA Dietary Guidelines for America, 2/4/80  
Symposium on Citizen Participation Model and Methods of Evaluating, 2/4/80  
Consumer Executive Order Workshop, 2/6/80  
President Carter's Speech at CFA's Annual Convention, 2/7-8/80  
New England Consumer Leaders Conference - FTC, 2/8/80  
Conference Breakfast, 2/8/80 1980  
Testimony Household Goods Transportation Act, 2/20/80  
Senator Gemma Hussey, 2/22/80  
Women in the Administration, 3/1/80  
Consumer Inflation Meeting, 3/3/80  
Energy Education Forum for Women, 3/8/80

### **Container 94**

Older Women's League Education Fund, 3/10/80  
YWCA and YMCA Jewish Senior Citizen Group, 3/18/80  
New York Senior Briefing, 3/20/80  
White House Conference on the Aging - Advisory Committee, 3/24-26/80  
Private Label Manufacturers Association, 3/27/80  
Texas Credit Union League Annual Membership Meeting, 4/10/80  
Washington Friends of Histadrut, 4/15/80  
Price Advisory Committee - COWPS, 4/16/80  
Washington Journalist Center Conference - "How Consumers Can Cope", 4/16/80  
Big Business Day, 4/17/80  
U.S. Pharmacopeia Convention, 4/18/80  
Earth Day National Coalition, 4/22-23/80  
Cash Discount Act and the Fair Credit Practices Act, 4/23/80  
John Glenn Workshop Series (Cancelled) 4/25/80  
National Coalition for Disease Prevention and Environmental Health, 4/28/80  
New Jersey Consumer Congress, 4/30/80  
American Public Power Association, 5/7/80

Schlesinger Library Luncheon (Cancelled) 5/8/80  
Close-Up Students from Vermont, 5/12/80  
Lars Broch's Reception, 5/12/80  
Consumer Information Seminar Chapter of Links, Inc., 5/13/80  
Maryland Citizens Consumer Council, 5/15/80  
National Conference on Regulatory Attorneys, 5/19/80  
Department of Energy's (DOE) Appliance Labeling Press Conference, 5/21/80  
Congressional EXPO - Gail Chapman, 5/22/80  
Meeting on "People Power", 5/22/80  
Tennessee Community Services Administration 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Consumer Conference, 5/23/80  
Sullivan County, Tennessee, Democratic Women's Luncheon, 5/24/80  
CPSC Awards Ceremony, 5/27/80  
Florida International University, Dr. Marvin Dunn, 5/28/80  
GSA and John Culver, 5/28-29/80

### **Container 95**

Consumer Labor Coalition of the FTC Bill - Meeting with the President, 5/30/80  
Press Conference Regulatory Council Announcement Calendar of Federal Regulations, 5/30/80  
Food Processors Meeting, 6/3/80  
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Paris, 6/3-7/80  
Presidential Drop-By Release of the Final Consumer Program Executive Order 12160, 6/9/80  
American Home Economics Association Annual Meeting, 6/26/80  
Reception East Room White House, 7/9/80  
USOCA Income Consumer Conference, 7/9-11/80  
GSA Anchorage, Alaska, 7/12-16/80  
Milwaukee National Environmental Health Association, 7/30/80  
Governors Convention, 8/3/80  
NCL's Conference - Making Auto Repair Credible, 8/6/80  
Consumers for Carter Administration - White House, 8/12/80

### **Container 96**

Women's Bureau 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, 9/2/80  
Testimony - Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade, 9/9/80  
Auto Industry Committee Meeting, 9/10/80  
Interdepartmental Government Relations Group - DuPont, 9/15/80  
Congressman Maguire- Consumer Constituency for Bergen County, 9/17/80  
White House Conference on Aging, 9/17-18/80  
USOCA Consumer Issues Training Session, 9/19/80  
Conference on Neighborhood Economic Development in the Eighties, 9/20/80  
National Consumer League's Awards, 9/23/80  
Consumer Education Advisory Board Conference at Mercy College, 9/24/80  
Women's Transportation Seminar, 9/25/80  
Worldwide Airline Consumer Relations Association 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, 9/26/80  
Democratic Women's Forum, 9/27/80  
American Public Power Association's Annual Conference, 9/30/80

Akron and Summit County Federation of Women's Clubs [Declined] 10/1/80  
Washington Association of Community Action Agency Conference, 10/2/80  
National Consumer Education Week, Washington D.C., 10/5/80  
Consumer Expo - Smithsonian Mall, 10/10/80  
Nation Consumer Education Week - Bristol, Pennsylvania, 10/10/80  
North Carolina Nurse's Association [Declined] 10/14/80  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Springfield Newspaper Conference, 10/15/80

### **Container 97**

Schlesinger Library Luncheon Series, 10/16/80  
Consumer Education Day, 10/17/80  
Annual Monmouth County Democratic Women's Club Luncheon, 10/18/80  
Indiana Conference on Pricing Information and Grocery, 10/20/80  
82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the League of California Cities [Declined] 10/21/80  
Federal Information Center National Conference, 10/22-23/80  
Geneva College, 10/24/80  
Contemporary Consumer Issues Seminar - Atlantic Richfield, 10/25/80  
Andy Maquire, 10/27/80  
National Wholesale Druggist's Annual Meeting, 10/29/80  
Florida Campaign, 10/29-11/5/80  
Conference on the Presidency of John F. Kennedy - University of California- Los Angeles (UCLA), 11/3/80  
Good Morning America 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 11/6-7/80  
USDA Symposium on Advertising and the Food System, 11/7/80  
National Council of Negro Women, 11/11-17/80  
Cosmo Club Monday Night Lecture Series, 11/24/80  
Consumer Law Class, University of Maryland, 12/3/80  
Consumer Information Center, 12/5/80  
University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA)-Corporate Governance Conference [Cancelled] 1/8-9/81

[Return to series list](#)

### **Esther Peterson's Correspondence Files**

#### **Container 98**

Copies of Staff Correspondence  
Correspondence Disposition Manual  
Correspondence Log  
Coupon Letters Favorable to Esther Peterson [1]  
Coupon Letters Favorable to Esther Peterson [2]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [1]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [2]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [3]

**Container 99**

Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [4]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [5]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [6]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [7]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [8]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [9]

**Container 100**

Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [10]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [11]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [12]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [13]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [14]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [15]

**Container 101**

Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [16]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [17]  
Coupon Letters Unfavorable to Esther Peterson [18]

**Container 102**

Coupon Postcards Favorable to Esther Peterson  
Coupon Postcards Unfavorable to Esther Peterson

**Container 103**

Miscellaneous Correspondence [Public Mail] [1]  
Miscellaneous Correspondence [Public Mail] [2]  
Miscellaneous Correspondence [Public Mail] [3]  
Miscellaneous Correspondence [Public Mail] [4]  
Miscellaneous Correspondence [Public Mail] [5]  
Miscellaneous Letters [1]

**Container 104**

Miscellaneous Letters [2]  
Miscellaneous Letters [3]  
Miscellaneous Letters [4]  
Miscellaneous Letters [5]  
Miscellaneous Letters [6]

**Container 105**

Miscellaneous Letters [7]  
Miscellaneous Letters [8]  
Miscellaneous Letters [9]  
Miscellaneous Letters [10]

**Container 106**

Miscellaneous Letters [11]  
Miscellaneous Letters [12]  
Miscellaneous Letters [13]  
Miscellaneous Letters [14]  
Miscellaneous Letters [15]

**Container 107**

Miscellaneous Letters [16]  
Miscellaneous Letters [17]  
Miscellaneous Letters [18]  
Miscellaneous Letters [19]  
Miscellaneous Letters [20]

**Container 108**

Private Individuals - A  
Private Individuals - B [1]  
Private Individuals - B [2]  
Private Individuals - C [1]  
Private Individuals - C [2]  
Private Individuals - D  
Private Individuals - E

**Container 109**

Private Individuals - F [1]  
Private Individuals - F [2]  
Private Individuals - G [1]  
Private Individuals - G [2]  
Private Individuals - H [1]  
Private Individuals - H [2]

**Container 110**

Private Individuals - I  
Private Individuals - J  
Private Individuals - K  
Private Individuals - L  
Private Individuals - M [1]  
Private Individuals - M [2]

**Container 111**

Private Individuals - N  
Private Individuals - O  
Private Individuals - P-Q  
Private Individuals - R

Private Individuals - S [1]  
Private Individuals - S [2]

**Container 112**

Private Individuals - T  
Private Individuals - U-V  
Private Individuals - W  
Private Individuals - Y-Z  
Private Individuals - No Name/No Address  
April, 1977  
May, 1977 [1]  
May, 1977 [2]  
June, 1977 [1]

**Container 113**

June, 1977 [2]  
July, 1977  
August, 1977  
September, 1977  
October, 1977  
November, 1977  
December, 1977  
January, 1978

**Container 114**

February, 1978  
March, 1978  
April, 1978  
May, 1978  
June, 1978  
July, 1978  
August, 1978  
September, 1978  
October, 1978

**Container 115**

November, 1978  
December, 1978  
January, 1979  
February, 1979  
March, 1979  
April, 1979  
May, 1979  
June, 1979 [1]

**Container 116**

June, 1979 [2]  
July, 1979  
August, 1979  
September, 1979  
October, 1979  
November, 1979 [1]  
November, 1979 [2]  
December, 1979  
January, 1980

**Container 117**

February, 1980  
March, 1980  
April, 1980  
May, 1980  
June, 1980

**Container 118**

July, 1980  
August, 1980  
September, 1980 [1]  
September, 1980 [2]  
October, 1980 [1]

**Container 119**

October, 1980 [2]  
November, 1980 [1]  
November, 1980 [2]  
December, 1980 [1]  
December, 1980 [2]  
January, 1981

[Return to series list](#)

**Jean Perwin's Subject Files****Container 121**

Armstrong Amendment  
Back Up Ceiling  
Bottler's Bill  
Budget, 1980-1981  
Clothing  
Coin Proposals  
Commodity Prices

Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, A-B  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, C-D

### **Container 122**

Congressional Card File - House Representatives, E-G  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, H-J  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, K-Mc  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, M-N  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, O-R  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, S-U  
Congressional Card File - House of Representatives, U-Z  
Congressional Card File [Senate - A-G]  
Congressional Card File [Senate - H-M]

### **Container 123**

Congressional Card File [Senate - N-Z]  
Consumers for World Trade  
Correspondence - Supermarket and Drug Chain Voluntary Price Ceiling Meeting, 4/30/80 [1]  
Correspondence - Supermarket and Drug Chain Voluntary Price Ceiling Meeting, 4/30/80 [2]  
Correspondence - Supermarket and Drug Chain Voluntary Price Ceiling Meeting, 4/30/80 [3]  
Correspondence - Supermarket and Drug Chain Voluntary Price Ceiling Meeting, 4/30/80 [4]  
Correspondence - Supermarket and Drug Chain Voluntary Price Ceiling Meeting, 4/30/80 [5]  
Coupons

### **Container 124**

Credit Privacy Bill [1]  
Credit Privacy Bill [2]  
Direct Marketing Act  
Discount Outlets  
Drug Ceiling  
Drug Company Correspondence [Price Freeze]  
Drug Processors  
Dumping Legislation [Vegetables]  
Early Inflation Ideas  
Fair Housing Amendments Act  
Food Bank  
Food Ceiling  
Food Processors

### **Container 125**

Fiscal Year Budget, 1981  
General Legislation  
Halla Brown Court Case [Diplomatic Immunity]  
Infant Formula  
National Referendum

Ohio Comparison Shopping Court Case  
Patent Bill  
Retailers  
Summaries [Price Ceiling Participation]  
TRIS Sleepwear Legislation

[Return to series list](#)

### **Michael Kerr's Subject Files**

#### **Container 125**

Citizen Participation Report  
Citizen Participation Study [1]  
Citizen Participation Study [2]  
Citizen Participation Study [3]  
Consumer Controversies Resolution Act  
Department of Energy [Intervention Funding]  
Drug Regulation Reform Act  
Economic Regulatory Administration [Regulation]  
Federal Communications Commission - Notice of Inquiry  
Federal Trade Commission - Restriction  
Justice Department Proposals  
Newspapers

#### **Container 126**

President on Government Regulations  
Public Participation - Background [1]  
Public Participation - Background [2]  
Public Participation - General [1]  
Public Participation - General [2]  
Public Participation - General [3]  
Public Participation - General [4]  
Public Participation - General [5]

#### **Container 127**

Public Participation - General [6]  
Public Participation - General [7]  
Public Participation - Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration  
Public Participation - Department of Education  
Public Participation - Department of the Interior  
Public Participation - Environmental Protection Agency  
Public Participation - Federal Agencies Proceedings Act  
Public Participation - Legislation [1]  
Public Participation - Legislation [2]  
Public Participation - Legislation [3]

## **Container 128**

Public Participation - National Highway Safety Administration and Civil Aeronautics Board

Public Participation - Nuclear Regulatory Commission [1]

Public Participation - Nuclear Regulatory Commission [2]

[Return to series list](#)

## **Midge Shubow's Subject Files**

### **Container 129**

Administrative Issues

Advertising for the Office of Consumer Affairs

Agriculture

Automobiles and their Problems

Banking, Finance, and Credit

Business Executives Supporting Consumer Protection Legislation

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [A]

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [B-C]

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [D-G]

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [H-L]

### **Container 130**

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [M-P]

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [R-V]

Businesses against the Consumer Protection Agency [W, etc.]

Businesses, Groups, and Organizations in Support of the Consumer Protection Agency

Businesses Non-Committal to the Consumer Protection Agency

Chronological File, 1977

Chronological File, 1978

Chronological File, 3/80 - 5/80 [1]

Chronological File, 3/80 - 5/80 [2]

Chronological File, 5/80 - 9/80

Citizen Action Guide - Inflation

Comparison of 6805 and 9708 Bills

### **Container 131**

Consumer Agency Bill [1]

Consumer Agency Bill [2]

Consumer Agency Bill [3]

Consumer Agency Bill [4]

Consumer Agency Bill [5]

Consumer Agency Bill [6]

Consumer Agency Bill [7]

Consumer Agency Bill [8]

Consumer Agency Bill - History [1]

### **Container 132**

Consumer Agency Bill - History [2]  
Consumer Education  
Consumer Protection Agency - Agencies  
Consumer Protection Agency - Cartoons  
Consumer Protection Agency - Chamber of Commerce  
Consumer Protection Agency - Coalition  
Consumer Protection Agency - Congressional Activity  
Consumer Protection Agency - Consumer Representation Plans  
Consumer Protection Agency - Correspondence [1]  
Consumer Protection Agency - Correspondence [2]  
Consumer Protection Agency - Editorials  
Consumer Protection Agency - Esther Peterson's Statements  
Consumer Protection Agency - History Before 1977  
Consumer Protection Agency - Letters sent by Stockholders, Members, and Company Associates  
Consumer Protection Agency - Meeting

### **Container 133**

Consumer Protection Agency - Newspaper Clippings  
Consumer Protection Agency - Nickel Campaign  
Consumer Protection Agency - Old Stuff [1]  
Consumer Protection Agency - Old Stuff [2]  
Consumer Protection Agency - Opposing Articles  
Consumer Protection Agency - President Carter's Comments  
Consumer Protection Agency - Press Articles Sent to Delegates from Different States  
Consumer Protection Agency - Press Materials  
Consumer Protection Agency - Proponents [1]  
Consumer Protection Agency - Proponents [2]

### **Container 134**

Consumer Protection Agency - Ralph Nader  
Consumer Protection Agency - Rebuttals to Opponents  
Consumer Protection Agency - Speeches  
Consumer Reporting  
Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities (COIN) Campaign  
Corporations  
Energy and Utilities  
Federal Trade Commission  
Food Additives/Chemicals  
Food Labelling Hearings [1]  
Food Labelling Hearings [2]  
Food and Drug Administration  
Getting More for your Health Dollar  
Home Repairs and Insulation

**Container 135**

Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [A-B]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [C-D]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [E-G]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [H-J]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [K]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [L-S] [1]

**Container 136**

Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [L-S] [2]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [L-S] [3]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [L-S] [4]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [T-Z]  
Individual Responses to the Consumer Protection Agency [Support]  
Inflation  
Issue Cards  
Lightbulb Letters Sent, 7/1/1980  
Letter to Pharmaceutical Companies Requesting Price Ceiling, 6/18/80  
Louis Harris [Poll]

**Container 137**

Metro Area Media List  
Midge Shubow's Travels [1]  
Midge Shubow's Travels [2]  
Miscellaneous Originals, 1977  
Miscellaneous Originals, 1978  
Nitrites  
Nutrition [1]  
Nutrition [2]  
Office of Consumer Affairs - Consumer Today and Consumer Participation

**Container 138**

Office of Consumer Affairs - Memos  
Office of Consumer Representation - Letters to Congress Members  
Office of Consumer Representation - Supportive Advertisements  
President's Statement to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 4/11/78  
President's Statement to the National Consumers League, 4/11/78  
Press Releases  
Taxes  
Universal Product Code  
Weights and Measures  
White House Background Speech Material, 10/179-11/79 [1]  
White House Background Speech Material, 10/179-11/79 [2]  
White House Background Speech Material, 1/80-8/80 [1]

White House Background Speech Material, 1/80-8/80 [2]  
Women

[Return to series list](#)

### **Edward Cohen's Subject Files**

#### **Container 139**

Accomplishments

Accomplishments - Publications

Administrative Procedure Act - Bill [1]

Administrative Procedure Act - Bill [2]

Administrative Procedure Act - Reform Background

ACP (Agency for Consumer Advocacy Votes) - First Session

#### **Container 140**

ACP - Agency Comments

ACP - Alternative (Options) [O/A 9814]

ACP - Analysis

ACP - Analysis, H.R. 6805 - H.R. 9718 [O/A 9814]

ACP - Articles [O/A 9814]

ACP - Business

ACP - Business Pro

ACP - Coalition for the Consumer Protection Agency

ACP - Comparisons [O/A 9814]

#### **Container 141**

ACP - Complaint Handling [O/A 9814]

ACP - Compromise [O/A 9814]

ACP - Congressional Record [O/A 9814]

ACP - Cost Benefit [O/A 9814]

ACP - Critical Documents - Jim Guy Tucker - Letter [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - Agricultural Import-Export Exemption [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - EP letters of Congressman Philip Sharp [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - Jaworski letters [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - Justice Department [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - McCloskey letter [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - Pitofsky letter, 6/30/77 [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - Reorganization (Speaker's Letter; VP Letter) [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - Safeguards Memo [O/A 9815]

ACP - Critical Documents - White Fact Sheet on Substitute [O/A 9815]

ACP - Dear Colleague letter [O/A 9815]

ACP - Documents - H.R. 6805 and H.R. 6118 [O/A 9815]

ACP - Documents - H.R. 9718 [O/A 9815]

ACP - Documents - Question and Answers [O/A 9815]

ACP - Editorials [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Ester Peterson's WNDU Speech, 5/12/77 [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Establishment [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Fact Sheet for Cabinet [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Floor (Amendments) [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Glickman Bill [O/A 9814]  
ACP - H.R. 9718 [O/A 9814]

#### **Container 142**

ACP - History [O/A 9814]  
ACP - House Mark - Up [O/A 9814]  
ACP - House Members [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Interrogatories and Information [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Judicial Review [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Levitas Bill [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Masters for Canned Material Prepared by N. Chasen [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Materials [O/A 9814]  
ACP - McCloskey [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Minutes of Office Meetings [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Office of Consumer Representation (OCR) Act of 1977 (Differences from H.R. 6805) [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Opponents [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Other Advocacy Program [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Pearson [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Peterson Statements [O/A 9814]  
ACP - Presidential Consumer Message, 5/6/77 [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Proponents [O/A 9814]

#### **Container 143**

ACP - Reorganization [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Senate [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Senate Bill - Testimony [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Senate Committee [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Senate Members A-Z [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Small Business [O/A 9815]  
ACP - Strategy House [O/A 9815] [1]  
ACP - Strategy House [O/A 9815] [2]

#### **Container 144**

ACP - White House Weekly Reports [O/A 9815]  
ACP - White House Working Group  
Aging  
Agriculture Export - Import Exemption  
Amtrak  
Anti-Regulation

Antitrust  
AT&T  
Attorney's Fees, 1977-1978  
Attorney's Fees, 1979-1980

**Container 145**

Auto Train  
Autocaps  
Automobile Committee  
Automobiles  
Aviation  
Backhaul  
Banking  
Bankruptcy  
Basic Needs  
Braden Letter  
Briefing Book - H.R. 6118 Consumer Protection Act, 4/77

**Container 146**

Briefing Book - S. 1262 Part I Consumer Protection Agency, 4/77  
Briefing Book - S. 1262 Part II Consumer Protection Agency, 4/77  
Briefing Book S. 200 H.R. 7575 Consumer Protection Agency, 1975  
Broadcasting  
Bumpers  
Business - Chamber of Commerce  
Business - Food Marketing Institute  
Business - Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc. (GMA)  
Business - Roundtable

**Container 147**

Busing Deregulation  
Cabinet Assistance Request  
Carcinogens  
Checkbook  
Children's Advertising  
Chron, 1977 [1]  
Chron, 1977 [2]  
Chron, 1978 [1]

**Container 148**

Chron, 1978 [2]  
Chron, 10/78-12/78  
Chron, 1/79-3/79[1]  
Chron, 1/79-3/79[2]  
Chron, 4/79-6/79[1]

Chron, 4/79-6/79[2]  
Chron, 7/79[1]  
Chron, 7/79[2]

### **Container 149**

Chron, 11/79-2/80  
Chron, 3/80  
Chron, 4/80  
Chron, 5/80  
Chron, 6/80-7/80  
Chron, 8/80-9/80  
Chron, 10/80-1/80  
Chron, 12/80-1/81

### **Container 150**

Citizen Action  
Class Action - 95th Congress  
Class Action - 96th Congress  
Class Action - Administration Position  
Class Action - American Bar Association  
Class Action - Articles  
Class Action - Beverly Moore  
Class Action - Comments  
Class Action - Durkin

### **Container 151**

Class Action - Eckhardt Bill  
Class Action - Federal Trade Commission (House)  
Class Action - Federal Trade Commission (Senate)  
Class Action - Illinois Brick [1]  
Class Action - Illinois Brick [2]  
Class Action - Justice Department - Basic Documents, Legislation, and Testimony [1]  
Class Action - Justice Department - Basic Documents, Legislation, and Testimony [2]

### **Container 152**

Class Action - Justice Department (1977-1978)  
Class Action - Justice Department (1979-1980)  
Class Action - Justice Department - Basic Documents Legislation Testimony, 1979-1980 [1]  
Class Action - Justice Department - Basic Documents Legislation Testimony, 1979-1980 [2]  
Class Action - Office of Consumer Affairs  
Class Action - Opponents  
Class Action - Proponents  
Class Action - S. 2390 - Citizens Access to Courts Act of 1978  
Class Action - Substantive Cause of Action  
Class Action - Supreme Court

Clean Air  
Cohen - Personal Correspondence

**Container 153**

Competition Improvement Act  
Complaint Handling  
Conference Board  
Conglomerate Mergers  
Congress and House - Miscellaneous  
Congressional Contacts - A-H  
Congressional Contacts - I-G  
Congressional Contacts - R-Z  
Construction Work In Progress (CWIP) - Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission (FERC)  
[1]

**Container 154**

Construction Work In Progress (CWIP) - Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission (FERC)  
[2]  
Construction Work In Progress (CWIP) - Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission (FERC)  
[3]  
Consumer Action Group  
Consumer Action Updates  
Consumer Affairs - The Record of President Carter  
Consumer Agency Floor Notebook [1]  
Consumer Agency Floor Notebook [2]  
Consumer Education  
Consumer Message

**Container 155**

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) - Nominations  
Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) - Other Than Nominations  
Consuming Action Now (CAN)  
Conversations  
Cooperative Bank Files - Administration Position [O/A 9817]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Articles [O/A 9817]

**Container 156**

Cooperative Bank Files - Budget [O/A 9817] [1]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Budget [O/A 9817] [2]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Correspondence [O/A 9817]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Documents [1]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Documents [2]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Eligibility and Priorities [O/A 9817] [1]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Eligibility and Priorities [O/A 9817] [2]

### **Container 157**

Cooperative Bank Files - General Information  
Cooperative Bank Files - Implementation [O/A 9817] [1]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Implementation [O/A 9817] [2]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Legislative History [O/A 9817]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Nominations [O/A 9817] [1]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Nominations [O/A 9817] [2]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Opponents [O/A 9817]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Proponents [O/A 9817]  
Cooperative Bank Files - Resumes [O/A 9817]

### **Container 158**

Cooperative Bank Files - Task Force  
Corporate Responsibilities  
Correspondence - General  
Cosmetics  
Coupons  
Credit Controls  
Critical Documents - Examples  
Critical Documents - Regulators letter (Pertschuk et al)  
Critical Documents - Setting the Record Straight  
Danforth Views  
Dear Colleague  
Debt Collection

### **Container 159**

Delaney Clause  
Dispute Resolution Act  
Drugs  
Eckhardt Amendment  
Electronic Fund Transfer [1]  
Electronic Fund Transfer [2]

### **Container 160**

Energy [1]  
Energy [2]  
Environment  
Examples  
Fact Sheet (SOPH)  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Advocacy Study  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Appropriations - General  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Appropriations - House  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Appropriations - Senate

### **Container 161**

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Authorization Legislation - Background [1]  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Authorization Legislation - Background [2]  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Conference Report [1]  
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Conference Report [2]  
Federal Trade Commission - Nominations  
First Session History  
Food

### **Container 162**

Gas Rationing  
Gasoline Price Posting  
Glickman Bill  
General Accounting Office (GAO) - Audit  
General Accounting Office (GAO) - Study  
Green Article  
Greyhound Case  
Harris Pool  
Hazardous Substances Export Policy (HSEP) - Articles  
HSEP - Correspondence (General) [1]

### **Container 163**

HSEP - Correspondence (General) [2]  
HSEP - Decision Memo  
HSEP - Definition  
HSEP - Draft Commerce Bill  
HSEP - Esther Peterson's, 9/9/80  
HSEP - Executive Order, President's Statement, Miscellaneous, and Meetings and Notes  
HSEP - Export hearings 1978  
HSEP - Fifth Draft  
HSEP - Final Negotiations, December 1980

### **Container 164**

HSEP - Final Order and Statements  
HSEP - First Draft  
HSEP - Fourth Draft [1]  
HSEP - Fourth Draft [2]  
HSEP - Fourth Draft Comments  
HSEP - General Accounting Office (GAO) Pesticide Study  
HSEP - H.R. 6587 and Document Reply  
HSEP - Hearing Statements, 9/9/80

### **Container 165**

HSEP - Hearing, 6/5/80  
HSEP - History  
HSEP - Legal Opinions- EAA  
HSEP - Meeting, 6/3/80

HSEP - Outreach  
HSEP - Public Advocates  
HSEP - Public Documents [1]  
HSEP - Public Documents [2]  
HSEP - Public Documents [3]  
HSEP - Public Documents [4]

**Container 166**

HSEP - Revised Fifth Draft [1]  
HSEP - Revised Fifth Draft [2]  
HSEP - Second Draft  
HSEP - Testimony before Rosenthal Subcommittee, November 1979  
HSEP - Third Draft  
HSEP - Working Group and Task Force  
Health

**Container 167**

Household Movers  
Housing  
Infant Formula  
Inflation  
Inflation Coordinating Committee  
Insurance  
Insurance Council  
Insurance Redlining  
Interagency Committee on Citizen Participation  
Internal Memorandums  
International

**Container 168**

Interstate Commerce Commission - Rail Public Council  
Interstate Land Sales - General Background Information  
Jaworski, Leon  
Judicial Review  
Karr - Chron File  
Louisville and Nashville Case  
Labeling - Alcohol  
Labeling - Net Weight  
Legislative Program  
Legislative Veto

**Container 169**

Letter of Support - Conference of Mayors  
Letter to Industry Supporters, 10/27/77  
Levitas

Life Insurance  
Light Bulbs  
List of Business Supporters  
Lobbying Initiatives  
Low Income Assistance  
McCloskey, Paul  
Meat Imports  
Miami  
Milk [Reconstituted]  
Miscellaneous - Fact Sheets and National Journals  
Montaup  
Motor Carrier Reform Program

**Container 170**

National Referendum  
Nitrites  
No-Fault Insurance - Bills  
No-Fault Insurance - General [1]  
No-Fault Insurance - General [2]  
No-Fault Insurance - Publications  
Nutrition Education  
Office of Management and Budget - General  
Office of Management and Budget - Miscellaneous  
Office of Management and Budget - Reports  
Packaging  
Passive Restraints - Articles from Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

**Container 171**

Passive Restraints - Congressional Record Articles  
Passive Restraints - Correspondence Articles  
Passive Restraints - General Articles and Information  
Passive Restraints - Testimony and Legislation  
Pertschuk - Regulators' Letter  
Phone Logs, 1978 [1]  
Phone Logs, 1978 [2]

**Container 172**

Phone Logs, 1979 [1]  
Phone Logs, 1979 [2]  
Phone Logs, 1979 [3]  
Phone Logs, 1980 [1]  
Phone Logs, 1980 [2]

**Container 173**

Phone Logs, 1980 [3]

Phone Logs, 1980 [4]  
Phone Logs, 1981  
Phone Logs, Notebook of Campaign Time Sheets  
Pink Sheets  
Planning Files - 96<sup>th</sup> Congress  
Planning Files - Advocacy Program Files  
Planning Files - Budget (General)  
Planning Files - Campaign  
Planning Files - Danforth Amendment [1]

#### **Container 174**

Planning Files - Danforth Amendment [2]  
Planning Files - Executive Order (Reorganization) [1]  
Planning Files - Executive Order (Reorganization) [2]  
Planning Files - Legislation, 1980 - 1982  
Planning Files - Office of Consumer Affairs [1]  
Planning Files - Office of Consumer Affairs [2]  
Planning Files - Presidential Mandate  
Planning Files - Self-Help Book  
Planning Files - Transition [1]

#### **Container 175**

Planning Files - Transition [2]  
Planning Files - Watson Memos  
Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO)  
Price Ceiling Program  
Privacy  
Product Information  
Product Liability [1]  
Product Liability [2]  
Product Safety

#### **Container 176**

Public Participation - 96th Congress (Planning)  
Public Participation - Administrative Position  
Public Participation - Articles  
Public Participation - Chamber Suite  
Public Participation - Constanza Initiative  
Public Participation - Executive Order 12044  
Public Participation - Federal Trade Commission  
Public Participation - Federal Trade Commission - Green County Decision  
Public Participation - General Accounting Office  
Public Participation - House Judiciary Committee  
Public Participation - Opponents  
Public Participation - Presidential Memorandums

**Container 177**

Public Participation - Programs (Other)  
Public Participation - Proponents  
Public Participation - Senate  
Public Participation - Senate Judiciary Committee  
Public Participation - Standing - Administration Bill  
Public Participation - Standing - Department of Justice  
Public Participation - Standing - Kennedy Bill (Senate)  
Public Participation - Standing - Public Citizen

**Container 178**

Public Participation - Standing - Senate  
Public Participation - Standing - To House  
Public Participation Testimony  
Pyramid Sales  
Radio Deregulation  
Railroad Deregulation  
Rebares  
Record Inserts - Anti  
Record Inserts - Pro  
Regulation Q  
Regulatory Reform

**Container 179**

Reorganization I  
Reorganization II  
Rust  
Senate Study  
Small Business  
Soft Drinks  
Solar Energy  
Solar Subcommittee  
Standing  
Substitute  
Substitute (Preparation)  
Survey

**Container 180**

TARP  
Telecommunications [1]  
Telecommunications [2]  
Telephone Directory - United States House of Representatives  
Telephone Solicitation  
Thank You Notes to Congress

Thanks You Letters  
Thornton Bill  
Tire Registration  
Tort Reform  
Transportation  
Tris  
Truck Safety

**Container 181**

Trucking Deregulation [1]  
Trucking Deregulation [2]  
Truth-in-Lending  
Usury Ceiling  
Variable Rate Mortgage  
Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO)  
Voluntary Standards  
Vote Calls  
Votes - Frenchmen/Potential  
Votes - Agency for Consumer Advocacy Vote Lists

**Container 182**

Votes - Consumer Interest Groups  
Votes - Government Operations Committee [HR 6118]  
Voting Records  
Weatherization  
Weights and Measures  
White House Agency for Consumer Advocacy Materials [1]  
White House Agency for Consumer Advocacy Materials [2]

**Container 183**

White House Agency for Consumer Advocacy Materials [3]  
Women's Task Force  
Yellow Sheets - Question and Answer

[Return to series list](#)

[Return to collection summary](#)

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## **Biographical Information**

### **Esther Eggertsen Peterson**

Esther Eggertsen Peterson was born in Provo, Utah on December 9, 1906. She received an A.B from Brigham Young University in 1927 and an M.A. from Teachers College of Columbia University in 1930. She was a teacher at Branch Agricultural College in Cedar City, Utah and at Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts. During this period she met and married Oliver Peterson. From 1932 until 1939, she taught at Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry. This was a program designed to bring milliners, telephone operators and garment workers onto the campus for the purpose of improving their education. She became a paid organizer for the American Federation of Teachers in New England in 1938. Peterson worked from 1939 until 1944 as assistant director of education of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. She also served as their legislative representative in Washington, DC from 1945 until 1948. She was that union's first lobbyist in Washington, DC. In 1948, the State Department offered her husband a diplomatic position in Sweden. The couple went to Sweden and also spent time in Belgium, where Mr. Peterson served as labor attaché. While in Europe, she became active in the various women's committees of the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions and the International Conference of Free Trade Unions. The Peterson's returned to Washington, DC in 1958.

Esther became the legislative representative of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO upon her return. She retained that position until 1961 when she was appointed Director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor. During the time period from 1961 until 1963, she served as the Executive Vice Chairman of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. President Johnson named Peterson to the newly created post of Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. In addition, she was also Chairman of the President's Committee on Consumer Interests. Ms. Peterson retained both these positions until 1967. In 1979, she became Vice President for Consumer Affairs at Food Giants, Inc. and President of the National Consumers League.

She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1981 and was named a delegate of the United Nations as a UNESCO representative in 1993. She served on the board of directors of several educational and civic organizations. These included the Institute for Public Interest Representation at the Georgetown University Law Center, the Women's National Democratic club, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and the National Center for Resource Recovery. Ms. Peterson passed away at her home in Washington, D.C. in 1997 at the age of 91.