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**OA/ID Number:** 17509

**FolderID:**

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**Folder Title:**

Race Book [1]

**Stack:**

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**Row:**

**0**

**Section:**

**0**

**Shelf:**

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**Position:**

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## **BOX 1**

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3. African-American Museums
4. CTBT Fall 1999
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7. Hurricane Floyd 9/15/99
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November 1, 1999

To: John Podesta, Chief of Staff  
Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff

From: Christopher Edley, Jr. 

Re: The President's Race Book

I hope you will consider the attached letter to the President constructive enough to forward it to him.

Of course, I'd be happy to discuss it with you.

There are other options for dealing with the book, but I wanted to stir the pot.

cc: Terry Edmonds

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER EDLEY, JR.  
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL  
CAMBRIDGE MA 02138

October 31, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I have a few specific suggestions concerning your race book. Let me begin with my deepest apologies for not being able to produce a draft close enough to the mark to make your present task a manageable one. I have a dozen lame excuses, but in the end, no one to blame but myself. And my wife.

- *Are you sure you really want a book?* I believe the political fallout from abandoning the project – or deferring it until 2001 – would be manageable provided you do something truly substantial in its place. My proposed explanation for the change in plans: the truth. We ran up against schedule demands, shortcomings of the draft, your strong interest in “getting it right” and our collective miscalculation in designing the process.

My only specific substitute idea is a White House Conference on One America, described in the attached 1-pager. I first proposed this 11 months ago. It is almost too late.

- *Don't bother with a book if it doesn't grapple with tough truths and bold policies.* The thrust of most White House staff comments on the drafts sought, in my judgment, to reshape the book into a celebration of all the positive developments since 1954, a sermon about the values that unite us, and a giant NEC/DPC compendium of Administration accomplishments. Given the transcendent importance of the problem and this enterprise, people seated in my section of the audience would find such an approach off-putting at best. More important, it would reduce the book to a political footnote in your presidency, rather than a call to action of lasting importance and historical moment.
- *Don't bother if the policy ideas are just about this year and next.* If this book is going to have lasting importance – that is, more than a couple of months – then the policy vision must have a horizon beyond the FY 2001 budget year. You should offer a workplan for the decade. JFK spoke about going to the moon, not about building a gantry and hurling a Mercury capsule toward Vieques. (And he didn't diminish the vision by making it sound conditional on the willingness of corporate volunteers to finance the project.)
- *Preach, but teach too.* Virtually every leader who deals with race tends to be platitudinous and vague because anything else is dangerous or difficult or both. But this is a chance for you to teach Americans something about wrestling with our vexing problems, and that

requires really saying what those problems are, and explaining why the easy ways of discussing them (I think here of Bill Bradley) won't help us make progress or bridge our differences in values and perceptions. You can offer readers, e.g., college students, some basic grounding they too often miss. And you can give concerned clergy and confused school board members news they can use about how to make a difference.

- *Prune viciously.* I could list several deficiencies in the current draft, although I have no idea whether you and I would agree on that list. For example, the committee process Terry and I were forced into led us to lard the draft with too many policy topics and too many "White House event" style micro-initiatives, rather than painting in broad strokes. When combined with a recitation of accomplishments, the result is, in a few places, deadly dull and uninspiring. The core messages get lost in the noise because, absent guidance from you, we couldn't define "core." From the First Lady's office to the most junior DPC aide, every adviser had their special concern. And almost every idea had some merit.
- *Be crystal clear about your vision of where we need to go.* The most effective part of my speeches on this subject is were I try to describe what I believe racial and ethnic justice would look like if we had it. It may seem a little corny and contrived, but audiences truly appreciate it because they know that above all, race is an issue of moral ambition for the nation. They want to hear yours. They want to see a blazing lodestar.

There are countless people around the country who genuinely want to contribute to achieving racial and ethnic justice. But for the most part they just don't know what to do. Most of us, faced with a problem we don't now how to solve, turn our attention elsewhere. Well, these people of good will do the same with respect to race. You can recall them to a great project of national progress and principle. Offer them ideas and hope. Doing so, however, will entail some controversy and choices, because it can't be done with rhetoric and anecdotes alone.

If you decide to go forward with the book, I hope you will lean on Terry Edmonds. He and I could have benefitted enormously from a few sessions with you like the one you had with the Cox Newspapers reporter last week. Much of what you reportedly said should be in the book. Terry can still make it happen for you, if you *order* your staff to make the time for it. Good luck.

Warmest regards,



Christopher Edley, Jr.  
Professor of Law, and  
Co-Director, the Civil Rights Project at Harvard

## **White House Conference on One America**

*– Draft Proposal –*

### **Central Idea:**

Convene a large group in Spring 2000 to take stock of where America is and where it must go in order to achieve racial and ethnic justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Attendees would be selected through a variety of complementary channels – think of it as a convention of caucuses:

- National and community-based leaders from key sectors: faith leaders; lawyers; business; educators; media
- National and community-based leaders from various racial and ethnic groups who have a track record of working on opportunity and/or civil rights issues
- Representatives of public and private organizations active in building bridges that connect people across lines of color and class (promising practices)
- Elected officials, and community leaders nominated by elected officials
- Researchers – especially law professors

### **Format:**

Through a series of workshops and caucuses and plenary sessions, participants would:

- Take stock of where America is, and the emerging challenges
- Share information about promising practices in a variety of contexts
- Debate elements of a “national workplan”, and meet as caucuses organized both by jurisdiction and by sector to formulate more tailored workplans
- Have a special focus on a handful of specific challenges, such as:
  - What the schools and universities can do to improve understanding of our history and our differences;
  - Public-private partnerships to promote sustained community economic development;
  - Inter-minority discrimination and conflict;
  - Strategies for reforming social programs to introduce more accountability for closing the opportunity gap.

### **Timing and Logistics:**

The event should be held over 3 days, at a convention facility in an affordable locale. None of this can happen on an appropriate scale and early enough before the election season unless the President makes a virtually immediate decision.

**correspondence  
to  
POTUS**

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**BOLD indicates letter from youth**

1) "The plight of the black man and woman today, regardless of wealth or position in life, is much improved. That is an undeniable truth. In the same breadth, however, it is imperative that we, as Americans, identify why the centuries-old conflict still exists between the races. If we cannot identify the reasons, as would be more difficult than you or I imagine, we must all make an effort to acknowledge that the problem exists."

A, pg 3

2) "Mr. President, I am of the opinion that this issue of race relations in America is one that will never go away...There will never be a situation where I do not first and foremost think about how my being a black american is going to affect what I do. There will never be a day when I do not fear the aspersions that are cast upon me simply because of the color of my skin. Mr. President, I hope with all of my heart that I am wrong. I hope that my own children will be able to live and love in a country that does not judge them for any other reason than their integrity."

A, pg 4

3)"A few weeks ago I was denied a contract with an international fortune 500 corporation to provide business services locally with a client with whom I have had a long standing business relationship. My client informed me that the corporate office preferred to do business with someone they felt more comfortable with. It turns out that when I probed my client for an explanation, I was told that the client wanted to [do] business with a white male with whom they had no business relationship...As a black business woman, with a practice that focuses on consulting and training services, I find this attitude particularly disheartening and discouraging. These attitudes make it difficult to conduct business, even in the most prosperous times.

B, pg 1

4) "I have a personal interest in this topic. Being a woman of mixed race, I have felt both advantaged and disadvantaged at times. My father is Japanese and my mother is Irish. As a child I never felt comfortable looking "different". I was raised in a predominately white, affluent community. I knew I was not like my friends and I even was embarrassed by my last name. I never wanted to tell anyone my middle name, which is also Japanese, because I thought I would be teased. Unknowingly, I had been socialized to think that if you are not "white" you are less important. I attribute this to imagery in the media and racist subtleties we encounter daily but are not necessarily identified. As I got older, I denied my japanese heritage...In a country where people of all colors are supposed to be accepted, why did I not feel I could be proud of my ethnicity?"

C, pg 1

5) "I think the problem of racism will be effectively reduced if children could be taught our country's true history. I do not wish to sound cynical. I simply feel there would be less discrimination if kids grew up learning about how people of all races have played a role in United States' historical development. Everything I learned in grade school came from a strictly white perspective."

C, pg 2

6) "I am a seventh generation American, and my ancestry includes many cultures- all rich with

their own heritage and history. But, above all, I am an American whose genes do not denote the color of my skin; rather they convey that I am a member of the human race.

I am neither an Afro-American, nor a black American: I am an American! An American born in this country, raised and educated by forward thinking parents who instilled in me the courage to challenge intolerance and bigotry.”

D, pg 3

7) “I grew up in a segregated neighborhood. We knew we were not welcome in the surrounding communities. The elementary school I attended was totally segregated. In 1967, I had to opportunity to attend an integrated school. Even as a ten year old, I knew that the white schools were better than the blacks so I pressed my parents to allow me to attend the previously all-white school. The first day of school the teachers look at us and exclaimed, “my god, look at the niggers.” Despite a less than warm welcome, I had a good educational experience at the school. I made some friends of another race for the first time in my life

E, pg 1

8) “I made a career change to something I loved: education. For many years I was told that the school really need minority male teachers to reach the students and serve as a role model. Well, I found out that was not true. Whether racism, prejudice or not, I still find myself on the outside looking in...”

F, pg 3

9) “As an aging baby-boomer myself and one who went to college in the early 1970s, I understand the good work of affirmative action. I was accepted into Amherst College as a transferring student in 1970 by a Dean of Admissions who was very concerned about admitting black students who were very hungry for an education--I graduated in 1972, U was accepted under affirmative action and made the Dean’s List; I went on to a corporate career and further education. My parents were from the South in the 1930s and had attended all black schools. My family stressed education and affirmative action made a difference in my life.

I would very much like to shake your hand and thank you for just caring about race relations.”

G, pg 1

10) “As a manager who is responsible for hiring people in mt department I find it very disconcerting to have an internal policy that requires us to leave “under utilized” positions (positions with less than the desired quantity of minorities in them) open for 30 days even when I have a very qualified individual apply. This makes it very difficult to maintain the quality of work that is needed. I believe the true meaning of the Affirmative Action program when it is used as a “tie breaker”...but not to slow down the work production while looking for a minority candidate.”

H, pg 2

11) “...the media has created and continues to create a “chasm” between the races by continuously reporting what this country is not about. After all, Mr. President, why should blacks have an “exclusive” on Empowerment to the chagrin of all other minorities. Blacks seem to think and the media grants that, they have an “exclusive” on Racism and prejudice against

them, yet there are other minorities who suffer from racism and prejudice as well.”

I, pg 1

12) “President Clinton you of all the other presidents this country has seen. You seem to feel the African Americans’ plight. I say this because you are the first to mention (publicly) about an apology. However a verbal apology would only skim the surface of our pain.

J, pg 1

13) “I have recently moved back to Salisbury, Maryland and the racism has grown even worse, especially in the courtrooms and prisons. I can only speak of personal experiences within my family. I have a nephew who became involved with drugs, which I do not condone. When he went to trial, he was sentenced to 39 years. I know that drug charges are very serious, but keep in mind that he did not bring the drugs into the community. I have seen cases where white offenders who committed far more serious crimes received 18 months or less. I understand that the supreme court will not address racial bias in the courtroom due to lack of evidence. Well what kind of evidence do they need. The judges or prosecutors are not going to admit to showing racial discrimination...Please do not think that I am only interested because a family member is involved because this is not my reason. The hurt that I feel runs much deeper than I expect you to understand. When I hear of incidents on the news, local and nationwide, of racial injustice, I honestly ache inside and can not hold back the tears.

K, pg 1

14) “But for what hope do we have, if we are not truly heard as a people in this nation. How can we grow with the rest of the world, if the world turns and looks away from us. Yes Mr. President the past is pass, but through positive change that comes forth for all the People in this country, without the division between race, sex, rich and poor through government and state, through church and state, which to date divides our country and the government which it stands for. For theirs is many world issues and problems, but first take care of the People in our land, we need not add to this division, but become united, as a people with our country not divided.”

L, pg 2

15) “That the corruption and collusion and racial discrimination is so wide spread not just in Pine Ridge, SD but in Nebraska also. When I was in Hay Spring, NE with Tammy Beltz are civil rights were violated, By McCarter Services, a public laundry mat with gas and food, they would not let us wash clothing or give us quarters to wash. They locked the doors to the laundry room. Which their is photo’s enclosed to show the above name business with the times laundry mat is open with the door lock and a person doing their laundry inside. For Tammy Beltz is mixed-blood cherokee indian, for I Rhonda S. Menninger is mixed-blood cherokee indian, this goes against our civil rights. The Lakota People live with this kind of action to them every day.”

L, pg 3

16) “I am writing to praise the speech you made in Texas about racial justice, and to urge to translate the rhetoric into reality by vetoing the congressional rejection of the U.S. Sentencing Commission recommendation to eliminate disparities in crack/cocaine cases.

The 100 to 1 ratio in sentencing in crack/cocaine cases is clearly racist and elitist and spills into

racist enforcement. 85% of those convicted of simple possession of crack in Federal Court and given mandatory five-year prison terms are Black, while Whites receive probation, treatment and other milder form of punishment.

M, pg 1

17) "...the O.J. Simpson trial has divided the nation in a profound way. I can't help feeling however that it offers an unprecedented opportunity to open a candid dialogue that moves us toward a greater mutual understanding. The subject of that dialogue: There's trouble in both our houses.

Experts of both races agree that the predominately black jury could not realistically be expected to separate their life experiences from their perception of the evidence and ultimately their verdict. Those experiences include not only distrust, fear, and resentment of a small but powerful segment of white society, but the fact that many of these realities have gone basically unacknowledged and unchallenged by many in the white community.

The fact is, both communities have small but virulent elements that are poisoning the waters of the mainstream--people of all color who wish nothing more than to play fair, live their lives, and raise their children as peacefully, harmoniously, and uneventful as possible."

N, pg 1

18) "The time has come for such an initiative. The events of the past few weeks from the O.J. Simpson trial verdict to the Million Man March has helped us to focus on how strained race relations are in this country. It is now imperative for us to take a step back and re-evaluate where we have been and in what direction we should be moving."

O, pg 1

19) "I am a twenty seven year old African American male from the inner city urban core of Kansas City. I was one who was born to an impoverished and dysfunctional family and some of the social ills that have befallen our youth today. By God's grace I was born with a sense of purpose and the good common sense to avoid most of the trouble that has basically wiped out the inner city youth's future. I have been on my own since I was sixteen years old and have created an existence for myself, not average middle class, but far from the chaos of what I see on a daily basis. I am telling you these things only to show you that so many blacks want so much more opportunity than appears to be available. How can this country even THINK about ending Affirmative Action, when bias is returning at an all time high.

P, pg 1

20) "Education is THE ONLY thing that can change the racial and economic landscape that divides this Country. We can never make up for past injustice, but we can go a long way to making the future better."

P, pg 1

21) "I think it is well known that Indians have historically been the objects of extreme racist national policies which have been tantamount to genocide. Our survival has often had little to do with federal government, but our own perseverance in the face of these destructive policies. There has been progress, but Indians are still subjected to daily discrimination from the majority

society in a wide range of activities.”

R, pg 1

22) “While the issue is complex, there is a way of thinking and talking about this problem that gets us on the right tack is solving the problem. First, it is important to continuously point out that we have made enormous progress in the area of race relations in this country over the last forty years. The conundrum that so many people often pose of whether the cup is half empty or half full is not the point. The point is the progress we’ve made; thus, **hope** should be the operative word in defining the state of race relations in America...Secondly, it is important to continuously impress on the nation that while we have made tremendous progress in this area, we still have a way to go in our journey and that the old adage that “the last mile can be the most difficult: is particularly instructive.

S, pg 2

23) “The Native Americans have long been overlooked and forgotten in a multitude of ways. We are struggling to become self-sufficient and have been me with many roadblocks and obstacles from Congress during our struggles. I believe it is your responsibility as the leader of these United States to ensure that Native Americans be recognized and valued as citizens.”

T, pg 1

24) “Mr. President, If we are to end racism and discrimination on the streets of America, the courts must set the example for the nation. The courts have been used as an instrument to promote racism and racial intimidation in this country...It has been my only problem in enjoying the liberties and freedoms associated with being a citizen of this great nation. I am a living example of judicial misappropriations of authority and exaggeration of judicial power.”

U, pg 1

### YOUTH'S LETTERS TO POTUS

25) “Back in Mansfield, Ohio, I have addressed these issues with all those around me, in depth, and plan to make sure that the “pebble” you dropped continues to make waves in the waters of Mansfield. My part of the bargain will be kept, Mr. President. I’m sure you will keep yours. Lets do this...and do it right. My future depends on it. It was an honor to see you in person, and it would be an even greater honor to hear from you as we fight against these evils of ignorance together.”

V, pg 1

26) “Our nation is divided by the color of our skin, the shape of our eyes, or the color of our hair. Because of these differences, the lines of communications are lost. Lack of communication is the building block for ignorance, and ignorance leads to racial tension. In order to resolve to this tension, we, as high school students, have come up with many ideas to help eliminate this problem...

One of our many ideas that will help ease racial tension, the the government can institute quickly and effectively, is to make an Ethnic Relations class mandatory for a graduation requirement. By doing this, students are able to learn about their peers, cultural backgrounds,

which allows them to peacefully interact with different cultures in the real world. Not only do students gain a sense of what other cultures consist of, they also develop a sense of pride in their own culture. Through this we hope to achieve a better sense of the cultural diversity which exist in the United States today.

The racial problems of today are already being fought in some school districts already, thought the use of the Spirit program. This program, which is federally funded, should be implemented through schools across America. The Spirit program is made up of students that represent all races in their school, which are then put into homogeneous groups that are asked to identify problems in their school concerning their own race. After the students identify the problems, they are placed into heterogeneous groups which then are made to find certain steps that need to be taken in order to resolve the problem.”

Q, pg 1

27) “To even start ending racism, we really need to understand that it starts with the people themselves. Sometimes we tend to forget that the voiced of this great nation are the real keys to locking away racism for good. Having summit meetings on racism or programs initiated on strengthening our respect for others can be a start for is to climbing that ladder in reaching that ultimate goal to end racism. All it takes really is for everyone to join in helping to eliminate racism mind in the minds of people. If I were called upon by anyone to help end racism, I would do it. The reason is because people want to make this world a better place, where we can have harmony and ever-lasting peace.

W, pg 1

28) “One of the hottest topics and ongoing debates going on right now is over the abolition of affirmative action. Whatever opinions that one may carry over this sensitive and serious topic, race will still come up un the discussion. Although this may be a bit of a generalization, most Caucasian individuals who you may ask their opinion on in this debate might tell you that they believe that white males specifically are getting shafted by affirmative action. At the same time, you may you may ask an African American their opinion on affirmative action and they might tell you that there is way too much work to be one and we are too far away from being perceived as equals to be fairly for a job or admitted to a college without affirmative action.”

X, pg 3

29) “The only law that can change racism is the unwritten law-the law of human existence. Laws that we are born with as inhabitants of this world. A law that comes from our hearts. You can make a million laws about racism but as long as people can have their own mind, they can think what they want.”

Y, pg 6

30) “Racism is in people’s heads. It can’t be controlled. Take me for example, until I meet an African-american I look at them as less of a person. The reason is that, even though nobody will accept it, white people are beat, chided and altogether stepped on because there are so many racist blacks out there.

I guess the point is racism begets racism, so because we have it now we will always have it.”

Z, pg 8

31) "In a perfect world, everyone would be free from fear they might be put in danger, avoided, or ridiculed because of their ethnicity. The real problem that we face is that racism in general will never end, only lessened, because people will always have their own opinions. That doesn't mean that we have to stop trying, though. The challenge of our generation is to help overcome negative stereotypes and create a society where people are judged on the basis of their merits instead of their race.

AA, pg 1

32) "One question I would like to ask is not too controversial, but is important for me to see where you are in the world of racism. Did you see or hear of a lot of racial controversies when you were growing up?

BB, pg 3

33) "Today's American Society is made up of so many colors and races. What does it mean to show your color? Does it mean to act the same way as everybody else that is your color, or does it mean to state that you belong to a certain group. And what does it mean to belong in a certain group? My life is full of questions: Why this and why that."

BB, pg 3

34) "The more exposure one has to other races and cultures, the more tolerant he/she becomes-- I've never found a case where this isn't true. I'm sure you're aware of all that, but the problem is that many kids aren't getting that "exposure". Kids who live deep in the country or suburbs don't grow up knowing anyone except kids just like themselves. The same is often true for inner city kids. Whether people divide into separate groups because of class, color. Or whatever, these social barriers need to be destroyed."

CC, pg 5

35) "Each individual must take part, as well as each organization and each state, in the elimination of racism. Perhaps one day our nation will truly be able to say that it is free from racism and prejudice, free from all the injustices that have torn at the fabric of our nation. These are my opinions on racism in this nation. These are my views on the past and the present. The future remains to be decided."

DD, pg 6

36) "I remember hearing about an event in my town when a professional basketball player was sitting in his expensive car in front of a bank, and someone from an office across the street thought that this was suspicious and called the police. The police arrived and searched the car and the basketball player only to find out that he was just innocently waiting for one of his friends inside the bank. The reason the person called was that he "fit the description". The player probably felt that he was stripped of his freedom; his freedom of being accused because of the color of his skin; his freedom of being equal to those people of white skin.

EE

## SOURCES

- A. *Mr. Mark Elliot Vertreese, 4/8/98*
- B. *Dr. Devona E.G. Williams, 4/9/98, inc. Article on slavery apology*
- C. *Ms. Tracy Yamada, 3/19/98*
- D. *Mr. Chauncey Spencer, 9/30/97*
- F. *Mr. Sylvester Rodd, 4/8/98*
- G. *Mr. John Howard Nesbitt, 4/22/98*
- H. *Mr. John Ley 4/20/98*
- I. *Mr. Ricardo Ayala, 3/26/98*
- J. *Y. Abdullah, 4/9/98*
- K. *Ms. Clyrice Austin, 8/15/97*
- L. Rhonda S. Menninger, 7/4/95
- M. Joseph E. Lowery, 10/27/95
- N. Ms. Leslie Singer, 10/12/98
- O. Mr. Tommy P. Baer, 10/26/95
- P. Mr. Steven Shaw, not dated
- Q. Mr. Javier E. Vargas and Mr. John C. Tran, 6/9/97
- R. Kelsey A. Begaye, 9/15/98
- S. Mr. Charles R. Stith, not dated
- T. Mr. Marvin Wilson, 10/30/97
- U. Mr. Lamar C. Chapman III, 1/19/98
- V. Mr. Jason Wilkes, 12/8/97, "president has seen"
- W. Anso Thomas, 12/22/97
- X. Terrence Satchell, 12/22/97
- Y. Ruth Colon, 12/16/97
- Z. Bryan Knight, 12/22/97
- AA. Jonathan Magaziner, 2/13/98
- BB. T.J Mobisson, 2/13/98
- CC. Alden Smith, 2/13/98
- DD. Joshua Rothenberg, 2/4/98
- EE. Andrew C. Fink 2/13/98

-*Italized denotes letter from PIR and the date is when the response was written by PIR,*

-Underline indicates letter was written by a young person

- otherwise it is from Correspondence and dated by the author

## **PART III: THE OPPORTUNITY WE DESERVE**

[Introduction to Part III]

[Sections 1-2]

...

### **3. COMMUNITY SECURITY, AND A CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT SERVES ALL AMERICANS FULLY AND FAIRLY**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

I ask every American who lives in a safe community to imagine what it would be like to live in neighborhood where you and your family feared violence every day. Are we willing to remain a nation that seems to tolerate having communities where law-abiding residents live in fear and other law-abiding persons fear to enter? More than anywhere else, our highest-crime communities—many of which are communities of color—want, need, and deserve strong law enforcement to restore order, reduce crime, and help build hospitable environments for families and businesses. But we must not substitute prisons for playgrounds, or parole officers for church deacons and college teachers. As we redouble efforts to ensure every family's right to a safe community, we must take action in every community across our nation to keep young people out of crime and build trust and confidence in the criminal justice system across racial lines.

When Americans are asked what issues concern them most, crime is often near the top of the list even though we've been reducing violent crime rates. Most of us live in relatively safe and crime-free communities, confident that our children won't get mixed up in crime and will have the chance to succeed to their full potential. And most of us believe that the criminal justice system exists "to protect and to serve" us—to ensure public safety, prevent crime, and promote justice.

Some Americans, however, live in communities in which crime is pervasive and fear of crime is constant. Some children grow up struggling to avoid being victims of crime, in places where their peers are more likely to go to prison than they are to go to college. Some law-abiding citizens have had experiences with our criminal justice system that lead them to believe that they are more likely to be targets of law enforcement than they are to be served by it. And more often than not, the people and communities facing these conditions are people and communities of color.

Several of our deepest and most complex challenges of race in America arise in the context of criminal justice. Today, crime rates are at their lowest levels in nearly 25 years. Since 1993, the violent crime rate has dropped more than 18 percent nationwide, including a 28-percent drop in the homicide rate, which is at its lowest level in 30 years.<sup>1</sup>

These are astonishing achievements. Nonetheless, as the Advisory Board on Race said in its final report, “Racial disparities persist in both the realities and perceptions of crime and the administration of justice.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite recent, substantial decreases in criminal victimization across racial lines,<sup>3</sup> persons of color remain significantly more likely than whites to be victims of crime, especially violent crime. For example, American Indians are more than twice as likely to be victims of homicide than whites or Asian Pacific Islanders; Hispanics are approximately 3 times more likely; and blacks are approximately 8 times more likely.<sup>4</sup> The homicide rate for black males is 58 per 100,000, compared to 5 per 100,000 for white males.<sup>5</sup> Homicide, moreover, remains the leading cause of death for young, black males, and ranks second for young Hispanic males.<sup>6</sup> Persons of color are also significantly more likely than whites to fear crime. Black and Hispanic households, for example, are approximately twice as likely as white households to identify crime as a neighborhood problem.<sup>7</sup>

Also sobering are data on victimization of women of color. A forthcoming Justice Department study found that victimization of African American women was 32 percent greater than for white women.<sup>8</sup> An earlier study found that Hispanic women were victims 21 percent more often than non-Hispanic women.<sup>9</sup> Most sobering, a 1999 Justice

Department study revealed that American Indian women are twice as likely to suffer from a violent crime than women of all other races.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the rate of violent crime experienced by American Indian women is nearly 50 percent higher than that reported by black males.<sup>11</sup> These startling numbers tell a story that is often missed in discussions about crime: not only are communities of color more likely to be victimized by violent crime, but women in those communities are especially at risk.

**See Attached: Victims of Homicide Graph**

Most crime is intraracial. Nine out of every 10 murders, for example, involve victims and offenders of the same race.<sup>12</sup> So, the fact that minorities are disproportionately more likely to be victims is connected to the fact that minorities are disproportionately committing offenses. Nonetheless, whites commit a majority of all crime, including a majority of all violent crime.<sup>13</sup>

Here's another key fact. Overall, the greater risk of crime faced by minorities is due to extremely high crime rates in a small number of poor, largely urban communities

of color, with much of that crime being committed by and against young males.<sup>14</sup>

**W**hy do these conditions exist? It is too easy to throw up our hands and blame it all on some culture of lawlessness which most of us have only read about or seen on television, and which too many people unfairly adopt as a stereotype. But we must look beyond the footage on the local TV news. Despite what some may say, I believe the crime in our highest-crime communities is neither inevitable nor incurable. Much of it can be stopped and prevented if we refuse to ignore it and if we are resolute in our approach to establishing order, raising healthy children, and building strong communities. Consider this parallel: In education, we are spurred to expect excellence by believing that every child can learn. In criminal justice, we must believe that every family in every community can be safe.

While poverty, family disruption and residential instability are terrible pressures for anyone to bear, they are not and should not be excuses for crime. America was built upon a foundation of mutual responsibility. Strengthening that foundation is critical if we want to build the One America we deserve. Freedom and opportunity only work when they are exercised with responsibility. Having said that, we know that responsibility is a two-way street. While we must demand that people respect and obey the law we also have a responsibility to create the conditions necessary for all our citizens to live with security

and to choose hope over fear. So while poverty, family instability and the absence of opportunity are not excuses for crime, we cannot deny that they contribute to crime and the destruction of the personal and social bonds that are so necessary for healthy communities. Absent these factors, rates of criminal offending and victimization do not differ significantly by race, but the communities in which these troubling conditions exist together are often communities of color.<sup>15</sup>

In the worst-case scenario, young people who grow up in these communities have limited legitimate opportunities, few role models, and little community supervision. Add to these conditions the proliferation of guns and illegal drug markets, and you have high rates of crime among youth and young adults. The community costs are dramatic. In addition to the direct costs to victims and their families, there are substantial psychological, social, and economic costs for the other law-abiding citizens who live there. We must not forget that in the poorest, highest crime neighborhoods in this country, the vast majority of people get up every day, go to work, obey the law, pay their taxes, and do their best to raise their kids.<sup>16</sup> In these communities, however, fear of crime limits social interactions and destroys the sense of community. Fear of crime restricts economic investment and job opportunities. Fear of crime creates the very conditions of social disorder in which crime itself can flourish. It is these communities in which strong, effective law enforcement is needed most.

However, persons of color often have less trust and confidence in law enforcement than whites, and these perceptions of unfairness limit the effectiveness of law enforcement in communities of color. For example, more than 7 out of 10 blacks believe that blacks are treated more harshly by the criminal justice system than whites, and more than 4 out of 10 whites agree.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, of those crime victims who did not report the incident to police, approximately twice as many blacks than whites say they did not report the crime because the police would not care or would be inefficient, ineffective, or biased.<sup>18</sup> Why do so many believe the system is unfair? There are many reasons, of course, both historical and current: the use of so-called racial profiling, incidents of police brutality, racial disparities in incarceration rates and sentencing, the lack of diversity in the criminal justice system, and of course the ever present sense that the rich get a better shake than the poor.

Let me be clear: I believe the justice system is for the most part fair, though areas of unfairness remain. These limited areas are serious problems by themselves, but their existence also feeds perceptions that the system fails to protect people of color, or deal with them fairly. During a meeting I had last year with a group of black journalists, I asked how many of them had been stopped by the police within the last few years for no reason other than the color of their skin. Every one of them raised his or her hand. Whether this is a matter of reality or perception—and I believe it is a combination

both—it must be addressed by all of us with responsibility for law enforcement and

**BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES  
-- THE CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION RECORD --**

**The Data:** Crime rates are declining – a 21 percent drop in violent crime victimizations since 1993, and the lowest crime rates in 25 years. The record that helped achieve this:

- **The 1994 Crime Bill:** After six years of gridlock, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed the toughest, smartest Crime Bill in the nation's history, including: funding for 100,000 more police; a ban on the manufacture and importation of 19-types of assault weapons; a targeted "Three-Strikes-and-You're-Out" provision to put career violent offenders behind bars for life; an expanded death penalty for drug kingpins and nearly 60 additional categories of violent felons; funding for 100,000 more prison cells to help states ensure that violent offenders serve their full sentences; a registration requirement and increased penalties for violent sexual offenders; and the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act.
- **Combating Gun Violence:** Won passage of the Brady Bill, which has helped to prevent over a quarter of a million felons and other prohibited purchasers from buying handguns since taking effect in 1994. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) took effect in November 1998, and has already conducted over 3.4 million background checks. In March 1999, President Clinton directed the Secretary of the Treasury and Attorney General to develop a national strategy to increase gun prosecutions and further reduce gun violence. The strategy will include: expanded efforts to identify illegal gun markets and gun "hot spots"; improved coordination with state and local law enforcement; closer supervision of gun criminals on parole or probation; and innovative, community-based efforts to reduce gun violence.

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community security.

And while many minority communities want and need strong law enforcement, they are bearing an enormous price for high rates of incarceration, especially for young

men of color. Today, one-third of all young, black males are under the supervision of the

#### THE CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION RECORD

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- **Restricting Youth Access to Guns**, with the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative in 37 cities to help trace crime guns to their source, as well as identify and arrest adults who traffic firearms to children; a Presidential Directive to enforce the "zero tolerance" policy for guns in schools, consistent with the Gun-Free Schools Act; and expansion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act to help make all schools safe, disciplined and drug-free. Recently, the President announced new legislation to strengthen the Brady Law and the assault weapons ban and restrict youth access to guns.
- **Fighting Domestic Violence**, including championing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), with \$1.6 billion over five years to hire more prosecutors and improve domestic violence training among prosecutors, police officers, and health and social services professionals, and dramatic increases in funding for shelters.
- **Combating Drug Use**, by year after year proposing the largest anti-drug budgets ever, helping to increase Federal counter-drug spending by nearly 40 percent since 1993. Overall drug use is half the level it was at its peak in the 1970's; drug-related murders are down by 40 percent since 1992; the first-ever paid anti-drug media campaign has been launched nationwide; and youth drug use is starting to decline. The number of drug courts has increased from an estimated 12 in 1994 to more than 400 in 1998, combining drug testing, sanctions, supervision and treatment to push nonviolent, drug-abusing offenders.

criminal justice system (on probation, in prison or jail, or on parole).<sup>19</sup> In a few places, such as Baltimore, more than 50 percent of young, black males are under criminal justice supervision.<sup>20</sup> Overall, the chance that a young male will go to prison during his lifetime is approximately 4 percent for whites, 16 percent for Hispanics, and nearly 30 percent for blacks.<sup>21</sup> While persons of color comprise less than one-third of the overall population in the United States, they comprise more than two-thirds of the Federal and state prison

populations, with blacks alone comprising nearly 50 percent of the prison population.<sup>22</sup>

These rates of imprisonment have substantial social and economic effects on minority communities, contributing to the rise in poor, single-parent, female-headed households, the lack of employable males of color, and the disenfranchisement of 1.4 million black males alone--they don't vote because under state laws they aren't permitted to.<sup>23</sup>

**T**hese conditions are intolerable. No American should have to live in constant fear of crime. No American should have reason to mistrust the very officers of the state assigned to protect him or her. No American should grow up believing that a stay in prison is a rite of passage. We must take action to eliminate these conditions and to build a criminal justice system that serves Americans of all races fully and fairly. There are voices in every community arguing that there is something fundamentally wrong with "the system." I disagree, but I also believe we can do better. We must do three things:

*First* and foremost, we must reduce crime and restore order in selected communities of color where crime and fear of crime are greatest. We must not cite high crime rates as an excuse for tolerating the fear, suffering and costs. That would be the worst kind of blaming the victim. Every American has the right to live in a safe community, and we should not be able to identify high-crime neighborhoods based on the

race of the residents who live there.

*Second*, we must prevent young people of color from becoming involved in crime and the criminal justice system. The present situation is dramatic. For black males born today, the odds of going to prison are greater than the odds of going to college. And racial disparities—from arrest through incarceration—are greater in the juvenile justice system than in the adult system. We must intervene to prevent juvenile delinquency before we lose another generation of minority youth to crime, as either victims or offenders. And for the kids who do get in trouble, we must intervene in their lives to help them become productive and successful members of society.

*Third*, we must build trust and confidence in the criminal justice system among persons of color. The vast majority of law enforcement officers in this nation are dedicated public servants of great courage and high moral character who deserve the respect of citizens of all races. I also want to stress that the tools of community policing—a subject I will discuss more below—are helping to restore trust in the justice system in thousands of communities. Furthermore, contrary to what some may believe, evidence shows that racial discrimination is not endemic to law enforcement. Evidence also reveals, however, that racial stereotypes and biases still exist, incidents of police brutality based on race still occur, and policies that have an unjustified disparate impact

on persons of color still operate. No person should be the target of law enforcement based on the color of his or her skin, and when such abuses occur we will prosecute the offenders to the fullest extent of the law. We must eliminate these conditions and increase fairness and trust in the criminal justice system.

In summary, to help us achieve our vision of One America, our workplan for criminal justice must increase community safety, prevent young people from entering the system, and build confidence and trust in law enforcement. We have laid the foundation for this work, and we have already made important progress. The cornerstone of that foundation is *community policing*—an approach to criminal justice that emphasizes strong partnerships between law enforcement and communities to prevent crime.

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## **B. THE FOUNDATION FOR THE WORKPLAN:**

### **COMMUNITY POLICING, AND THE CLINTON-GORE RECORD**

#### **(1) Community Policing**

While increasing law enforcement can help reduce crime in our highest-crime

communities, it must be the right kind of law enforcement done in the right way. A relatively new model of law enforcement, community policing is based on a few interrelated principles. First, reducing disorder in communities tends to encourage citizens to interact with one another and their community, which can lead to decreases in crime and fear of crime. Second, police must identify and help solve the underlying community problems that cause crime, rather than simply make arrests. Frequently, this involves collaborations with social service, education, or other agencies. Third, reducing disorder and solving community problems require strong relations between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve: police must not only know the concerns and needs of law-abiding citizens but look to these same citizens for information about neighborhood crime. Finally, citizens and community organizations can play a vital role as partners in solving community problems, and these efforts can directly improve community cohesiveness to further reduce crime.

Before I ran for President, I traveled across the country and visited different cities where local officials were leading the way in solving some of the nation's most difficult domestic problems. One of the places I visited was Charleston, South Carolina, where Police Chief Reuben Greenberg was at the forefront of the community policing movement. Through community policing, Chief Greenberg was both driving down the crime rate in public housing and strengthening the relationship between local police and

community residents.

When I became President, one of my top priorities was to help our cities hire more police and expand the community policing movement. Vice President Gore and I were proud to work with an unprecedented coalition of teachers, clergy, law enforcement and elected officials, and other community leaders to pass our initiative to put 100,000 more community police on the street. Today, we have reached this goal and helped expand community policing to thousands of police departments across the country. Since 1993, the number of communities implementing community policing has increased from hundreds to more than 11,300.<sup>24</sup> Our efforts are making a difference. Crime and fear of crime have dropped to their lowest levels in a quarter century. And I have asked Congress to extend the program by adding another 50,000 officers.

Our efforts in community policing provide a solid foundation for achieving the goals of enhancing safety in our highest crime communities, keeping young people out of the criminal justice system, and increasing trust and confidence in law enforcement. To fully achieve these goals, we should build on that foundation by applying the lessons learned from community policing in other areas of the criminal justice system, such as local prosecutors' offices, our courts, and the probation and parole systems.

**I**t is essential that the community itself be fully engaged in both the development and implementation of any new public safety effort. Without that involvement, targeted law enforcement efforts may be perceived not as comprehensive community building but as a full-scale assault on selected minority neighborhoods. Instead of increasing public safety, we can end up increasing mistrust of law enforcement, thereby actually reducing its effectiveness.

**COMMUNITY POLICING AND THE  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CRIME BILL**

Over a decade ago, forward-looking police chiefs built on research and their own experiences to develop a new approach to fighting crime in American communities. These police chiefs and scholars recognized that when police were isolated from the community in which they serve—operating from the precinct station house or from the patrol car—they were handicapped in the fight against crime. The chiefs came up with a new strategy for law enforcement: community policing.

The Clinton/Gore Administration embraced this new approach in the Community Oriented Policing Services [COPS], created in 1994. In May, 1999, the President urged adding 50,000 officers as part of his proposed “The 21st Century Law Enforcement and Public Safety Act.” Designed as an extension of the successful 1994 Crime Act, among the other key provisions:

- **Punish and prevent youth crime and violence** by giving prosecutors new tools to punish the most violent juveniles and curb witness intimidation by gang members, promoting swift and certain punishment for all juvenile offenders, and working to prevent at-risk youth from committing serious crimes in the first place by supporting comprehensive community-based initiatives.
- **Break the cycle of drugs and crime** by expanding drug courts, helping states and localities implement “zero tolerance” drug supervision programs that test, treat, and punish all drug-involved offenders, and putting into place tough provisions on money laundering to help staunch the flow of illegal drug profits.
- **Protect all crime victims** by enhancing penalties for child abusers who kill and adults who commit violent crimes in the presence of a child; and by keeping up the fight against domestic violence.

Research shows that by improving the legitimacy of police in the eyes of the community, we can not only reduce tensions, but also help prevent crime.<sup>25</sup> Building that police legitimacy requires training police and citizens to interact effectively, with mutual respect, and building lines of communication through community meetings and other mechanisms. In all of this, however, we must recognize that racial and ethnic differences, festering as mistrust and suspicion, stand in the way of achieving what both the community and the police seek: the community security to which every American is entitled.

The community must also be fully engaged because each community's crime problem is to some extent unique, and the law-abiding citizens of each community are the best resource for understanding the roots of the crime and fear of crime they face.

**CHICAGO'S ALTERNATIVE  
POLICING STRATEGY (CAPS)**

Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) seeks to identify and resolve problems of crime at the neighborhood level by putting more police on the street, training police and citizens in problem solving and partnership building, and holding hundreds of community meetings each month around the city at which thousands of Chicagoans interact with their community policing officers. Evaluations of CAPS show that the effort has been successful in reducing crime, reducing fear of crime, and improving relations between citizens and law enforcement.

Partnerships are, therefore, the heart of community policing. Evidence shows—as with Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)—that the expansion of community policing has contributed greatly to the decrease in crime across our nation and to better police-community relations.<sup>26</sup>

As difficult as these problems are, there is reason to hope. Law enforcement need not be a losing battle if we use what we know, invest what we can, and stay focused on the goal of community security.

## **(2) Gangs, Guns, and Drugs**

Increased law enforcement can help prevent crime, and these returns can be greatest in our highest crime communities.<sup>27</sup> According to a recent study, “each additional police officer assigned to a big city prevents six times as many serious crimes each year as an officer assigned nationally by population.”<sup>28</sup> But to be most effective, increased law enforcement must be aimed at the right places and factors.

Crime is largely a concentrated phenomenon. Even within our highest crime areas, the vast majority of crime occurs in relatively few places and at relatively few times. Studies have shown that as little as three percent of all street addresses can account for as much as 50 percent of the crime in a given community.<sup>29</sup> These “hot spots within hot spots” may include buildings, parks, or street corners that serve as havens for criminal activity. The best law enforcement strategies identify high-crime places through computer mapping, and then increase police patrols at those high-crime places at high-crime times. Importantly, research shows that enhancing such targeted law enforcement does not

simply displace crime, but actually reduces it.

In addition, whatever unique problems exist in a given high-crime community, two problems likely to be pervasive are guns and drugs. And we know that at the heart of the violent crime problem is the combination of guns and drugs. Alfred Blumstein and other noted criminologists postulate that the rise in violent crime in our highest-crime communities during the 1980s was the result of a rise in gun violence among youth caused by the emergence of crack cocaine. According to Professor Blumstein:

[C]rack arrived in the mid-1980s, initially in the larger cities, and spread from there to the smaller cities. Because crack required many more sellers to meet the increased demand ... there was major recruitment of young minorities to serve in that role. They were carrying valuable property—drugs or the proceeds from the sale of those drugs—and so they had to take steps to protect themselves from robbery. Because they were dealing in an illegal market, they could not call the police if someone tried to steal their valuables. Their self-protection involved carrying handguns. Because young men are tightly networked and highly imitative, their colleagues—even those not involved in selling drugs—armed themselves also, at least in part as a matter of self-protection against those who were armed. That led to an arms race in many inner-city neighborhoods.

It is widely recognized that violence has always been part of teenage males' dispute resolution repertoire, but that has typically involved fights, the consequences of which were usually no more serious than a bloody nose. The lethality of the ubiquitous guns contributed in a major way to the doubling of the homicide rate by (and of) those 18 and under.<sup>30</sup>

One important lesson from this theory is that guns do kill people, and that truth is especially plain in the struggles of young people of color in our most disadvantaged communities. But we also know that guns and teen violence are not exclusive to communities of color. As we have seen in the senseless multiple shootings at schools, hatred, fear and gun violence respect no racial boundaries. We must look beyond the stereotyped notion that youth violence is solely an inner-city phenomenon. We must ask ourselves, what would make a teenager of any color pick up a gun and kill? Sadly, it takes events like Columbine to get the nation's attention. But I share the grief and outrage of thousands of parents in communities who live with violence day in and day out, praying that their child will not be next.

We don't have all the answers, but we do know that in places where community supervision is limited, many young people are armed, and gangs exert great influence, disputes are more likely to be "resolved" through gun violence. About 40 percent of all

murders committed in the United States each year are committed by persons under 24 years old with guns.<sup>31</sup> In the words of criminologists Philip Cook and Mark Moore, “There are very few drive-by knifings, or people killed accidentally by stray fists.”<sup>32</sup> We must take action to stop gun violence and to keep guns out of the hands of those who should not have them, including convicted felons and juveniles. The one thing that Columbine has in common with our most distressed urban communities is the easy access to guns. That is why I have pressed for new, tougher measures, including strengthening the Brady Law to prevent any juvenile convicted of committing a violent crime from ever buying a gun, and requiring background checks to anyone attempting to buy weapons at a gun show. I have also proposed a crackdown on illegal gun trafficking, closing the loopholes in our assault weapons ban and raising the legal age of handgun possession from 18 to 21 years. (As I write this, these measures are moving through the Congress.)

In addition, we must crack down on gang activity. Today, there are an estimated 23,000 gangs with 665,000 members in 2,000 jurisdictions across the country, and there is evidence that these numbers are growing.<sup>33</sup> Research shows that gang members account for a high percentage of crime in our highest crime communities and that gang membership itself encourages criminal activity.<sup>34</sup> We must prevent and reduce gang membership and crime. In large part, this means increasing support for prevention programs aimed at our young people. Simply put, we must draw the line against gang and

gun violence in our highest crime communities. By doing so, we can reduce crime and save lives. For example, in Boston, law enforcement and community leaders—especially clergy leaders—came together in 1996 and made clear to gang members that any gun violence by any gang member would be met with a massive, comprehensive crackdown against all members of the gang. The result was an immediate decline in the number of juvenile homicides in Boston to zero for two consecutive years. Still, researchers tell us that we know far too little about the strategies most likely to work in different communities. Gangs sow chaos, and we must redouble our efforts to combat them not only with effective police work, but also by strengthening families, improving our schools, and strengthening the community institutions that create hope.

#### **THE BOSTON GUN PROJECT**

The Boston Gun Project presents an innovative approach to deterring violent crime: combining the efforts of the Boston Police Department, the departments of probation and parole, the U.S. Attorney's and county prosecutor's offices, the Attorney General's Office, school police, youth corrections, social services, and other partners, the Ceasefire Working Group meets with gangs, makes it clear that violence will not be tolerated, and backs up that message with swift and strong reactions if violence does occur. The strategy has demonstrated that communicating up-front the consequences of gang violence and backing up the message brings about impressive results.

Finally, while the use of some drugs is decreasing in many places, the percentage of persons who commit crimes under the influence of drugs is increasing,<sup>35</sup> and drug markets continue to threaten order in our highest-crime communities. That's why we

cannot ease up our battle against drug use and illicit drug markets. However, we must also acknowledge that the war on drugs has taken a terrible, disproportionate toll on persons in communities of color—compounding the destruction from the drug scourge itself. So, with more effective enforcement, we need a reinvigorated focus on prevention, treatment and promoting greater fairness in administration of our drug laws.

We have made important progress in the war on drugs, but we cannot “incarcerate” ourselves to victory in these most needy communities.

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**C. BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION TO  
ENSURE SECURITY IN OUR HIGHEST-CRIME COMMUNITIES:  
HOT SPOT PARTNERSHIPS**

Our record of accomplishments and proposals provide the foundation needed to face head-on the special challenges in our worst crime areas. Unless we do, these communities will be left behind, and so will our goal of building One America.

**(1) Tighter Targeting of Federal Resources for Partnerships in Crime Hot Spots**

Although crime rates are dropping across the nation and for all racial groups, they remain unacceptably high in a small number of deeply poor, mostly minority communities. These high-crime areas are concentrated in urban centers, but exist in other areas as well, including parts of Indian country. In 1998, we took action at the federal level to target community policing resources to our highest need cities, and I have proposed similar targeting of future federal community policing resources as well. But we must do more.

I believe the federal government should take the leadership in supporting *Crime Hot Spot Partnerships*, working with state and local governments to promote comprehensive community policing and crime prevention initiatives targeting neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, social disorder, and high crime rates. Like multiple fire hoses aimed at the center of a blaze, *Hot Spot Partnerships* would pull proven community safety efforts together in a single stream targeted at the centers of danger.

### **INSIDE A CRIME HOT SPOTS PARTNERSHIP**

To qualify for federal assistance, communities would be required to bring all the actors to the table (federal, state, and local; public and private; law enforcement and other services; and, most important, concerned citizens and community leaders) to develop a strategy to prevent and combat crime in specific highest-crime neighborhoods.

These community strategies, and the partnership agreement to implement them, include concrete goals for reducing crime, reducing fear of crime, increasing confidence and trust in law enforcement, and more. For accountability, continued federal support would be tied to progress.

Strategies would vary, but probably include such elements as (1) enhancing community policing, (2) rebuilding community "social infrastructure", and (3) proven prevention programs aimed at young people, such as mentoring and after-school programs.

This third element is key. Just as overcoming disparities in educational achievement requires taking early action, preventing crime by teens and young adults requires early action to increase community supervision, provide adult support, strengthen families, and instill a belief in opportunity. All of this should go hand-in-hand with other community and economic development efforts aimed at our most distressed communities. That means including business, education, faith and other sectors as partners in the development of community plans.

In important respects, my proposal is akin to the very successful community empowerment strategy embodied in the Empowerment Zones initiative. Communities demonstrating initiative and creativity in tackling conditions in their highest-crime neighborhoods would receive added funds and flexibility, tied to results. The targeted federal assistance might be drawn from a range of existing and proposed programs, perhaps using the flexibility available under current and proposed laws. If, for example, we took just a fraction of the tens of billions of dollars the Federal government will spend on crime enforcement and prevention over the next five years, and invested that to

leverage break-through efforts in Hot Spots, that would amount to a major down payment toward ensuring that no communities are left behind as we continue to drive down crime rates.

Many strategies show promise for reducing crime in our highest-crime communities. But hard evidence from program evaluations is never as extensive as we would like on a subject of this importance. In part, this is hard—though not impossible—for social science to measure. The idea I have proposed above, therefore, is designed to be flexible and to support innovative local approaches to reducing crime, but at the same time to make the most use out of the things we know can work.

My hope is that Congress will complete action on the pending crime proposals in a manner which leaves sufficient flexibility to fashion a *Hot Spots Partnership* initiative without further legislation. By focusing the resources of many programs and many actors on the concentrated problems facing our highest-crime neighborhoods, we can vastly improve public safety, and we can do so in a way that helps keep young people out of crime while building greater confidence and trust in our criminal justice system.

**(2) Build Stronger Communities**

While law enforcement is important, crime prevention in most communities is a consequence not only of government or law enforcement, but is primarily based on the strength of the community itself, and the families within it. As one authority has put it:

Each person's bonds to family, community, school and work create what criminologists call 'informal social control,' the pressures to conform to the law that have little to do with the threat of punishment. Informal controls threaten something that may be far more fearsome than simply life in prison: shame and disgrace in the eyes of other people you depend upon.<sup>36</sup>

Emerging research shows that crime rates in communities are related to what researchers call "collective efficacy," which simply means the degree of social cohesion in a community—the extent to which neighbors know, trust, and look out for one another; the more there is, the lower the crime rates.<sup>37</sup> So, formal law enforcement efforts must be fully aligned with and support a range of community- and school-based efforts that leverage informal social controls—from parent-teacher associations to neighborhood watch programs.

However, communities with the highest crime rates not surprisingly have the worst social conditions for preventing crime—pervasive unemployment, family disruption, residential instability, and symptoms of disorder and seemingly petty lawlessness. According to Wesley Skogan:

Disorder is evident in the widespread appearance of junk and trash in vacant lots; it is evident, too, in decaying homes, boarded-up buildings, the vandalism of public and private property, graffiti, and stripped and abandoned cars in streets and alleys. It is signaled by bands of teenagers congregating on street corners, by the presence of prostitutes and panhandlers, by public drinking, the verbal harassment of women, and open gambling and drug use. What these conditions have in common is that they signal a breakdown of local social order. Communities beset by disorder can no longer expect people to act in a civil fashion in public places. . .

Researchers have found that perceptions of disorder have many ill effects on urban neighborhoods. Disorder not only sparks concern and fear of crime among neighborhood residents; it may actually increase the level of serious crime. Disorder erodes what control neighborhood residents can maintain over local events and conditions. It drives out those for whom stable community life is

important, and discourages people with similar values from moving in. It threatens house prices and discourages investment. In short, disorder is an instrument of destabilization and neighborhood decline.<sup>38</sup>

We can and must take action to rebuild community infrastructure and strengthen the forces of cohesion. One simple key is to get organizations involved. Existing community organizations can and must reach into high-crime neighborhoods, encourage civic participation, and build a foundation of community support.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the community can be an essential partner in helping to restore order in high-crime communities by cleaning up areas and promoting positive activities for youth. Indeed, these roles might be more appropriate and successful ones for citizens and organizations than a more traditional law enforcement role. Finally, we must promote quality education and strong economic development to overcome the concentrated disadvantage that plagues many high-crime communities. The elements of the workplan I have proposed in these other areas are also vital to building secure communities.

### **(3) Keep Young People Out of Crime and the Criminal Justice System**

After increasing dramatically for nearly a decade, juvenile crime has been decreasing rapidly for the last few years at rates even greater than adult crime. Too many

children are still falling prey to crime, however, as either offenders or victims. And kids who commit crime are significantly more likely to become adults who commit crime.<sup>40</sup> There are nearly 3 million juvenile arrests across the nation each year, and children of color are over represented in those arrests and at every stage in the juvenile justice process.<sup>41</sup> For example, minority youth constitute approximately 32 percent of the juvenile population, but they represent 68 percent of the juvenile population in detention.<sup>42</sup> The further you go in the process, the worse the disparities look: black youth constitute approximately 15 percent of the juvenile population, but blacks alone account for 26 percent of juvenile arrests, 32 percent of delinquency referrals to juvenile court, 41 percent of juveniles detained in delinquency cases, 46 percent of juveniles in correctional institutions, and 52 percent of juveniles transferred to adult criminal court after judicial proceedings.<sup>43</sup>

To some, these figures raise serious concerns about the fairness of the juvenile justice system. I, too, am very troubled. But we must face facts. The numbers also reflect disparities in the commission of crimes and the need for greater efforts to keep our young people, especially young males of color, out of crime and the criminal justice system. Once again, research suggests that racial disparities in the commission of crimes by youth are closely tied to factors such as concentrated poverty, family disruption, and residential instability that plague many communities in which children of color are raised.<sup>44</sup>

Controlling for those factors, juvenile offending rates do not differ significantly by race.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, supporting efforts in our highest crime communities, described above, to increase law enforcement, enhance community policing, rebuild collective efficacy, and promote economic development will help reduce and prevent youth crime. However, in addition to and as part of those efforts, we must also renew our commitment to prevention and treatment programs aimed directly at youth and young adults to ensure that our children have every chance to succeed in life rather than getting caught up in a life of crime. But none of this will matter unless young people themselves seize these opportunities and take responsibility for leading healthy, productive lives.

- **Prevent Crime by Supporting Young People**

Several strategies show evidence of success at keeping young people out of crime and the criminal justice system and would likely have a disproportionately positive effect on young people of color. Implementing those strategies successfully will require the support and participation of families, schools, and communities. At the federal level, in 1998, I was proud that we launched a Values-Based Violence Prevention Initiative to support community-based efforts led by civic and religious organizations and designed to target the problems facing young people, including youth violence, truancy, and gangs. I believe these efforts show great promise, and we must do more at all levels of

government—especially at the community level.

First, as reported in the education section of this chapter, emerging evidence shows that early childhood and family support programs can help reduce criminal activity years and even decades later. The Perry Preschool project in Michigan, for example, provided early childhood education and in-home family support for low-income, black children ages three to five and their families. Children who participated in the project were found to be less than

one fourth as likely to become involved in crime by age 24 as children who did not participate in the program.<sup>46</sup> Similar programs have also been found to reduce child abuse, which is a great evil in itself and a risk factor for future child delinquency and adult criminality.<sup>47</sup> We must increase support for early childhood development, family support, and quality pre-school programs to reduce juvenile delinquency and increase

#### **YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

In Houston, police opened a police substation in a neighborhood storefront, where officers met with community residents, held community meetings, and developed programs to bring the police and community closer together.† Special patrols monitored known trouble spots in the neighborhood, and officers met regularly with local school administrators. In addition, the city has begun to invest \$46 million in revitalizing the city's 77 parks, an effort intended to reclaim parks as safe and beautiful public spaces after many had become havens for gangs and drug activity.

Boston has also adopted several innovative strategies for curbing youth crime: in addition to the Boston Gun Project (see previous text box), Operation Night Light pairs one probation officer with two police officers to make unscheduled visits to the homes, schools, and workplaces of high-risk youth probationers between 7 p.m. to midnight, rather than the traditional hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The program has succeeded in coordinating the efforts of correctional officers and police officers and has shown promising results with youths on probation.

educational achievement.

Second, after-school programs can help reduce delinquent activity. Data show that juvenile crime peaks sharply at 3 p.m., just as school lets out, and remains high until approximately 8 p.m.<sup>48</sup> It is during these hours of 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. that our kids are often on their own and most likely to fall prey to gangs, drugs, and/or crime. By keeping schools open to serve children and their families during these hours, we can provide our children with safe havens from crime, promote constructive activities, and develop educational and other skills.

Third, many young people get into trouble because they lack adult and/or community supervision. Mentoring programs can prevent juvenile crime by providing that supervision and vital support. For example, a recent study of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America program, which has existed for more than 90 years, found that children participating in the program, 60 percent of whom were children of color, were significantly less likely to use drugs or alcohol, get into fights, or skip school than kids who did not participate in the program.<sup>49</sup> If we are going to prevent our young people from getting involved in gangs and crime, more caring adults must get involved in the lives of our young people as mentors. Community-based organizations and institutions are often the best sources for this kind of civic investment.

- **Promote Appropriate Punishments When Children First Get in Trouble**

Rates of criminal recidivism—repeated law-breaking—among juveniles and adults are astounding. Data show that the majority of adult prisoners released from state prison are rearrested within three years, and these recidivism rates are highest for persons of color.<sup>50</sup> For some violent juvenile and young adult offenders, arrest and incarceration are necessary, justified, and effective. In many instances and many ways, however, we can do more to intervene in the lives of young people who commit crimes or delinquent acts and help them and their families turn their lives around. Once again, several strategies have shown signs of success.

First among these strategies are youth, gun, and drug courts, as well as drug treatment more generally. These courts provide alternative interventions for non-violent youth offenders and offer treatment and other services as long as those offenders stay out of further trouble. Drug courts have become particularly important, both for children and adults. Data show that the majority of all crime is committed under the influence of drugs, including alcohol, or to get money to buy drugs.<sup>51</sup> Drug courts and related treatment strategies can help reduce recidivism by offering first-time, non-violent offenders drug treatment, but requiring consistent drug testing and exacting immediate sanctions for

failing a drug test. There is a related challenge posed by the fact that too many of those arrested for drug offenses never get the treatment that makes it more likely that they will overcome their addictions. Most people on probation, parole, or in prison have some form of drug history,<sup>52</sup> but we have not done enough to reduce their drug use and the criminal behavior it often provokes. That's a self-defeating approach to fighting crime, and we must do better.

Second, programs that promote what is called "restorative justice" can help reduce repeat offending. Restorative justice holds youth offenders responsible for their delinquent acts to both their victims and communities. Delinquent youth are required to make restitution and perform community service, but they are also given adult mentoring and employment training. Studies indicate that such programs can reduce recidivism and strengthen community values.<sup>53</sup> In addition, both offenders and victims who participate in restorative justice report greater respect for the criminal justice system, which may also reduce criminal offending.<sup>54</sup>

**I**t's not enough to just hope that families, and perhaps churches and schools, will keep youngsters on the right path, or "straighten them out" if things go wrong. Wishing that things would be like they were in some idealized past is a romantic and

ineffective response to those who are struggling against all but overwhelming problems. It takes hard work by loved ones and by people in positions of community or public leadership, to help young people make the right choices for their future.

Our country has a higher proportion of our people in prisons and jails than any other democracy. While we have had important success in reducing violent crime in recent years, it remains intolerably high, especially in our poorest communities. Taken together, these facts are overwhelming proof that we need far more emphasis on prevention and diversion, to stop criminal behavior before the seeds of wrongdoing take root in adolescent minds. It has been said that the best social policy is a good job. There's much truth to that, because a good job anchors a strong family and strong families anchor a vibrant community. Yes, we must redouble our efforts to create jobs so that no community is left behind. But meanwhile, we cannot write off children and leave them vulnerable to crime or the seduction of criminal behavior. We cannot build the One America we want if one in six black children born today, and one in eleven Hispanic children, can be expected during their lives to spend time in a prison, while white children face only a one-in-40 lifetime chance of incarceration.

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**D. BUILD FAIRNESS AND TRUST IN OUR  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM ACROSS RACIAL LINES**

There is no more fundamental tenet of our governmental system than the entitlement of every person, inscribed in our Constitution, to equal protection under the law. That seemingly simple notion means many things in many contexts. But at its heart, it means that the state shall not without compelling reason treat people differently because of such factors as race, color, or national origin. The criminal justice system is the most powerful domestic arm of the state. It has the power to restrict individual freedom and, in extreme cases, even to take human life. With that power comes the great responsibility and obligation to implement our laws fairly and justly.

Today, persons of color continue to have less confidence and trust in our criminal justice system than whites. In a recent poll, for example, a majority of blacks said they believe that the criminal justice system is biased against them.<sup>55</sup> These perceptions are based on a number of experiences, incidents, and policies that lead some law-abiding persons of color to believe that they are likely to be targeted or threatened by law enforcement for no reason other than the color of their skin.

For white Americans, it is difficult but important to fully understand what this means. Recently, the brother of a young, black member of my staff got his driver's license. But, as my staff member explained to me, before his brother was allowed to drive, his parents would have to have "the talk" with him. I wasn't sure what that meant. "The talk" in this case was that when (not if, but when) the young man is stopped by the police for no reason other than the color of his skin, he is to hide his frustration and anger so that an upsetting situation does not escalate into a dangerous one. Many African Americans have dubbed this phantom crime "Driving While Black." Two United States attorneys who are African American talked at a recent Department of Justice conference about having similar conversations with their own children.<sup>56</sup> That is a talk that most white parents do not have to have with their children. And it is a talk that no American family should have to have.

The lack of trust and confidence in our criminal justice system among persons of color is not only morally disconcerting, it also limits the effectiveness of law enforcement. People who don't trust the police or have confidence in them may not report crimes, may not cooperate in investigations, and may even work against law enforcement by "sticking up for" acquaintances involved in crime. Recent studies show that persons are more likely to obey the law when they believe the law and its officers are legitimate, and when they are treated with respect. One study in Milwaukee, for example, found that

persons arrested for domestic violence who believed they were treated fairly by law enforcement officials in their interactions were significantly less likely to commit another act of domestic violence compared to those who believed they were treated unfairly.<sup>57</sup> A similar study found that persons who perceived that police treated them fairly in their interactions (such as when they were stopped by the police for traffic offenses) were less likely to commit minor crimes (such as parking violations or petty theft).<sup>58</sup> While the studies may not put the social science question to rest, these troubling results are in a way unsurprising. The fact is that we are all more likely to obey rules, respect authority, and feel like members of a community when we believe that the rules are legitimate, the authority treats us fairly, and the community respects our concerns. None of these are excuses for committing crime. They are reasons to enforce the laws fairly.

We must take action to build the same levels of confidence and trust in our criminal justice system among persons of color that other Americans have. In no small part, this means improving relations between law enforcement and minority communities. Community policing can play an important role here by establishing stronger lines of communication—through community meetings, door-to-door visits, and more—and by building partnerships between citizens and law enforcement. In addition, we must do a better job of training law enforcement officials in how to interact effectively with citizens of all races. Finally, we must address several important and difficult issues underlying the

present racial gap in trust and confidence in our criminal justice system, including such issues as racial profiling, police brutality, disparities in incarceration rates and sentencing, and the lack of diversity in law enforcement.

The answer to the question of whether there is discrimination in the administration of justice should not be, “We don’t *know* there is discrimination.” The answer must be, “We know there is *not* discrimination, and we have processes in place to ensure that.” Clearly, we’re not there yet.

#### **(1) Combat Racial Profiling**

I discussed my general views concerning racial profiling in Part II of this book. I know that reconciling the day-to-day reality of street-level law enforcement with racial and ethnic justice concerns is not always as simple as some people – on both sides of the issues – argue. That said, I believe that to achieve our vision of One America with community security and community faith in law enforcement, all levels of government must take this issue head on. First, we must promote greater training for law enforcement officers on how to avoid basing their actions on improper racial stereotypes and how to interact fairly and constructively with citizens of all races in ways that de-escalate situations and build trust. The Department of Justice is working on this at the national

level, and many local jurisdictions have already tackled this challenge.

Second, we must improve data collection so that we know the extent to which persons of color are being inappropriately targeted by law enforcement and can take steps to restrict such actions.

Third, we must use the full force of our civil rights law enforcement agencies to correct situations in which persons of color are being inappropriately targeted by law enforcement. Specifically, the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department investigates the most serious allegations of this sort; I believe this work is vital to public confidence in the criminal justice system, and needs the ongoing support of U.S. attorneys as well as state and local officials.

Finally, we should encourage all levels of law enforcement to develop and explain clear policies concerning racial profiling. Both our officers and the general public deserve that. At the federal level, I have instructed the Attorney General to prepare an Executive Order for my signature that will establish policy throughout all of federal law enforcement, and provide an example to state and local jurisdictions that have no policy. That order will prohibit the use of race or ethnicity as a factor for general screening of the population in all contexts, with one limited exception. I want to leave law enforcement

officials with the possibility of making a special case for the use of race or ethnicity, but only by providing a detailed public justification and instituting reliable mechanisms to collect data and monitor their practice to detect and correct any abuses. Any exceptions would have to be specifically approved by the responsible Cabinet Officer, and would require periodic reconsideration.

**Executive Order on Racial Profiling**

The Federal executive order will include:

- A broad prohibition against the use of race or ethnicity by federal law enforcement officers;
- Authority for cabinet officers to grant limited exceptions, based on specific justification offered by an enforcement agency, related to national security or a comparably vital interest, fully supportable under the Constitution, and disclosed to the general public;
- Any exception would require a showing that there are no reasonable alternative enforcement strategies, and would be accompanied by thorough data collection, training, and monitoring;
- Periodic evaluation of the implementation of this overall policy.

I believe this strong presumption against any use of race or ethnicity is consistent with our values, and with a vision of One America in which we build diverse communities, replacing stereotypes with trust. But I want to leave the door open just a little for the possibility of extraordinary justifications consistent with the Constitution and related to national security or comparable grounds. For example, some career professionals at the Immigration and Naturalization Service believe there are certain situations close to the Southwest border in which the problems of illegal crossings and

alien smuggling are so serious that the Border Patrol must occasionally do “random” car stops, and there is no reasonable alternative to using apparent ethnicity as one of several factors in their selection of cars to stop. Although this procedure is constitutionally permissible because of the weight of sovereignty concerns at the border, none of us should feel comfortable with it. Inevitably, citizens and lawful residents are stopped, largely because of the way they look. They are made to pay a cost for the border security we all want.

We should not ignore that cost, and indeed there should be a presumption as a matter of policy that such stops are unacceptable. We should insist that Border Patrol impositions (on our behalf) are very carefully justified by their true contribution to law enforcement and the absence of alternative strategies. That means careful data collection. And it means that any such policy must be monitored to minimize abuses. My executive order will bar racial profiling, and I have specifically asked the Attorney General to address thoroughly all of these concerns in the Border Patrol context and to recommend whether any kind of exception to the general ban is warranted.

## **(2) Eliminate Police Brutality**

No issue looms larger than the issue of police brutality. We all know many of the

most egregious incidents, from Rodney King to Abner Louima to Amadou Diallo. We have all read the headlines: “New York Police Officer Accused of Brutalizing Haitian Immigrant.” We have also lived through the racial tension and even community violence that such incidents can spark. But what we must understand is that to many persons of color, incidents of police brutality are more than just discrete, horrific acts; they are seen as examples of what could happen to them if they are caught in the wrong place at the wrong time with the “wrong” kind of officer. That lack of trust is a reality, and it is corrosive.

But there is another reality. Most police officers are, quite simply, heroes who do an extremely difficult job with fairness, honor, and skill. Furthermore, most officers abhor the improper use of force because it hurts their legitimacy, makes their jobs more difficult and, most importantly, is inconsistent with their responsibility to enforce the law. When we take action against police misconduct, we are not taking action against our law enforcement officers, we are taking action to support good law enforcement and to protect all citizens from crime. Simply put, police brutality is a violent crime made more vile by the fact that it is committed under the supposed authority of the state, by servants of the community, and sometimes appears, when it does occur, to be motivated by racial or ethnic prejudice.

I want to make two points here: First, we know too little about police use of excessive force. As of 1994, federal law requires the U.S. Department of Justice to collect and analyze data on excessive use of force. While a preliminary report suggests that police use of force occurs infrequently but disproportionately involves persons of color,<sup>59</sup> this study is very limited, and more comprehensive analysis is needed. What is clear is that all levels of government can do a much better job monitoring police use of force and communicating to police and citizens that excessive use of force is unacceptable and will be punished. That is what both professionalism and fairness require.

But, second, apart from the need for better monitoring and information, we must acknowledge that excessive use of force against persons of color still occurs. There are just too many examples, some horrific, to ignore the problem. Later in this book, I will challenge communities across the nation to formulate workplans to help achieve their vision of a healed, “opportunity community” in a just One America. I believe that any such community workplan must include a determined effort to root out police brutality and punish those who commit it.

I pledge whatever advice and assistance the experience and resources of the federal government can offer, because police brutality is destructive of the trust so essential to community law enforcement. We know some of what works. Police leaders

have found certain training to be helpful, including how to communicate across racial lines, how to de-escalate situations, and how to use force only in appropriate circumstances and in appropriate ways. It helps to have clear mechanisms for dealing with allegations of excessive use of force that include clear chains of management and independent review. And finally, federal and state prosecutors must be prepared to combat brutality through appropriate enforcement actions, because these are crimes in which the victims include the community and justice itself.

**(3) Ensure Fairness in Incarceration and Sentencing**

While persons of color make up less than one-third of our nation's population, they make up more than two-thirds of the state and federal prison populations.<sup>60</sup> Blacks account for 43 percent of arrests, 54 percent of convictions, and 59 percent of prison admissions for violent crime.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, America has a greater percentage of its citizens behind bars than any other nation in the world, except Russia.<sup>62</sup> These rates of imprisonment and racial disparities are disconcerting regardless of the cause and, as I have argued, we must take bolder steps to prevent crime and recidivism. However, in terms of fairness in the administration of justice, the key question is to what extent are present disparities caused by discrimination in the administration of justice. Most of us believe that discrimination is a very small factor, but some of our citizens feel otherwise.

Still more of us suspect that, even if there is not discrimination, there is some subtle role of racial difference and color that has stacked the deck.

Having said that, the best available evidence indicates that most of the existing disparities in the administration of justice—from arrest through sentencing—are not due to discrimination, but are primarily due to underlying disparities in the commission of crimes: once the crime is committed, the rates of arrest, conviction and imprisonment do not seem to differ significantly by race. For example, a recent analysis by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) compared racial differences in arrest rates for several violent crimes to data from a national survey of crime victims concerning the race of their assailants. GAO found no significant difference between the two, suggesting that controlling for criminal offending, arrest rates do not differ significantly by race.<sup>63</sup> In addition, a study by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics tracked more than 10,000 adult, felony defendants in the nation's 75 largest cities through all stages of the criminal justice process. The study, which focused on black and white defendants, found that the defendants were equally likely to be prosecuted and convicted, and received the same sentence regardless of race.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, there is a key area in which disparities in the administration of justice raise immediate concerns of discrimination. Racial disparities in drug arrests and

sentencing are dramatic. In part, this is an unintended consequence of the war on drugs. Let me be clear: I believe that drugs, drug use, and especially drug trafficking should be unlawful and subject to punishment. Drugs destroy individuals, families, and communities, and threaten the strength of our nation. However, we cannot ignore the disproportionate impact that drug laws and enforcement have had on persons of color in America. Blacks, for example, are approximately five times more likely than whites to be arrested for drug-related offenses.<sup>65</sup>

The war on drugs is a war *for* our communities and children, not a war against them. That is why I have urged increases in support for prevention and treatment. This also means making sure kids get the message on drugs, and we have launched at the federal level a \$200 million anti-drug media campaign to promote that message. However, this also means revising drug policies and practices that have an unjustified negative impact on persons of color. Chief among these is the present gap in sentencing for crack versus powder cocaine. Under present federal law, possession of 5 grams of crack cocaine triggers a 5-year mandatory minimum sentence, the same sentence imposed for possessing 500 grams of powder cocaine, a 100:1 ratio. Black defendants comprise 84 percent of those convicted in federal court of crack cocaine offenses, compared with 30 percent of those convicted of powder cocaine offenses.<sup>66</sup> There are some legitimate justifications for treating crack cocaine offenses more harshly than powder cocaine

offenses, but, as the Advisory Board on Race said in its final report, the disparate racial effect of the present policy and the racial division it engenders make the present 100:1 ratio “morally and intellectually indefensible.” I believe we should, in effect, lower the sentence for crack cocaine while raising the sentence for powder cocaine to reduce the present sentencing disparity to 10:1 and, thereby, reduce the reality and perception of unfairness.

**(4) Increase Diversity in Law Enforcement**

Police and prosecutors, judges and jurors, are officers of our society empowered on behalf of all of us to enforce the laws and serve all of us. Quite simply, they are likely to receive greater trust and confidence when all persons in society see themselves reflected in those officers. When it comes to diversity in law enforcement, we are, to some extent, caught in an unfortunate cycle. Increasing minority representation in law enforcement may increase trust in law enforcement among citizens of color. But the lack of trust and confidence in law enforcement among persons of color likely makes it more difficult to attract minority law enforcement officers.

We have made some important gains in diversifying law enforcement. In 1993, persons of color comprised 18 percent of all police officers in local police and sheriff's

departments across the nation and 30 percent of all officers in larger cities. Since that time, our COPS initiative has helped fund nearly 100,000 additional police officers in communities across the nation. And one goal of that initiative has been to increase diversity in law enforcement. Furthermore, I am proud that, as President, I have appointed several minorities to some of the country's top law enforcement posts and appointed more persons of color as federal judges than any other President in our nation's history. We must continue this progress at all levels of government and in all segments of the criminal justice system.

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### **CONCLUSION**

All that we have talked about—ensuring public safety, keeping young people out of crime, and guaranteeing fairness in the administration of justice—is crucial to building One America. Crime and fear of crime threaten some of our American communities and too many of our fellow citizens. We cannot ignore the frustrations of many Americans of color who too often experience injustices at the hands of our criminal justice system.

But I do not think you can talk about crime in America, especially the

proliferation of crime and violence among young people of color in deeply poor communities, without talking about the values and the lessons we teach our young people. A child's world view—whether positive or negative—is formed early in life, not only by the love or lack of love we show them, but also by the investments we make or don't make in their futures, the values and images we present them through the media, and the opportunity or lack of opportunity that surrounds them. We cannot be satisfied when some states spend more on prisons than education, or when America, the land of the free, has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. Doesn't it make more sense to invest in our children at the front end of their lives—in education, in prevention, in strong communities—than to pay at the back end by building more and stronger prisons in which to warehouse them? We cannot talk about race and crime in America without talking about our commitment, as parents and as a nation, to embrace all children as our own and to give them something to say yes to.

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November 1, 1999

To: John Podesta, Chief of Staff  
Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff

From: Christopher Edley, Jr. 

Re: The President's Race Book

I hope you will consider the attached letter to the President constructive enough to forward it to him.

Of course, I'd be happy to discuss it with you.

There are other options for dealing with the book, but I wanted to stir the pot.

cc: Terry Edmonds

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER EDLEY, JR.  
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL  
CAMBRIDGE MA 02138

October 31, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I have a few specific suggestions concerning your race book. Let me begin with my deepest apologies for not being able to produce a draft close enough to the mark to make your present task a manageable one. I have a dozen lame excuses, but in the end, no one to blame but myself. And my wife.

- *Are you sure you really want a book?* I believe the political fallout from abandoning the project – or deferring it until 2001 – would be manageable provided you do something truly substantial in its place. My proposed explanation for the change in plans: the truth. We ran up against schedule demands, shortcomings of the draft, your strong interest in “getting it right” and our collective miscalculation in designing the process.

My only specific substitute idea is a White House Conference on One America, described in the attached 1-pager. I first proposed this 11 months ago. It is almost too late.

- *Don't bother with a book if it doesn't grapple with tough truths and bold policies.* The thrust of most White House staff comments on the drafts sought, in my judgment, to reshape the book into a celebration of all the positive developments since 1954, a sermon about the values that unite us, and a giant NEC/DPC compendium of Administration accomplishments. Given the transcendent importance of the problem and this enterprise, people seated in my section of the audience would find such an approach off-putting at best. More important, it would reduce the book to a political footnote in your presidency, rather than a call to action of lasting importance and historical moment.
- *Don't bother if the policy ideas are just about this year and next.* If this book is going to have lasting importance – that is, more than a couple of months – then the policy vision must have a horizon beyond the FY 2001 budget year. You should offer a workplan for the decade. JFK spoke about going to the moon, not about building a gantry and hurling a Mercury capsule toward Vieques. (And he didn't diminish the vision by making it sound conditional on the willingness of corporate volunteers to finance the project.)
- *Preach, but teach too.* Virtually every leader who deals with race tends to be platitudinous and vague because anything else is dangerous or difficult or both. But this is a chance for you to teach Americans something about wrestling with our vexing problems, and that

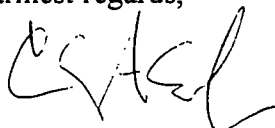
requires really saying what those problems are, and explaining why the easy ways of discussing them (I think here of Bill Bradley) won't help us make progress or bridge our differences in values and perceptions. You can offer readers, e.g., college students, some basic grounding they too often miss. And you can give concerned clergy and confused school board members news they can use about how to make a difference.

- *Prune viciously.* I could list several deficiencies in the current draft, although I have no idea whether you and I would agree on that list. For example, the committee process Terry and I were forced into led us to lard the draft with too many policy topics and too many "White House event" style micro-initiatives, rather than painting in broad strokes. When combined with a recitation of accomplishments, the result is, in a few places, deadly dull and uninspiring. The core messages get lost in the noise because, absent guidance from you, we couldn't define "core." From the First Lady's office to the most junior DPC aide, every adviser had their special concern. And almost every idea had some merit.
- *Be crystal clear about your vision of where we need to go.* The most effective part of my speeches on this subject is were I try to describe what I believe racial and ethnic justice would look like if we had it. It may seem a little corny and contrived, but audiences truly appreciate it because they know that above all, race is an issue of moral ambition for the nation. They want to hear yours. They want to see a blazing lodestar.

There are countless people around the country who genuinely want to contribute to achieving racial and ethnic justice. But for the most part they just don't know what to do. Most of us, faced with a problem we don't now how to solve, turn our attention elsewhere. Well, these people of good will do the same with respect to race. You can recall them to a great project of national progress and principle. Offer them ideas and hope. Doing so, however, will entail some controversy and choices, because it can't be done with rhetoric and anecdotes alone.

If you decide to go forward with the book, I hope you will lean on Terry Edmonds. He and I could have benefitted enormously from a few sessions with you like the one you had with the Cox Newspapers reporter last week. Much of what you reportedly said should be in the book. Terry can still make it happen for you, if you *order* your staff to make the time for it. Good luck.

Warmest regards,



Christopher Edley, Jr.  
Professor of Law, and  
Co-Director, the Civil Rights Project at Harvard

## **White House Conference on One America**

*– Draft Proposal –*

### **Central Idea:**

Convene a large group in Spring 2000 to take stock of where America is and where it must go in order to achieve racial and ethnic justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Attendees would be selected through a variety of complementary channels – think of it as a convention of caucuses:

- National and community-based leaders from key sectors: faith leaders; lawyers; business; educators; media
- National and community-based leaders from various racial and ethnic groups who have a track record of working on opportunity and/or civil rights issues
- Representatives of public and private organizations active in building bridges that connect people across lines of color and class (promising practices)
- Elected officials, and community leaders nominated by elected officials
- Researchers – especially law professors

### **Format:**

Through a series of workshops and caucuses and plenary sessions, participants would:

- Take stock of where America is, and the emerging challenges
- Share information about promising practices in a variety of contexts
- Debate elements of a “national workplan”, and meet as caucuses organized both by jurisdiction and by sector to formulate more tailored workplans
- Have a special focus on a handful of specific challenges, such as:
  - ▶ What the schools and universities can do to improve understanding of our history and our differences;
  - ▶ Public-private partnerships to promote sustained community economic development;
  - ▶ Inter-minority discrimination and conflict;
  - ▶ Strategies for reforming social programs to introduce more accountability for closing the opportunity gap.

### **Timing and Logistics:**

The event should be held over 3 days, at a convention facility in an affordable locale. None of this can happen on an appropriate scale and early enough before the election season unless the President makes a virtually immediate decision.

October 29, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Maria Echaveste

cc: John Podesta

James T. Edmonds ✓

SUBJECT: Additional Sections of the Race Book

You asked me to send you sections of the Race Book. We had previously sent you a revised version of the economic section incorporating your New Markets Initiative. Attached hereto for your review is: the Introduction (Terry believes that it sets the tone for the rest of the book so it's important to know if you are satisfied with the tone); Part II—the vision chapter that outlines your view of the kind of America we want in the next century and the education section of Part III (the Opportunity chapter). These three sections together with the economic section represent key elements of the book—that is, introduction, vision and substantive discussion of policy proposals. Your reaction to these sections will assist in determining how to rewrite this draft so as to meet your expectations. It appears that the crucial issue is whether the book in its current form truly reflects the tone and approach that you want.

As we discussed, perhaps after your review of these sections, you might meet with two or three people (e.g., Taylor Branch, Hugh Price, John Lewis) to solicit their input on how best to complete this project.

## **OUT OF MANY, ONE:**

### **RACIAL AND ETHNIC JUSTICE IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AMERICA**

*Grandfather*

*Look at our brokenness.*

*We know that in all creation*

*Only the human family*

*Has strayed from the Sacred Way*

*We know that we are the ones*

*Who are divided*

*And we are the ones*

*Who must come back together*

*To walk in the Sacred Way*

*Grandfather,*

*Sacred One,*

*Teach us love, compassion, and honor*

*That we may heal the earth*

*And heal each other.*

**—Ojibway Prayer<sup>1</sup>**

*America's greatest promise in the 21st century lies in our ability to harness the strength of our racial diversity. The greatest challenge facing Americans is to accept and take pride in defining ourselves as a multi-racial democracy. At the end of the 20th century, America has emerged as the worldwide symbol of opportunity and freedom through leadership that constantly strives to give meaning to democracy's fundamental principles. These principles—justice, opportunity, equality, and racial inclusion—must continue to guide the planning for our future.*

**Report of The President's Advisory Board,  
President's Initiative on Race<sup>2</sup>  
September 18, 1998**

## INTRODUCTION

We must embark on the new century recommitted to right the wrongs of our past and to make real the promise of equality and justice that has eluded us throughout our history. This challenge is daunting. At century's end, color in America remains a vexing paradox of ideals and ordeals, of hopes and fears. To build One America in the 21st century we must do all we can to strengthen opportunity for all, demand responsibility from all and unite in a new spirit of community. Only then can we redeem the promise of our founding and the truth of our hearts.

Today that challenge takes on a new urgency. The American people, in the age of the new global economy and growing diversity, are facing enormous new pressures. These pressures can pull us apart, isolating us from one another or they can be a source of unity and strength. As we have seen in other parts of the world and throughout history, under such stress, nations themselves can fragment, with racial and ethnic groups pitted against each other, too often in violent struggle. But in our own nation's history, Americans have time and again overcome centrifugal forces that threatened to tear us apart over our differences. But new threats continue to emerge and old ones have not been fully conquered. And so, trying to achieve the ideal of One America is the challenge of every generation.

We are upheld in the eyes of the world rightfully as the most successful multi-racial democracy in history, a model of peaceful co-existence in a world rent by ethnic, racial and religious conflict. In our best moments we have aspired to an even nobler model -- one in which we not only tolerate, but actually celebrate the many races and cultures that make America, in which we not only affirm but try to live by our Nation's founding creed, "that all men are created equal."

America is demographically undergoing one of the great transformations in our history. We are a changed people, as is every generation, from that of the Irish and German migrations from the mid-19th century to the arrival of Asians and Hispanics today. Today, nearly one in ten people in the United States were born in another country<sup>3</sup>, and one in five schoolchildren are from immigrant families.<sup>4</sup> Today, largely because of immigrants, there is no majority race in Houston or New York City.<sup>5</sup> In eight of our ten largest public school systems, over 75 percent of the students are minorities.<sup>6</sup> Within ten years there will no majority race in our largest state, California.<sup>7</sup> In a little more than 50 years there may be no majority race in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

All of this is happening against a backdrop of unparalleled peace and prosperity. Our economy has never been stronger. Our people have never been more confident in the

future. And in the absence of a compelling racial crisis like the riots of the 1960s, many of our citizens have been lulled into thinking that America's racial problems are a thing of the past. That is simply not true.

An old enemy still lurks in the shadows. It continues to poison our perceptions, undermine our progress and threaten our future. Racism has been America's constant curse, predating the nation's founding by a century and a half. And race has also been our constant struggle. Many lives have been lost, many dreams deferred while we have grappled with this demon. Truth, too, has often been a casualty, caught in the crossfire of our contradictions.

Consider this: We were born with a Declaration of Independence which asserted that we are all created equal and a Constitution that enshrined slavery. We fought a bloody civil war to abolish slavery and preserve the union, but we remained a house divided and unequal by law for another century. We advanced across the continent in the name of freedom, yet in doing so we pushed Native Americans off their land, often crushing their culture, their livelihood and their lives. We eagerly recruited laborers from Asia to help build our fledgling economy but in a time of war, forcibly removed more than 100,000 Japanese Americans from their homes and into internment camps. Our Statue of Liberty welcomes poor, tired, huddled masses of immigrants to our shores, but

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each new wave has felt the sting of discrimination, and for many that discrimination has burdened their native-born children and grandchildren. We must face these contradictions squarely as a critical step, not only to healing the wounds of our past, but also of unleashing the power and promise of our future. We must become One America in the 21st century.

I hope this report will help lay the foundation for a renewed national commitment to racial healing in America. At the beginning of this century, the great African American scholar and civil rights leader W.E.B. Dubois said that “The problem of the 20th century will be the problem of the color line.”<sup>9</sup> He was right. America’s color line started centuries ago and stretches into our lives today.

As a boy growing up in the 1950s and early 60s in segregated Arkansas, I was perplexed by the stark lines drawn between black and white, separating neighbor from neighbor. The black children went to different schools, ate at different restaurants. The rough gravel streets they walked and played on stood in bleak contrast to the smooth paved roadways on the white side of town.

But these disparities were mostly background music to me until 1957, when the

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high stakes drama of the Little Rock Nine sent shock waves through the nation. I was only 11 years old at the time. Like most southerners then, I never attended school with a person of another race until I went to college. Though discrimination had always gnawed at me, it was the courage and sacrifice of those nine black children who endured constant attacks, both physical and emotional, to integrate Little Rock's Central High School, that made racial equality a driving commitment in my life. I have done all I could to make it a reality.

After I launched the national Initiative on Race in San Diego in 1997, people asked me, why, in the absence of a great national crisis like Little Rock or race riots, should the American people focus anew on the challenge of racial reconciliation. That is a good question, and it has several answers. Why now? Because, first and foremost, our work is not yet done and our present progress and confidence gives us the best chance to finish it. We have moved out of the epicenter of racism that rocked our nation from the time of the Indian conquest, slavery and Japanese internment until the great breakthroughs of the civil rights era, but we are still experiencing the after shocks. Though people of color have more opportunities than ever today, we still see evidence of unequal treatment in the litany of disparities in jobs and wealth, in education, in criminal justice that so often still break down along the color line.

Secondly, as we grow more diverse and the world is drawn closer together, our diversity will either be the great problem or the great promise of 21<sup>st</sup> century America. What we make of ourselves will determine whether we lead the world toward greater peace, freedom and prosperity or join those gripped by racial, ethnic and religious conflicts in a much more clouded future.

If we are ever going to truly overcome, we must begin to experience our diversity as a source of solidarity and strength, not division and weakness. First, we must get the facts right and dare to be honest with ourselves and each other. Then we must decide on a shared vision to guide our progress. Finally, we -- each one of us -- must answer the call to action. In these pages, I will offer a rough blueprint for that call: a renewed commitment to racial reconciliation and to the pursuit of a more just and more perfect union.

Part I, *The America We See*, presents the facts about race in America today, including demographic trends, evidence of disparities, and evidence of progress. Part II, *The America We Want*, outlines my vision for the future by challenging us to think outside the box about a set of vexing questions surrounding our growing diversity. Part III, *The Opportunity We Deserve*, presents workplans addressing equal opportunity in education, criminal justice, jobs and economic development, civil rights enforcement and

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the special challenges of improving the lives of the first Americans — Native Americans.

Part IV, *The Community We Must Build*, explores the ways in which groups and communities are connecting people and toppling racial barriers. And finally, Part V, *The Leadership We Need: The Road Forward*, issues a call for the leaders in every community and every sector of American life to develop their own workplans for racial reconciliation.

What will the America we want look like? What vision should guide our work? To begin with, let me say that we must be bold enough to imagine and then journey towards a society dramatically different from both our past and present. Our ideals demand nothing less. To get to the promised land, we must battle the cynicism that says history and color will always shackle our aspirations. So instead, let us envision a new America where *opportunity* will be shared so deeply and broadly that an observer, a stranger in our land, will see no evidence of a past with slavery or conquest or nativist discrimination. Whatever forms of misery remain, they will not be the special burden of any racial or ethnic group. Let us envision a nation where each person takes *responsibility*, not only for making the most of their own life, but also for ensuring that every other American has an equal chance to do the same. Let us build a sense of *community* so powerful that our social and economic interactions will pull us out of ethnic enclaves. Rather than merely tolerating our differences, we will celebrate them

and draw strength from them. Finally, let us work to heal our *hearts* of the crippling influences of prejudice and fear — to be so committed to building a stronger common future that we have neither the time nor the inclination to hate.

Undergirding all the facts and plans presented here are a set of ethical precepts that I believe must guide us on this journey. The first is a spiritual law common to every major world religion. We hear its echo in our call for One America. It is the law of oneness. *E pluribus unum*: Out of many, one. We must stop living under the delusion of separation, dividing ourselves into categories, mistakenly believing these can capture the whole truth about anyone. We are all born of the same creative source. There is no “other.” In Christianity it is expressed as loving thy neighbor as thyself. In Islam we are instructed to “Do unto all men as you wish to have done to you and reject for others what you would reject for yourself.”<sup>10</sup> The Talmud teaches us, “Should anyone turn aside the right of the stranger, it is as though he were to turn aside the right of the most high God.”<sup>11</sup> As a nation that takes pride in both the depth and diversity of religious expression, we must embrace racial reconciliation as a way to honor our highest spiritual values.

The second underlying ethical precept is my belief that we should approach this issue with proper humility. After all, if any one of us had all the answers we would have

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settled this problem a long time ago. We must not lock ourselves into old arguments and rigid beliefs. We must always search for the kernel of truth in what the other side is saying. With open minds and hearts we can build bridges, and I have faith that our search for common ground will be rewarded.

Third, we must recognize the ways we have allowed our racial differences to get inside our heads, causing many whites, for instance, to deny the fact that their skin color protects them from indignities and suspicions that many people of color face every day. Some scholars call this phenomenon “white privilege.” On the other hand, many people of color have come to see themselves as perpetual victims, attributing every setback to racism.

A final precept is that we cannot expect government, or business, or some group of leaders we know through television and newspapers to make this journey for us. It is responsibility we all share. Achieving our vision requires not only the right public policies, but also the right private and personal practices. Reaching the promised land requires a journey of the heart, for each of us.

Of the many things that have changed about race in my lifetime, as a lawyer and a public servant, I am particularly struck by the transformation in our legal and political

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culture. We cannot afford to be less vigilant in enforcing laws against discrimination and pressing to root out bias wherever we can find it. Yet, as I look ahead I am convinced that we must go beyond the agenda defined a generation ago.' We will not achieve our vision unless we recognize that opportunity is not an accident in America -- it is a right of citizenship, not coded or discounted by color. And to redeem that right, we must embrace new civic covenants for the new century, expressing the responsibilities we must assume for ourselves and our communities. These must include:

- a covenant with our children, that each of them will have access to a world-class education, and an equal opportunity for educational achievement;
- a covenant with our families, that each can live secure in their home without fear of violent lawlessness; and
- a covenant with our communities, that each will be part of the nation's economic mainstream, neither ignored nor left behind.

The workplan to accomplish all of this must combine public investments and personal inspiration, community engagement and committed leadership. I know we can do it. The good and hard work that I have seen across our nation while President has convinced me that America's greatest resource is the idealism of our people.

I want to thank The Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race for all they did during 1997-98 to re-engage the American people in the hard work of improving race relations. Led by the eminent scholar and historian, John Hope Franklin, the Advisory Board spent the year criss-crossing America, examining race, racism and the potential for racial reconciliation using a process of study, constructive dialogue and action. The other members of the Board were Linda Chavez-Thompson, Reverend Dr. Suzan D. Johnson Cook, Thomas H. Kean, Angela E. Oh, Robert Thomas and William Winter. Laura Harris provided invaluable assistance as a Senior consultant. I also want to extend a special thanks to Judith Winston who served as Executive Director for this effort. The Board presented its final report to me in September, 1998, and much of their good work is reflected in this book.

No President or Advisory Board could be expected to resolve America's vexing racial problems in one or two years. We believe we have made a good start. Now, we must all continue, united in a common vision of what it means to be One America.

*Introduction*  
*June 30, 1999*  
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*I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn.  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, my world!*

**Langston Hughes<sup>12</sup>**

*Introduction*  
*June 30, 1999*  
INTRO3

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