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ONE AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

"In the end, more than anything else, our world leadership grows out of the power of our example here at home, out of our ability to remain strong as one America...We are the world's most diverse democracy, and the world looks to us to show that it is possible to live and advance together across those kinds of differences...Building one America is our most important mission...money cannot buy it. Power cannot compel it. Technology cannot create it. It can only come from the human spirit."

-- President Clinton, February 4, 1997

WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S RACE INITIATIVE?

This initiative is a year-long effort, led by the President, to present to the nation his vision of a stronger, more just and more united American community, offering opportunity and fairness for all Americans. The President's initiative will combine constructive dialogue, study, and action -- an examination of the current state of race relations and our common future, looking at the laws and policies that can help to ensure that we remain One America, and enlisting everyone in an effort to understand our differences as we appreciate the values that unite us.

WHY A MAJOR INITIATIVE ON RACE, AND WHY NOW?

President Clinton's personal, life-long commitment. Growing up in the South, he saw for himself the great harm caused by racial discrimination, and the difference that can be achieved by changing both policies and attitudes. That longstanding, deeply personal commitment has led him to make this initiative one of his major second-term priorities. He knows that America can reach its full potential only by enlisting the full energies of all our people, and giving all our citizens, of every background, the chance to make the most of their own God-given talents.

Not a crisis, but an opportunity. This effort builds on the President's record throughout his first term (defending affirmative action, major speeches on race and reconciliation, etc.). But unlike previous Presidential efforts in this area, President Clinton's initiative is the result not of a crisis, but of a unique opportunity:

America is strong enough to look to the future. Having moved aggressively in the first term to get the country back on the right track -- reversing the rising tide of crime, welfare, budget deficits, unemployment and income inequality -- the President believes that it is time for America to address these issues as we prepare for the 21st Century.

Many "wedge" issues have been defused. On many of the issues that had been used to divide the country -- crime, welfare, and affirmative action -- the President has changed the terms of the debate, pointing to solutions instead of pointing fingers, and defusing tensions so that a real dialogue about race can begin.

It's about responsibility, community and citizenship. This initiative will encourage

Americans to take responsibility -- for ourselves and our families, for our community, at home with one another. It is a call to citizenship, because the President believes that being a good citizen includes recognizing the promise of America, an America free of destructive bigotry, a nation that welcomes those who play by the rules, serve their community, and reach out to make all Americans feel at home. This is a great nation, and the true measure of our greatness is in the human heart.

WHAT WILL THE INITIATIVE INCLUDE?

The initiative will have five central goals:

- 1) To articulate the President's vision of racial reconciliation and a just, unified America;
- 2) To teach the nation the facts surrounding the issue of race;
- 3) To promote a constructive dialogue to confront and work through the difficult and controversial issues surrounding race;
- 4) To recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help bridge racial divides;
- 5) To find, develop, and implement solutions in critical areas such as education, economic opportunity, housing, health care, crime and the administration of justice -- for individuals, communities, corporations and government at all levels.

The President hopes to achieve these goals through the following:

Presidential leadership. The President will begin a national examination of race and reconciliation -- explaining why the goal of One America is so important to preparing for the 21st Century, addressing the facts about race, encouraging others to discuss difficult racial issues that we too often avoid, and reaching out to Americans of every race to get them engaged in the process. Unlike previous national efforts, this initiative will be directly and personally led by the President throughout.

Dialogue, study and action -- increasing our understanding of race, and proposing and promoting policies and solutions that can make a difference.

Dialogue can help to inform, and to build support for constructive solutions to the issues of race. For an entire generation growing up after the civil rights movement, there has been little or no public articulation of the values and ideals of racial reconciliation. (And too often the rhetoric has been negative, helping to confirm derogatory stereotypes.) This initiative will employ the power of the Presidency in encouraging open, candid debate about difficult issues and highlight actions by individuals, communities, businesses and government that are working in this area now.

Study. The issues to be addressed will include: different perceptions and different experiences of Americans of different races, confronting harmful stereotypes and examining serious problems. While the initiative will be

largely forward looking, it is also important to teach about the past -- so that the nation has a clear sense of what has come before, recognizing the unique experience of African Americans throughout our history.

Action. Throughout this effort, attention will go to policies that can make a difference and solutions that can be implemented by individuals, community groups, state and local governments and the federal government. Examples of issues to be addressed include the lack of economic progress among Hispanic Americans and the greatly reduced number of black and Hispanic students in California. This nation has made real progress, but we know that there is more that must be done.

- On June 7 the President announced a White House Conference on Hate Crimes this November 10th, bringing together victims and their families, law enforcement experts, and community and religious leaders. The Attorney General has begun a thorough review of the laws concerning hate crimes, and how we can build a plan of action to combat them.

ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE

Advisory Board. This small group will advise the President and assist him in outreach efforts and consultations with experts. (Names to be added after 6/12.)

Significant Presidential event/actions throughout the year. Events held throughout the year will include town hall meetings in different regions of the country , meetings with the advisory board, and other events which will enable the President to carry out his goals for the initiative.

Outreach, consultation, and leadership recruitment: The effort will include outreach to community leaders, religious leaders, state and local elected officials, members of Congress, business leaders and individuals, encouraging them to become involved in reconciliation and community building projects.

The President's Report to the American People will be issued next summer, in which the President will:

- Present his vision of One America, including an illustration and assessment of the growing diversity of our nation, and the consultations with his advisory board;
- Reflect the work that has occurred during the year, including the conversations and suggestions made at town hall meetings and other venues;
- Report on how the nation has evolved on the issue of race over the past 30 years, including the studies commissioned for the initiative;
- Provide recommendation and solutions that enable individuals, communities , business and organizations, and government address the difficult issues and build on the best possibilities.

ONE AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

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WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S RACE INITIATIVE?

This initiative is a year-long effort, led by the President, to present to the nation his vision of a stronger, more just and more united American community, offering opportunity and fairness for all Americans. The President's initiative will combine constructive dialogue, study, and action. It will examine the current state of race relations and our common future, look at the laws and policies that can help to ensure that we remain One America, and enlist individuals, communities, businesses and government at all levels in an effort to understand our differences as we appreciate the values that unite us.

WHY A MAJOR INITIATIVE ON RACE, AND WHY NOW?

President Clinton's personal, life-long commitment. Growing up in the South, the President saw for himself the great harm caused by racial discrimination, and the difference that can be achieved by changing both policies and attitudes. That longstanding, deeply personal commitment has led him to make this initiative one of his major second-term priorities. He knows that America can reach its full potential only by enlisting the full energies of all our people, and giving all our citizens, of every background, the chance to make the most of their own God-given talents.

 **Not a crisis, but an opportunity.** This effort builds on the President's record throughout his first term (defending affirmative action, major speeches on race and reconciliation, etc.). But unlike previous Presidential efforts in this area, President Clinton's initiative is the result not of a crisis, but of a unique opportunity:

America is strong enough to look to the future. Having moved aggressively in the first term to get the country back on the right track -- reversing the rising tide of crime, welfare, budget deficits, unemployment and income inequality -- the President believes that it is time for America to address these issues as we prepare for the 21st Century.

Many "wedge" issues have been defused. On many of the issues that had been used to divide the country -- such as crime and welfare -- the President has begun to change the terms of the debate, pointing to solutions instead of pointing fingers, and defusing tensions so that an honest dialogue about race can begin.

Responsibility, community and citizenship. This initiative will encourage Americans to take responsibility -- for ourselves and our families, for our community and at home with one another. It is a call to citizenship, because the President believes that being a good citizen includes recognizing the promise of America -- an America free of destructive bigotry, a nation that welcomes those who play by the rules, serve their community and reach out to make all Americans feel at home. This is a great nation, and the true measure of our greatness is in the human heart.

WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVE'S GOALS AND METHODS?

The initiative will have five central goals:

- 1) To articulate the President's vision of racial reconciliation and a just, unified America;
- 2) To help educate the nation about the facts surrounding the issue of race;
- 3) To promote a constructive dialogue, to confront and work through the difficult and controversial issues surrounding race;
- 4) To recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help bridge racial divides;
- 5) To find, develop and implement solutions in critical areas such as education, economic opportunity, housing, health care, crime and the administration of justice -- for individuals, communities, corporations and government at all levels.

The President hopes to achieve these goals through the following methods:

Presidential leadership. The President will begin a national examination of race and reconciliation -- explaining why the goal of One America is so important to preparing for the 21st Century, addressing the facts about race, encouraging others to discuss difficult racial issues that we too often avoid and reaching out to Americans of every race to get them engaged in the process. Unlike previous national efforts, this initiative will be led directly and personally by the President throughout.

Dialogue, study and action. Through dialogue, study and action, we will increase our understanding of race, and propose and promote policies and solutions that can make a difference.

Dialogue. Dialogue can help to inform, and to build support for constructive solutions to the issues of race. For an entire generation growing up after the civil rights movement, there has been little or no public articulation of the values and ideals of racial reconciliation. (And too often the rhetoric has been negative, helping to confirm derogatory stereotypes.) This initiative will employ the power of the Presidency to encourage open, candid debate about difficult issues and to highlight actions by individuals, communities, businesses and government that are working in this area now.

Study. The issues to be addressed will include: different perceptions and experiences of Americans of different races, confronting harmful stereotypes and examining serious problems. While the initiative will be largely forward-looking, it is also important to help educate Americans about the past -- so that the nation has a clear sense of what has come before, recognizing the unique experience of African Americans throughout our history.

Action. Throughout this effort, attention will go to policies that can make a difference and solutions that can be implemented by individuals, community groups, state and local governments and the federal government. Examples of issues to be addressed include the lack of economic progress among Hispanic Americans and the greatly reduced number of black and Hispanic students in California. This nation has made real progress, but we know that there is more that must be done.

- An example of dialogue, study and action is the President's 5/16/97 apology to the survivors of the Tuskegee Study, which was combined with concrete actions and further study (establishing a bioethics center at Tuskegee; studying ways to involve minority communities in research and health care; new training materials for medical researchers on ethics and how to apply them to diverse populations; and new postgraduate fellowships in bioethicists for minorities).

ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE

Advisory Board. This small, diverse group will advise the President and assist him in outreach efforts and consultations with experts. They were chosen based on their outstanding leadership on this issue and their contributions to America's ongoing dialogue about race and reconciliation.

Significant Presidential events/actions throughout the year. Events held throughout the year will include town hall meetings in different regions of the country, meetings with the advisory board and other events which will enable the President to carry out his goals for the initiative.

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conversations and suggestions made at town hall meetings and other venues;

- Report on how the nation has evolved on the issue of race over the past 30 years, including the studies commissioned for the initiative;
- Provide recommendations and solutions that enable individuals, communities, businesses, organizations and government to address difficult issues and build on our best possibilities.

TALKING POINTS ON RACE/RECONCILIATION

** In discussing this initiative, we have concluded that it is prudent not to make analogies juxtaposing the future of U.S. race relations with instances of civil war or major ethnic strife, e.g. Bosnia, Zaire or the Mid East. However, it is all right to talk affirmatively about the U.S. as a beacon and example to a world where there are deep divisions among ethnic, racial and religious groups within nations and among nations. A Q&A will be provided on this type of question which has surfaced repeatedly.*

- The charge the President set is for us to shape an initiative that will make a difference for Americans --that will make changes and improvements that we can look back on with pride. The President's goal is for us to enter the next century as a strong and united America.
- At a time when affirmative action and other tools to deal with discrimination are under attack, we must establish a new American consensus about what it means to *be* and *become* One America. While there is no immediate crisis driving us, the President believes that we should take stock of the progress we have made in race relations and take action to improve the ability of all Americans to succeed in the 21st century.
- We face a very different America in the next century. After all, America has changed a great deal in the past three decades. Hispanic-Americans are now the fastest growing minority group. There are four school districts in the country, including one right across the river from here --in Virginia --that have children from more than 100 different racial and ethnic groups in one single school district. We should embrace such diversity.
- The President has long maintained that the evil of racism is rooted in our separateness. He believes that greater dialogue between individuals of differing races will reveal the similar interests and values all Americans share. The President wants to encourage Americans to celebrate their diversity while reinforcing the values important to us all.
- The President has been a constant voice in pressing racial healing and unity. Those occasions include speeches in Memphis, Tennessee in 1993 and Austin, Texas in 1995, his inaugural and State of the Union addresses this year, a recent radio address, the Jackie Robinson anniversary commemoration. He will also raise the issue in the government's apology for the Tuskegee experiment and in his commencement speech at Morgan State University -- an historically Black college.

- The President's experiences with discrimination are rooted in the South and in the legacy slavery left. His grandfather had a grade school education and ran a grocery store in Hope, Arkansas. Most of his customers were black, poor and were working people. As a child in that store, President Clinton learned that people of different races could and should treat each other with respect and dignity.' While his grandparents were in the minority being poor, Southern whites who were pro-civil rights, they taught the President a lesson that he has carried with him through life -- Discrimination is not just morally wrong, it hurts everyone.
- The President has been consistent and steadfast throughout his life and professional career in his pursuit of equality and opportunity for all.
- We are crafting an initiative that capitalizes on the power of the Presidency and the strengths of this President. The bully pulpit is a potent amplifier of any Presidential message. President Clinton's personal history and conviction to lead this country in finding strength in our diversity make him well suited to help forge alliances and reconcile differences among us.
- The President has not yet settled on the set of activities that will constitute this initiative. We are designing a proposal that strikes the right balance between study and action.

TALKING POINTS ON RACE/RECONCILIATION
AS OF MAY 9, 1997

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Government, for the Syphilis Study at Tuskegee University. The President's first commencement speech this year will be at an historically Black school -- Morgan State University in Maryland. This national address on Sunday, May 18th will focus on science and technology.

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