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Suggested Statement on Gingrich Meeting with District Residents

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TO:

Alexis Herman

ORGANIZATION:

The White House

FAX NUMBER:

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FROM:

COMMENTS:

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**SUGGESTED PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON
GINGRICH MEETING WITH DISTRICT RESIDENTS
August 2, 1995**

I am very pleased and encouraged by the interest that Speaker Gingrich is showing in helping our nation's capital. As the Speaker knows, the federal agencies of our Administration have been working with the departments of the D.C. City Government, as well, to assist the District.

The Speaker has said that he seeks bipartisanship where possible. We worked together on creating a Financial Authority that respects home rule and that is now in place. There could be no better basis for bipartisan cooperation between the new Republican Majority and our Administration than working together to help the District solve the problems of the nation's capital. Our joint efforts to help the District are especially important now, considering the deep financial problems the city is suffering. As long as Speaker Gingrich continues to work jointly with D.C. officials and residents and to respect home rule, as he is doing now, he will find a willing partner in our Administration.

I look forward to working more closely with the Speaker and the Congress on the revitalization of our nation's capital.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

SUBCOMMITTEE
PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WATER RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENT



**COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT REFORM AND
OVERSIGHT**

SUBCOMMITTEE
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515**

June 29, 1995

William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

May I express my appreciation for the tremendous help the District of Columbia has received from you personally as well as from your administration. We especially appreciate your help in achieving a Financial Authority that does not violate home rule and that is composed exclusively of D.C. residents.

I want to thank you as well for the Task Force of federal agencies that is making contributions to the revitalization of the District. I write now to suggest that we build on your efforts in light of the substantial help you have given and have indicated that you wanted to continue to give the capital city. Specifically, I would like to point up an opportunity for a bipartisan partnership between your administration and the Republican leadership. I believe that the renewal of the nation's capital provides this opportunity, is in keeping with the approach you took in New Hampshire with Speaker Gingrich, and is consistent with your view that bipartisan cooperation with the Republican majority, where possible, is appropriate. Recent actions of the Republican leadership, I believe, may indicate that they, too, would be open to a bipartisan relationship on the District.

Speaker Newt Gingrich has moved in a most visible and aggressive fashion to help D.C. He has appointed task forces that are currently working on education, crime, taxes, welfare reform, and housing. His education task force has been having collaborative discussions with school officials and residents, and a bold new program funded from federal and private sources, is likely. Significantly, Mr. Gingrich also has promised some federal tax relief for District residents and businesses.

Several federal agencies are working effectively as well, but not with the focused coordination and energy that is most compatible with the conversations you and I have had. Among the most important and visible is action that has been taken by the Federal Highway Administration, under the leadership of Transportation Secretary Federico Pena and FHWA director Rodney Slater. They have moved energetically to release federal

President Clinton
June 28, 1995
Page Two

funds and to help write legislation that waives the local matching share, and thus are keeping the District's street repair operation going and providing desperately needed construction jobs as well. Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary has donated surplus security equipment that will be a tremendous help in keeping guns out of our schools. Today, you are announcing that the District is one of 21 jurisdictions receiving COPS MORE crime funds and, in an especially significant action, you are waiving the local matching share. The efforts of several other agencies have been important as well, but not always commensurate with the District's extremely fragile financial situation. Moreover, among D.C. residents, there is little knowledge of administration efforts, and even less visibility. Agency response is uneven and not always at the level you clearly intend.

I know that you have sincerely sought bipartisan opportunities since the Republicans took control of the Congress. I believe that reviving the capital of the United States presents an especially good opportunity for bipartisan cooperation between your administration and the Republican House leadership, especially since you both share responsibility for the well being of the nation's capital.

Two approaches seem appropriate. First, inasmuch as some agencies are already helping the District, I suggest that you announce an Interagency Committee on District of Columbia Renewal to give greater importance and visibility to your efforts and to signal that you regard the revitalization of the nation's capital as an important mission. Second, I believe that the appointment of the First Lady as the Chair of the Committee would assign special significance and give the kind of visibility for your administration that the Republican leadership has already established for their effort. The First Lady and Speaker Gingrich both have well-known concerns for children. This priority could lay the groundwork for a larger, bipartisan partnership, and the Interagency Committee on District of Columbia Renewal could then be broadened to include more agencies and to offer greater coordination and output.

Although I have not mentioned these ideas to Newt Gingrich, I believe that the Speaker might welcome such a bipartisan effort. Several months ago, during a Washington Post interview with Sally Quinn, he discussed how the First Lady was in a unique position to make contributions to the District. I believe a special effort here would have meaning not only for D.C. residents, but for hard-pressed urban areas across the country, which have come upon very hard times. The effort would not take a great deal of the First Lady's time and energy. However, it would get the administration out front on the District and on urban issues, would get you the credit you deserve for your efforts during this critical time, and would be a good match for Mr. Gingrich's energetic activities in the District.

President Clinton
June 28, 1995
Page Three

Please let me hear from you.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eleanor", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Eleanor Holmes Norton

cc: Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Mr. Leon Panetta

EHN/gmh