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Subgroup/Office of Origin: Public Liaison

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Subseries:

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FolderID:

Folder Title:

Americans with Disabilities Act

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Whitney Valentine - 301 843 7900 Bus

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ROUTING SLIP

DATE: 6/28/96

C.L. ADM

FROM: Stephanie Streett and Anne Hawley
Deputy Assistants to the President and Directors of SchedulingSUBJECT: Video Message for 6th Anniv. of passage of ADA
(Americans w/Disabilities Act)Don Baer ✓Mack McLarty Peg Cusack Leon Panetta Rahm Emanuel Jack Quinn Jack Gibbons Carol Rasco Laura Graham ✓Paige Reffe Marcia Hale Patti Solis Alexis Herman ✓Doug Sosnik ✓Nancy Hernreich G. Stephanopoulos Kitty Higgins Todd Stern John Hilley Ann Stock Harold Ickes Kim Tilley Jennifer Jose Jodie Torkelson Ron Klain Laura Tyson Anthony Lake Melanne Verveer Evelyn Lieberman Michael Waldman Bruce Lindsey Maggie Williams Mike McCurry ✓Laura Schwartz ✓Bill White ✓Danny Wexler ✓FILE: pendingCOMMENTS:

VIDEO PROPOSAL

June 25, 1996

☐ ACCEPT

☐ REGRET

☒ PENDING

TO:

Stephanie Street and Ann Walley
Directors of Scheduling and Advance

FROM:

Alexis Herman
Assistant to the President and Director,
Office of Public Liaison

REQUEST:

For the President to tape a video message to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

PURPOSE:

To energize disability rights activists around the country by articulating the Administration's commitment to the ADA.

BACKGROUND:

There are 49 million Americans with disabilities.

The ADA Anniversary on July 26 is the most important day of the year to the disability community, a day that is as important to the disability community as Martin Luther King day is to the African American community.

This landmark civil rights legislation guarantees equal rights and equal opportunity for the millions of Americans with disabilities. The ADA is the foundation for the Administration's national disability policy of inclusion, independence and empowerment.

The President's video message commemorating the 6th Anniversary of the ADA will be distributed and shown at hundreds of ADA celebrations that are being organized around the country.

DURATION:

5 minutes.

REMARKS:

Draft script attached.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Alexis Herman

CONTACT:

Bill White, 6-7032

ORIGIN OF PROPOSAL:

White House generated.

Draft

ADA SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

I am pleased to join citizens across the country in celebrating the sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In 1992, I issued a challenge to our nation. I said we must not rest until America has a national disability policy based on three simple creeds: inclusion, not exclusion; independence, not dependence; and empowerment, not paternalism. I remain committed to that vision.

More than ever before in our history, America's greatness in the next century will depend upon the ability of all our citizens to make the most of their own lives. Americans with disabilities are an enormous, largely untapped reservoir of that potential.

Like the civil rights laws that came before it, the Americans with Disabilities Act is grounded in the principles of equal opportunity and fair play. These principles lie at the core of our national identity and at the heart of our national hopes and aspirations. They provide common ground.

But the vision of the ADA will not be realized without the strong commitment of all of us. As we know from our Nation's still unfinished attempt to eradicate race and gender discrimination, the commitment to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities requires perseverance, vigilance, and sustained enforcement efforts.

We have made vigorous enforcement of all laws protecting people with disabilities a top priority of this Administration. We will stay this course until all barriers to the full participation of individuals with disabilities come down.

Consistent with this commitment, my FY 1997 budget proposes a 3.9 percent increase over the current budget for the Department of Justice's ADA enforcement activities. Given the difficult task of balancing the budget in seven years, this increase dramatically demonstrates my commitment to ADA enforcement.

Our commitment goes beyond the nuts and bolts of law enforcement. All too often we hear attacks on the ADA that are based on misinformation. We in government have a responsibility to counter these attacks with the truth.

The essential challenge we face is that too many people fail to appreciate the essence of discrimination that people with disabilities face in their daily lives. Many still don't see discriminatory barriers -- whether they are based on architecture or attitudes. Many still remain trapped by society's stereotypes about disability. Many still think the barriers faced by people with disabilities stem from their disabilities -- and not from what we as a society have erected.

The promise of the ADA -- and all other disability rights laws -- will never be realized until we respond, vocally and visibly, to this challenge. We must work to assure that all Americans fully comprehend that it is wrong to exclude anyone from full participation in society simply because of a disability -- just as wrong as it is to exclude someone because of race, or ethnic origin, or gender, or religion.

We all must remember as we celebrate the ADA that a civil rights law alone will not achieve our vision of inclusion, independence and empowerment for people with disabilities. That's why I fought so hard for measures like the Family and Medical Leave Act. And that's why I am committed to preserving the Federal guarantee of Medicaid coverage for people with disabilities.

For three decades Americans have stood on common ground about the need for guaranteed Medicaid coverage for older Americans, pregnant women, low-income children, and people with disabilities. But last year Congress sent me legislation to repeal that guarantee -- legislation that would have taken away health care coverage from millions of Americans who need it most. I vetoed that legislation, and if they send it to me again and they want to repeal the guarantee, I will veto it again.

Let me be clear. We can balance this budget without repealing guaranteed Medicaid coverage for six million Americans with disabilities who depend upon it, including one million children. Medicaid is a family issue, as people with disabilities know, which makes it possible for more people to get care at home and in their communities. Without the guarantee, a middle-class family with a child with a severe disability could be forced into poverty to pay for the child's medical care. Parents could be forced to give up their jobs to stay home to care for a child. Children and adults who live independently today might be forced into institutions. I will not let that happen.

Access to home and community-based, consumer-directed, long term supports and services is critical for many Americans with disabilities to achieve independence. The vision of community integration, independent living, and competitive employment at the heart of the ADA depends on the existence of home and community-based supports, and I will continue to fight any attempts to roll back these critical services.

Another cornerstone of our national disability policy that undergirds and complements the ADA is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law will make it possible for students with disabilities get their share of the high-wage jobs that are opening up in this new economy. I know how much IDEA means to the millions of students with disabilities and to their parents, and I strongly support it.

High school graduates with disabilities who went to school under IDEA have an employment rate of twice that of the overall population of individuals with disabilities. Recognizing the value of investing in quality education, I have requested a 12% increase over 1996 funding in my FY 97 budget for state grant for special education. Some in the Congress have proposed reducing the federal share to its lowest level ever. Just as with Medicaid, I believe we can balance the budget and maintain a strong federal role in the

education of disabled children. I will continue to fight for IDEA because I know it works. Spending money on education, health care, and personal assistant services is an investment in our future.

America is in the best position to be a winner in the global economy of the 21st century because of the depth of our values, the strength of our diversity, the power of our economy. But we don't have a single person to waste. We have to continue to expand opportunity and demand responsibility from all of our citizens. And that means inclusion, not exclusion.

Six years after the historic passage of the ADA, we must redouble our efforts to achieve the law's vision. We must remain committed as we face new challenges, and we must bear in mind the ultimate wisdom embodied in the ADA. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."