

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: National Service

Series/Staff Member: Eli Segal

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 1295

FolderID:

Folder Title:

Bostonian Club 8/11/93

Stack:

S

Row:

66

Section:

2

Shelf:

8

Position:

1

REMARKS OF ELI SEGAL
Bostonian Club -- August 11, 1993

Thank you Ladi. It's good to be home.

My thanks as well to Tommy O'Neill and Pam McDermott.

We are all embarked on new ventures, ~~the~~^I with national service and you with the Bostonian Club -- and I can only hope that your success

is contagious! ~~It's~~ I can hardly wait to return home and become a member. I can remember just a little more than a year ago when T O'N persuaded me to leave Woyled for But Bay. The only problem is that I work - labor to L.A. & Red City.

~~And~~ I feel privileged to spend time with a group that ~~is~~^{many} has hosted distinguished visitors, ~~from~~^{none more important than} General Joseph ~~Hoar~~ to

Senator Edward Kennedy. Senator Kennedy was the principal sponsor of our national service legislation in the Senate. More than

that, he was an inspired and inspiring floor leader, expertly guiding our Bill to adoption. In an arena of show horses, Senator Kennedy

again showed the ability to be a work horse, and for his effort, and

for his leadership, all of us from ~~the~~^{Boston} Bay State should be most proud.

Senator Kennedy and I began working in earnest on this legislation back in February, a month in which you hosted Red Sox General Manager Lou Gorman. [Lou Gorman has to make tough decisions, and then is judged on the basis of events he cannot possibly control -- all under the eye of an unforgiving press and thousands of self-anointed experts. If he's going to put up with all that, he might as well be President -- but not in the foreseeable future!]

[I think] both the Red Sox and the Clinton administration have had difficult Springs followed by pretty good summers -- and for both teams, I have high hopes for the Fall. As you know, we were able to pass a landmark budget agreement last week. [I think] the budget agreement is tremendously important -- not only in finally addressing the deficit but in giving all of us a sense that gridlock is not a permanent part of our political landscape. But I think that landscape will be even more fundamentally changed by the President's National Service initiative, which [we hope] will receive its final Senate passage right after this August Recess.

Here in Boston, our landscape has always had more dimensions than could be known by our five senses. When John Winthrop, ~~[aboard the Arabella and bound for the New World]~~, told his fellow emigrants that ~~["we must consider that"]~~ we shall be a city upon a hill, [for] the eyes of all people are upon us", he was exhorting our forbearers to seize their opportunity to create a new community in the wilderness.

That community was not easily achieved. Carved from the forest and defended repeatedly by force of arms, it was still a place that in Tommy's father's youth sported signs warning that "No Irish Need Apply".

Today, our desire for community is buffeted by problems of which John Winthrop -- or even a young Tip O'Neil-- could never have dreamed: illegal drugs and the crimes that surround their use; homelessness and endemic poverty; an environment so befouled that we can not trust the water we drink or the air we breathe.

And while Tommy's ancestors and yours and mine muscled their way to the common table, today we see chairs at that table being demanded by an astounding new array of immigrants. "If current trends continue," ~~[writes demographer Martha Farnsworth Riche]~~ "the United States will become a nation with no racial or ethnic majority" within our children's lifetimes ~~[-- indeed, in many of our major cities, this is already the case.]~~

How, then, are we to find common interest amongst such diversity? The day after Martin Luther King was killed, Robert Kennedy warned us what happens when societies fragment: "We learn, ~~[at the last]~~ to look at our brothers as aliens, ~~men~~ ^{people} with whom we share a city, but not a community; ~~men~~ ^{people} bound to us in common dwelling but not in common effort. We learn to share only a common fear, only a common impulse to meet disagreement with force."

No government, no matter how vigorous or well intentioned, can legislate us into community. And, unlike our grandparents's time, it is no longer sufficient to expect the non-white, non-Western portion of our population to assimilate into a dominant majority. [As demographer Riche has written,] "in the future, the white Western majority will have to do some assimilating of its own."

Fundamentally, creating community will require the concerted efforts of all of us, allied with a focused and effective government. And therein lies the power of national service, and my message -- in fact, my appeal -- to you today. National service does, it's true, offer a number of benefits. But far more than that, it poses a series of challenges.

To our young people, the challenge is to rise above the false and flip characterization of their generation as uncaring, and to take a lead role in creating their own futures through revitalizing their own communities.

To those in Washington D.C. -- ~~[and keep in mind, I have been a taxpayer in Boston far, far longer than I've been a Presidential Assistant in Washington]~~ -- to our government, the challenge is to meld the best practices of the private sector with the reach and responsibility of government.

And to you -- and your colleagues in businesses communities around the country, the challenge is to redouble your and your companies' public involvement. Your efforts are critical to your neighborhoods, to your city, and to your country.

The first of these challenges is an echo of the call to public service made by our most famous local son thirty-two years ago. For many of you, as for President Clinton and myself, President

Kennedy's call is an indelible part of our personal history. ^{challenge to solve it} But for ^{and the Area Corps launched shortly thereafter} our children, the 1961 inaugural speech consists of mere words in a dusty history book. It has been too long since any of us were challenged to serve our country -- but for our children, it has been a lifetime.

President Clinton has now called America's youth to service. In his inaugural address, he mentioned only one government program -- national service -- and said "you too must play your part in our renewal. [I challenge a new generation of young Americans to a season of service [and] to act on your idealism."]

I am certain that our young will answer this call, as each ^{we in P.C.} generation of Americans before them did. ^{generations were present in CCC did before that.} We plan to unleash the energy and enthusiasm of our young people on our critical national challenges. Our new Americorps volunteers will:

- ensure that infants are immunized;
- tutor in our grade schools;
- channel teenagers away from gangs and drugs;
- promote recycling and conservation; and
- help make sure that our streets are safe for the elderly.

We'll send them to ^{flood country} the northwest where after the
commodities leave they'll be working in homeless shelters,
rebuilding efforts, assisting ^{filling} in a local applications & in some cases

They will receive the minimum wage while in the program, and an educational benefit of nearly \$5000 after each a year's service -- I will receive *something even more important -- a threshold gateway in citizenship.*

The second challenge of national service is directed at my office and the organizations running local service programs. [We must accept and embrace the radical notion that our efforts have to be as entrepreneurial, efficient, and professional as your daily work.

There is a very simple reason for me to insist upon this approach. I've done two things over the past twenty-five years. In one -- trying to elect Democratic presidential candidates -- I have lost seven times before Bill Clinton's victory. In the other, I've started and run several businesses. Thankfully, for my family's sake, they have been somewhat more successful -- and they've taught me a lesson. National Service will be run like a business.

Our legislation creates a corporation: the Corporation for National Service. This Corporation will operate like a venture capital firm, seeking out and funding initiatives that will maximize returns to the public. [For the most part, we will be funding local non-profit organizations, who will compete for funding based on their business plans and track records. [To keep decision-making where the rubber meets the road, most applications will first be judged by nonpartisan state Commissions.]

Once a program has been funded, it will be rigorously evaluated. We will demand results -- not rhetoric. We will demand good performance -- not good intentions. If a program doesn't work, we will cut our losses. And let me stop there for a minute: When I was in business, we tried many things, and some of them just plain didn't work. I never found that surprising. But for some reason, when it comes to government, the expectation (at least by some elements of the press) is that any failure is attributable to fraud or mismanagement. I hope you can help us communicate to the press that innovation means taking risks -- and that means the risks of missteps, not the prospect of an unbroken series of triumphs.

But when a program does work, we'll help expand it. The new Corporation will be relentless in seeking out the most profitable uses of its scarce resources. We are committed to proving that a federal program can be soft-hearted and hard-headed at the same time.

This new approach will be seen as a burden by some local organizations -- and as an opportunity by others. Competition for resources will force them to think clearly and carefully about their goals and the most efficient way to reach them. Our focus on results will mean that their next year's budget depends upon this year's performance. And any program seeking federal money must first obtain 25% of their program budget -- and 15% of their participants' wages -- from ^{local} other sources. Let me say that again: no federal money will be spent unless the community has committed its own money to the effort. This will ensure that service programs grow locally instead of being transplanted from Washington.

Perhaps most importantly, this program will be nonpartisan, at all levels. Republican Congressman Steve Gunderson recently praised our program as combining "the idealism of the Democratic Party with the pragmatic realism of the Republican Party." I deeply appreciated those words -- but I hope that our program will eventually escape even those labels. Ultimately, national service must fuse **America's** realism with **America's** idealism.

There's an old joke in Washington about the difference between Democrats and Republicans. Picture a man drowning fifty feet offshore. The Republican would throw him twenty-five feet of rope and tell him to swim the rest because ^{of the way} it would be good for his character. The Democrat would throw him a hundred feet of rope and then run off looking for more people to save.

There's a lot of truth in that. President Clinton was elected to steady the pendulum that has swung between federal callousness and federal bossiness. The programs of the 1960s and '70s proved that Washington does not have all the answers. But the last twelve years have proven that even a thousand points of light leave a lot of people in the darkness. We have got to find a third way, one that coordinates the invisible hand of capitalism with the helping hand of community organizations.

Which brings me to the challenge before you. If we are to make our community service programs more business-like, we will need businesspeople to show us how. If we are to demand that programs be community-based, we are going to need community leadership. If we are going to tell our youth that their service will be valued, we will need for the business community to help make good on that promise.

To begin, I ask you to provide financial resources. As I mentioned before, each Massachusetts program that seeks federal money must first obtain private funding. That means you.

But I know from my twenty-five years as a businessman how frequently you are asked for money. So let me be unique, and ask for far more than money. Service requires that you give of yourself.

Boston is the perfect place to make this request. We are only steps away from Faneuil Hall, where a businessman and a lawyer -- John Hancock and Sam Adams -- led the public outcry against the Stamp Act. But those two patriots recognized that leadership consists of much more than protesting taxes. They understood that the city's professionals must take the lead in fostering a sense of community -- here in Boston and throughout the country.

And they knew that their actions would likely end up costing them money -- in fact, commodities trader Hancock probably lost profit from every ~~barrel of tobacco~~^{commodity} his followers threw into the Bay. From that time on, Massachusetts has been blessed by a private sector that elevates the community's interest above short-term, personal interests.

That tradition is at work within Boston's City Year program -- which is in many ways a model for our national efforts. City Year has shown us all how to recognize and utilize the private sector's community spirit. Lawyers provide pro bono legal assistance. Consultants help with strategic planning. Computer companies have provided equipment. A clothing manufacturer provided uniforms. Banks provide free checking accounts to volunteers. A host of other firms loan out experienced managers to take on leadership roles within the organization. And business sponsorship underwrites the costs of the teams of corpsmembers themselves.

The business community's leadership with City Year

makes me certain that Boston will meet the new challenge of our

national service program. There will be a host of additional ways to

participate. Businesses can help fund local programs, or underwrite

additional participants in programs being federally funded. They can

encourage service by their employees -- or better yet, allow their

employees to use release or paid leave to assist local programs. And

every company or firm has expertise that service organizations need;

products or equipment that could comprise in-kind contributions; or

the ability to offer employment opportunities to graduates of service

programs.

Youthbuild, PBH come to mind right away

~~discuss~~ or encourage their employees to provide service schedules -- a movement already under way here in Boston.

as

one Hollywood based entertainment company has already committed to:

Let me close by noting how differently I would have addressed a group like this twenty-five years ago. In 1968, I was deeply involved in the presidential campaign of Eugene McCarthy. I was sure then that I had all the answers, and that what America needed was for me to go to Washington and provide those answers to a waiting nation. Thankfully -- for me and the country -- I have had a long time to rethink my ideas. Those twenty-five years taught me that I did not have all the answers, and neither did anyone else. So when I finally participated in a winning campaign, I was not sure that I wanted to go to Washington after all.

What brought me into the government was the opportunity to be part of President Clinton's national service initiative. This program made sense to me. It fit not only with my idealism, but with the lessons I learned as a businessman, and a father, and a citizen. I no longer believe that government, acting alone, is the answer. I know that together, we are the answer.

The great civil rights worker Fanny Lou Hamer used to tell the story of the wise old ~~man~~^{woman} and the two little boys who thought they were very clever. They decided they would fool the old ~~man~~^{woman} by catching a small bird and cupping it in one boy's hands. They would then bring it to the old ~~man~~^{woman} and say: "old ~~man~~^{woman}, we have a bird in our hands. Is it alive or dead?" Their plan was that if ~~she~~ said the bird was dead, they would release it and let it fly away. If ~~she~~ said it was alive they would crush it and show ~~her~~^{her} the dead bird. But when the boys brought the bird to the old ~~man~~^{woman} and asked ~~her~~^{her} their question, ~~he~~^{she} answered "it's in your hands."

In many ways, the fate of Massachusetts' part of national service is in each of our hands. Let us celebrate the opportunity in this responsibility, so that this city and this nation finally discharge our debt to our forbearers -- and our promises to our children.