



## Essay One: Putting NAFTA in Perspective

### October 2016 Correspondence Excerpt...

*Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:*

*As you know, New York State and Canada enjoy an especially harmonious and beneficial cultural, regional and economic bilateral relationship. New York exports more to Canada than to any other country in the world, and, last year, our entire bilateral trade relationship totaled \$32.93 billion in goods and supports over 500,000 jobs regionally. This is why I was distressed to hear that the Province of Ontario and Canadian Milk Supply Management Committee (CMSMC) have embarked on regulatory regimes, including the proposed establishment of a new National Ingredient Strategy, that could effectively block New York exports of ultrafiltered milk—potentially violating World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments. I urge you to ensure that any new Canadian program does not follow the flawed approach of seeking to solve the challenge of Canada’s dairy industry by creating barriers that hamper the export of products from New York’s dairy industry. ...*

Governor Andrew Cuomo

NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, signed into law on November 17, 1993, has been under fire recently. “U.S. dairy organizations and the state departments of agriculture across the country” are turning to President Trump to help them “combat Canada’s existing and soon-to-be-expanded protectionist policies designed to block imports from the United States” ([www.foodsafetynews.com](http://www.foodsafetynews.com)) and are urging government officials to “take immediate action.” The policies, if enacted, the dairy and agricultural organizations say, will be in direct violation of Canada’s free trade agreements under NAFTA and the WTO.

New York state dairies will be especially harmed, says Kevin Ellis, CEO of Cayuga Milk Ingredients, based in Auburn. The company estimates it could lose 25 percent of its sales if the proposed policy is adopted.

In March of last year, Senator Chuck Schumer also urged the Department of Agriculture to take protective action toward U.S. dairy exports, suggesting that these new rules are not being considered because “there is a problem with U.S. milk, but because Canada wants its own milk to be used.”

The (Rochester, NY) *Democrat and Chronicle* reports that Governor Cuomo, in his letter to Justin Trudeau, is asking Canada “not to dump milk into NY,” leaving many farmers and milk producers in New York asking “how does free trade affect our businesses, and is [NAFTA] really a ‘level playing field?’”

***Using your knowledge of basic economics, in an essay of at least 500 words, discuss your view of NAFTA.***

***Be sure to explain and explore the following:***

- What is NAFTA and what was the original philosophy behind passing this trade agreement?
- Has the treaty’s original intention been met? Has it accomplished what it set out to when it was first signed into law?
- What have been some of the ramifications—positive or negative—of NAFTA?
- What would you suggest President Trump do if he decides to modify this agreement?

(see reverse for essay two)



## Essay Two: Economics vs. The Environment

In his bid for office and again in his Inauguration speech on January 20, President Trump vowed to create jobs for Americans and improve our nation's economy.

In the first few days of his presidency, Trump signed an executive order reinstating work on the Dakota Access Pipeline, which he assured the public would create 25,000 jobs. In late March he then signed an executive order to nullify President Obama's climate change efforts and put West Virginia coal miners back to work, touting coal as a major energy source for the U.S. Additionally, Republican Congressman Matt Gaetz of Florida introduced HR 861, which, if passed into law, would essentially (and permanently) strip the EPA of its power, effectively putting it out of business.

Since this present administration has taken this giant step toward abolishing the EPA, former Vice President Al Gore has vowed to continue his fight against global warming and against climate change deniers. In his Academy Award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, the former VP argues that the effects of global warming are putting our whole planet in extreme danger.

Which perspective is correct?

***In an essay of at least 500 words, or in a medium of your choosing (PowerPoint presentations are acceptable), address the issue of the economics vs. the environment, including discussion of:***

- What you believe to be the truth about climate change. Explain your rationale.
- Choosing one president, from Washington to Obama: How did that president address environmental issues—pro or con—during his term(s) in office? How did the policies he espoused toward the environment (vs. economics) effectively and/or fundamentally change views on conservation?
- Are economic and environmental issues mutually exclusive?
- In view of current contradictory views what do you think can/should be done to/for the environment to preserve resources for generations to come?



## Essay Three: The Ellis Island Promise

Ellis Island was once the gateway for many who entered these United States. Coming from every corner of the globe, immigrants abandoned everything with the hope of building a better life on our shores. Some were fleeing hardship, persecution, even tyranny. Some came simply because of the promise of prosperity.

Not all had the opportunity to pursue their dreams. Also known as Heartbreak Island, Ellis Island turned away a number of these men, women, and children for one reason or another. Over the course of more than two centuries, however, the immigrants we have welcomed have, by in large (although not in all cases), enriched and contributed to our lives and our country. They have brought broad perspectives, new ideas, innovative technologies, and cultural/ethnic diversity (including food!). They have also presented us with unique challenges, often rooted in cultural differences both resulting from and leading to misunderstanding and misfortune on both sides.

Now closed, Ellis Island still stands as a symbol of hope to the thousands who wait to enter our doors in search of freedom and democracy. Yet growing concerns focused around international terrorism appear to be tempering willingness to be openly accepting of them.

***In an essay of at least 500 words or in a medium of your choosing (visual art is acceptable), share a story of Ellis Island that you learned about through family or friends or read about in school or on your own. Be sure to address the following:***

- How this particular story inspired you or otherwise shaped your thinking on this issue.
- Why this particular story is important—not only to you, but to the very fabric and make-up of our nation.
- How this story might enlighten and enrich the ongoing debate about immigration.
- How your story relates to and/or brings perspective to the situation the U.S. currently faces with regard to concerns about international terrorism. How might we encourage potential adversaries to embrace rather than tear down the ideals that have shaped this country for hundreds of years?