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National Black Business Roundtable

P.O. Box 83130, Los Angeles, California 90083

November 25, 1996

David R. Barclay
Chair

William Holland
Vice Chair

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

Congratulations on your re-election and we look forward to the next four years.

Of particular concern to our membership is what appears to be the deteriorating state of race relations in our country today. In California during the last general election this was quite clear with the divisive debate that surrounded Proposition 209, the affirmative action initiative.

We are most appreciative for your public opposition to 209 during the week before the elections and believe your position was instrumental in convincing many people to vote against this proposition. But at the same time, we were disappointed that the National Democratic Committee refused to enter this debate, and most important, refused to provide financial support. Unfortunately, the National Republican Committee provided considerable financial support to the "Yes on 209" committee and this helped significantly with their media campaign.

However, the struggle for equality has just begun. We expect a concerted effort in the 105th Congress to eliminate affirmative action at the federal level. Congressman Canady (R-Florida) has already indicated his plan to introduce legislation that would have the same effect on federal contractors as 209 will have on state and local government entities, including the University of California and the State University systems. *We hope you will not waiver in your commitment to affirmative action.*

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) in the Department of Labor has the potential of being the most

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important federal agency to ensure employment equity in the workplace.

However, the OFCCP cannot fulfill their mission unless they are adequately funded. Their staff has been reduced to less than half of what it was in 1980, even though the issues are far more complex today than they were during the early days of the contract compliance program. We hope your budget allocations will reflect this need. Your investment with this agency will pay significant dividends to our overall economy when more minorities and women can be educated and obtain meaningful employment and become contributing members to our society. Their exclusion only adds to our tax burden through increased poverty, welfare, crime and other social services. We must not be shortsighted and not consider the societal implications of exclusion.

A question still remains with many of us as to what your plans are "to mend it, don't end it." The executive order (11246) has been an important business tool to help us reach our diversity goals. It does not require quotas, hiring and promoting unqualified personnel, or the granting of preferences to less qualified minorities and women. It does provide a systematic approach to analyze our personnel practices and workforce and expand opportunities to all qualified people. The numerical goals are an essential component of this plan to assess whether or not we have been successful. These goals are not quotas. We hope that any revisions the administration undertakes will retain the goals and timetable section of the implementing regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this important subject. Our organization's membership is composed of highly-qualified professionals who have worked in this field for years and if we can be of assistance in providing real-life experiences in implementing this program, don't hesitate to call upon us.

Sincerely,



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