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August 15, 1997

The Honorable Harold James
Chairman
Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus
Room 307, South Office Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Harold:

Thank you for your letter regarding race relations in America. I have forwarded your letter to appropriate members of my staff for consideration.

I am confident that The President's Initiative on Race will help build a stronger, more just, more united American community -- one that offers opportunity and fairness for all of our citizens. I urge you to continue your efforts to advance our national dialogue.

Again, thank you for getting in touch with me.

Sincerely, **BILL CLINTON** ^A

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/cc w/copy of incmg to President's Advisory Board
on Race, 3236 NEOB

/cc: IGA, 106 OEOB

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Date Received in PLM: 8/5

Assigned to:

☒ Kyle Baker

☐ Anna Cushing

☐ Sarah Freeman

☐ Diane Ikemiyashiro

☐ Leanne Johnson

☐ Tracy Sisser

RE:

Race Initiative

☐ SCHEDULING REQUEST - Forward to Megan Williams, Room 106

☐ PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATION - Forward to Ruth Eaglin, Room 158

☐ REQUEST FOR A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE (letter of greeting for an event or proclamation) - Forward to Carmen Fowler, Room 91

REP. HAROLD JAMES, CHAIRMAN
ROOM 307, SOUTH OFFICE BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120
PHONE: (717) 772-6955
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REP. LeANNA WASHINGTON
TREASURER

Pennsylvania General Assembly

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus

July 24, 1997

President Bill Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

"One man with courage makes a majority."
-President Andrew Jackson

I applaud you for showing the courage that it takes to attempt to address this nation's great racial divide, especially when so many other of this nation's leaders have failed to give this problem the attention that it so desperately calls for. The President's Initiative on Race is a bold step towards the betterment of our society.

The tension between the races in this country has been allowed to foster for far too long, sapping the potential of this great country to achieve all that it can economically, socially and culturally. If successful, the American people will remember your efforts for a long time as a watershed event that changed the way we view one another as united and equal -- without the racial divide that separates us.

Allow me to invite your National Advisory Board on Race to hold a town meeting in Philadelphia to discuss the issues that you have charged it to address. As you may know, this city has had its share of problems with racial tensions in the past, including major race-related incidents that captured the nation's attention in the Bridesburg and Greys Ferry neighborhoods. Philadelphia's community leaders, organizations, and citizens can offer a very relevant perspective and valuable insight about issues involving race.

As a Pennsylvania State Legislator, I have accepted your challenge to begin a national debate on race-relations at a local level. Shortly, I will co-sponsor a resolution in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to create a State Advisory Board on Race modeled after your national board. Also, I have issued a call for reconvening hearings by the House Judiciary Committee to deal with the issue of hate groups and hate crimes in Pennsylvania. The Committee held similar public hearings

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President Clinton

July 24, 1997

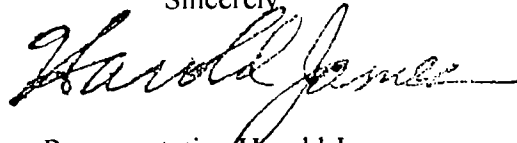
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last year to address this issue and they proved to be extremely disturbing, yet enlightening. Legislators and citizens both were made further aware of how much hostility still exists between citizens of this Commonwealth regarding the issue of race.

Those who long for a time when racism in America no longer exists need to be united and encouraged to raise their voices against acts of both racial violence and racial intolerance that permeates in all aspects of our society. It will take a concerted effort by all fair-minded individuals in this nation to correct the racial problems that amount to a great national embarrassment and a problem that is unfortunately, uniquely American.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold James", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Representative Harold James
Chairman

HJ/rlo

cc: Senator Arlen Specter
Congressman Thomas M. Foglietta
Congressman Chaka Fattah
Congressman Robert A. Borski
Mayor Edward Rendell
President John Street
All PLBC Members