

# FOIA MARKER

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Misc. Inaugural

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December 20, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR MICHAEL WALDMAN

FROM: TERRY EDMONDS

SUBJECT: Thoughts on the President's Inaugural Speech

This speech will be an opportunity for the president to spell out in values language his vision and agenda for the next four years. Rather than being a list of policy proposals, it should reveal the heartfelt principles that have always undergirded his approach to public service: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a national community of all Americans..

**Education**

In her remarks during the Cabinet announcements, I was moved by Carol Rasco's personal testimony about why literacy is so important to her. The President also has a story. "For most Americans, education is a given, like sunlight and air. From birth it is never questioned that we will go to good schools, graduate from high school, and go on to college. But those assumptions are not shared by many who live in houses of poverty, surrounded by streets of violence, and communities of despair. And much of this is because their first teachers -- their parents -- are distracted by their own struggles to care for their families, or have succumbed in negative ways to the pressures they face. I know something about that struggle, and believe me, if it were not for that "village" that Hillary understands so well, I would not be here today. I want to put that village to work, teaching our young people to read, strengthening our schools and teachers, and opening up the door to college for more and more of our people..."

**Crime**

"Being President puts me in touch with so much that is right and good about America. But, unfortunately it also demands that I confront so much that is painful and ugly. During the past four years, I have met many Americans who bear the scars of crime and violence -- from the police officer who has dedicated his life to standing in the way of the kind of domestic violence which was all too commonplace in his childhood home to the mother whose cries of pain at the murder of her young son still reverberate in my soul to the brave former presidential press secretary, James Brady, who is waging a valiant struggle to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. When people ask me why I am for 100, 000 more police and sensible gun control, I think of these."

**Welfare**

"Martin Luther King once led a movement with the simple force of human dignity. He taught the poor and the down trodden, "I may not have a job, but I am somebody." When you are somebody, you move from powerlessness to power, from dependence to independence, from hopelessness to hope. That is what we are trying to achieve with welfare reform. We want to

challenge the weak and the strong to work together to build better lives for the parents of today and the children of tomorrow.”

### **Racial healing and diversity**

“Standing here in the shadow of the world’s greatest legislature, facing the memorial to our great emancipator, I am reminded of the life of one who’s birthday we celebrate today. Thirty-four years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King stood in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial facing Congress and America with a powerful plea for moral and legislative leadership in the struggle for racial equality. Who can forget his call for civility and common ground. “Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred,” he said. America listened, and much of the legislative framework of equality is now in place. But sadly in America, too many still refuse the beauty of the dream. They seek to erode the progress of the past and they use King’s call for diversity not as a force to make bring us together, but as a wedge to drive us apart. Clearly, our work is not yet done. What was once a battle solely of the ballot is now a battle of the heart.”

### **Closing Scripture (suggested by Tony Campolo)**

I am honored not only to stand in the shadow of Congress, but also to stand in the shadow of great Americans who came before me in the service of their country. Washington and Jefferson, Lincoln and Franklin, and Reagan. While there was a wide diversity of principle and philosophy among them, there was a unity of purpose to move America forward and make it the greatest force for peace and freedom in the world. I am reminded of the words of Paul talking of the great icons of the church. He said, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” [Hebrews 12:1]

- \* praising Dodd and Fowler on their service as chair
  - building up state parties
  - now dnc has 1 million donors
- \* roy romer, new general chair
  - known him for years, he's the senior governor in the dem party, whatever
- \* steve grossman, new other chair
  - has known him since 1980s when he headed AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee)
  - he's done a great job as Massachusetts Dem chair, now no Republicans in the cong. delegation!

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\* general thematic ----

{ land of new promise- great time in our history  
*new govt*  
 Ours is the party that's gonna get it done

our issues are the issues that the country needs -- education etc.

We must be repairers of the breach (isaiah 58:12)

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- \* as part of that, one of the things we need to do is political reform
  1. Strongly support McCain Feingold
  2. I believe both parties should give up soft money even before the legislation; we've called for that, and call the GOP to join
  3. As a first step, x, y, z.

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