

## **The Clinton Presidency: National Service and Philanthropy**

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Through the 1980s, America's sense of community and shared purpose began to disintegrate. Between 1989 and 1993, charitable giving as a portion of our economy declined and the number of people volunteering fell by more than 9 million. President Clinton and Vice President Gore have worked to create new opportunities for community service, and provided leadership to develop innovative partnerships between federal agencies and private nonprofits. They have also worked to involve the private sector, challenging business leaders to work with community groups, religious leaders and faith-based partnerships to tackle problems like putting welfare recipients to work, teaching children to read and closing the digital divide.

### **Restoring Community Service: AmeriCorps**

- ✓ THEN: Previous generations of Americans had answered the call to service of their country through programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Peace Corps and VISTA. However, it had been more than a decade since the federal government challenged the energy of Americans by putting significant resources behind a meaningful effort to expand community service opportunities. The Peace Corps and VISTA combined provided just 10,000 service opportunities in 1993.
- ✓ NOW: President Clinton created the AmeriCorps National Service Program in 1993, his first year in office. Since then, AmeriCorps has brought together nearly 200,000 people of all ages, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds to solve community problems and improve the lives of Americans. And after a year of full-time public service, AmeriCorps members receive education awards to help finance college or pay back student loans. The President defended AmeriCorps from numerous Congressional efforts to eliminate the initiative, and built it into a successful program supported by Democratic, Republican and Independent Governors across the country.

### **Teaching Children to Read: America Reads**

- ✓ THEN: Reading scores among young students dropped significantly during the 1980s. Despite research demonstrating that reading to young children was the best way to increase reading skills, in 1991, just 35 percent of young children were read to at home every day.
- ✓ NOW: In 1997, President Clinton challenged Americans to unite to be sure that every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade. So far, more than 1,400 colleges have committed more than 26,000 Work Study students to tutor children in reading, and nearly one million children have been taught, tutored or mentored through national service programs like AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Foster Grandparents. President Clinton's America Reads challenge also sought to involve businesses, communities, pediatricians and child care providers in helping recruit volunteers, organize book drives and tutor young children in reading. President Clinton launched America Reads as a volunteer partnership,

then worked with Congress to pass the Reading Excellence Act in 1998 to provide \$260 million and serve 1.1 million children annually.

### **College Students Contributing to Their Communities through America Reads**

*"At California State University, Los Angeles, tutors participating in the America Reads Challenge are part of a long-standing institutional commitment to community service. Documented outcomes of the America Reads project illustrate significant improvement in the literacy skills of the children with whom we are tutoring. Our students and our neighbors are benefiting from this relationship. Cal State, LA is proud to be a part of the America Reads Challenge."*

**-- Dr. James Rosser, California State University, Los Angeles**

### **Increasing Charitable Giving:**

- ✓ THEN: Charitable giving as a portion of Gross Domestic Product declined from 1989 to 1993. The number of people volunteering fell from 98.4 million in 1989 to 89.2 in 1993, and the total number of volunteer hours dropped by one billion over the same period.
- ✓ NOW: The Clinton-Gore Administration has worked to promote charitable giving and philanthropy, hosting the White House Conference on Philanthropy in October 1999, creating an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government and working to build partnerships between government, business and non-profit organizations. The strong economy has driven a large share of the increase in philanthropy – as individual wealth has increased, the value of the stock in foundations has soared. Charitable giving reached a record high in 1999, surging to more than \$190 billion, an increase of 43 percent since 1993; as a percentage of GDP, charitable giving soared to 2.1 percent, the highest level in almost three decades.

### **Drawing on the Private Sector:**

- ✓ THEN: In 1992, America faced high poverty rates; record numbers of people unemployed or on welfare; serious environmental problems; and record-high deficits. Government alone could not solve all of these problems.
- ✓ NOW: President Clinton challenged corporate, religious and community leaders to join together to solve major problems facing the country. The Clinton-Gore Administration has provided important leadership to develop vital partnerships with the private sector, including:
  - Through the President's New Markets and Digital Divide initiatives, corporations have pledged millions of dollars in assistance and development commitments to bring economic development and high-tech training to underserved urban, rural, and tribal communities.

- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, a private nonprofit organization, was launched in response to the President's 1995 State of the Union in which he challenged parents and leaders across the country to come together in a national effort to reduce teen pregnancy. The Campaign has raised the visibility of this issue nationwide by enlisting the help of the media and private advertising experts. The Campaign has also created a more effective grassroots movement that brings together public, private, nonprofit partners in states and local communities. Both teen pregnancy and teen birth rates are now at record low levels. In 1997, the President launched the Welfare to Work Partnership, an independent organization of private sector businesses that made commitments to hire and retain welfare recipients. So far, the Partnership has grown from five founding companies to 20,000 business partners who have collectively hired an estimated 1.1 million individuals from the welfare rolls. [NOTE: SUGGEST REPLACING WITH NEW EXAMPLE SINCE THE PARTNERSHIP IS HIGHLIGHTED ELSEWHERE]
- The Administration's efforts also resulted in the creation of the Fair Labor Association, which includes apparel makers who have adopted a code of conduct to eliminate child labor and sweatshop working conditions in manufacturing plants throughout the world.
- The President's work with the entertainment industry led to the voluntary adoption of a ratings system for television shows so parents can be informed about the content of the programs their children are watching.

## Service and Volunteerism Producing Progress for Communities

- ✓ **Almost 200,000 AmeriCorps Volunteers:** Since 1993, nearly 200,000 AmeriCorps members have served our nation by building homes, responding to natural disasters, helping to make our streets safer, and tutoring in schools. More Americans have served in AmeriCorps in its first five years than have served in the Peace Corps throughout its history. In addition, nearly 500,000 senior citizens provide community service through Senior Corps.
- ✓ **America Reads volunteers teaching children to read:** National Service Participants have tutored nearly one million children, helping them learn to read. Independent studies found that children involved in the program improved their reading abilities more than the gain expected for children at their grade level. Additionally, many students closed the gap and were reading at or near the grade-level expectation.
- ✓ **~~The President's Welfare to Work Partnership has found jobs for 1.1 million welfare recipients:~~** ~~The Welfare to Work Partnership, founded by the President in 1997 has grown from five founding companies to 20,000 business partners who have collectively hired an estimated 1.1 million individuals from the welfare rolls.~~ [NOTE: DOES NOT FIT UNDER SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM]
- ✓ **Charitable giving and volunteering have rebounded:** Charitable giving reached a record \$190 billion in 1999, increasing 43 percent over 1993. As a percentage of GDP, charitable giving reached 2.1 percent in 1999, the highest level in nearly three decades. In addition, the number of Americans volunteering reached an all time high in 1998, as an estimated 20 million more Americans volunteered than in 1993.

## President Clinton's Legacy: National Service

America's greatest leaders have always worked to strengthen the bonds between Americans, their country and their community. Thomas Jefferson spoke of a "debt of service from every man to his country," Franklin Delano Roosevelt promised a New Deal that offered opportunity in return for hard work, and in 1961 President John F. Kennedy inspired a nation to service by challenging America to ask what they can do for their country and creating the Peace Corps. However, through the 1980s, America's sense of community and shared purpose began to disintegrate. The previous two Administrations emphasized private gain over public obligations and the promise of prosperity degenerated into greed, selfishness and irresponsibility. Between 1989 and 1993, charitable giving dropped from the level it reached in the 1970s [unclear how this relates to 1989. Was charitable giving flat from 1970s through 1989? Perhaps give a "high of xx, dropping to xx."] and the number of people volunteering fell by more than 9 million.

**Restoring America's Sense of Community Service:** President Clinton and Vice President Gore promised a New Covenant that would restore a national ethic of opportunity, responsibility and community. A key element of this included expanding opportunities for community service and challenging all Americans to participate in their communities. The President proposed a domestic Peace Corps that would allow thousands of students to earn money for college by serving their communities, and promised leadership in challenging the private sector to expand its efforts to serve America's communities.

- Created AmeriCorps National Service:** The President's AmeriCorps National Service Program was created in 1993, his first year in office. Today, AmeriCorps brings together people of all ages, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds to solve community problems and improve the lives of Americans. And after a year of full-time public service, AmeriCorps members receive education awards to help finance college or pay back student loans. The President defended AmeriCorps from numerous Congressional efforts to eliminate the initiative, and built it into a successful program supported by Democratic, Republican and Independent Governors all across the country. The President also worked to expand existing programs encouraging volunteer work such as VISTA and Senior Corps.
- Teaching Children to Read:** In 1997, President Clinton challenged Americans to unite to be sure that every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade. So far, more than 1,400 colleges have committed more than 26,000 Work Study students to tutor children in reading, and almost one million children have been taught, tutored or mentored through by national service programs like AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Foster Grandparents.
- Increased Private Sector Involvement and Corporate Responsibility:** President Clinton has challenged corporate and community leaders to form partnerships that focus on solving problems. Through the President's New Markets and Digital Divide initiatives, corporations have pledged millions of dollars in assistance and development commitments to bring economic development and high-tech training and opportunity to underserved urban, rural, and tribal communities. In 1997, the President launched the Welfare to Work Partnership, an independent organization of private sector businesses that made commitments to hire and retain welfare recipients. So far, the 20,000 members of the partnership have moved 1.1 million individuals welfare to work. The Administration's efforts also resulted in the creation of the Fair Labor Association, which includes apparel makers that have adopted a

code of conduct aimed at eliminating child labor and sweatshop working conditions in manufacturing plants throughout the world. Finally, the President's work with the entertainment industry led to the voluntary adoption of a ratings system for television shows so that parents could be informed about what their children are watching.

- **Marking Martin Luther King Day with Community Service:** In 1994, President Clinton signed into law the King Holiday and Service Act, encouraging Americans to mark Dr. King's birthday by devoting the day to service projects in their communities. Community service was at the heart of Martin Luther King's philosophy and action. By celebrating his birthday as a "day on and not a day off," Americans honor Dr. King's life of service.

#### **The Results: Solid Progress for America's Communities**

- **Almost 200,000 AmeriCorps Volunteers:** Since 1993, nearly 200,000 AmeriCorps members have served our nation by building homes, responding to natural disasters, helping to make our streets safer, and tutoring in schools. More Americans have served in AmeriCorps in its first five years than have served in the Peace Corps throughout its history. In addition, nearly 500,000 senior citizens provide community service through Senior Corps.
- **[Possible bullet on the number of students who have gone on to college with AmeriCorps scholarships.]**
- **America Reads volunteers and teaching children to read.:** National Service Participants have tutored nearly one million children learning to read. Independent studies found that children involved in the program improved their reading abilities more than the gain expected for children at their grade level and many students closed the gap and were reading at or near the grade-level expectation.
- **Charitable giving and volunteering have rebounded:** Total charitable giving reached 2 percent of GDP in 1970 but dropped and remained at about 1.75 percent of GDP in the 1980s and early 90s. However, since 1995, giving has risen sharply to just over 2 percent in 1998 -- back to the levels of 30 years ago. Philanthropic giving in 1998 was estimated to be \$174.5 billion. The percentage of Americans volunteering reached an all time high in 1998 as an estimated 20 million more Americans volunteered than in 1993.

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## **President Clinton's Legacy: Historic Economic Growth**

In 1992, the United States faced record deficits, high unemployment, and growing welfare rolls. The previous administration had compiled a record of the slowest job creation, wage increases and income growth since the Great Depression. Over 80 percent of Americans thought that the state of the economy was bad or poor and economists routinely and confidently predicted that the United States was soon to be eclipsed as a global economic power by the end of the 1990s. One leading expert on Japan told a Congressional committee that "Should current trends continue, I expect Japan to become the world's No. 1 manufacturing power by the mid-1990s and surpass the United States as the world's largest economy in the next decade."

### **Reversing Years of Economic Decline**

President Clinton reversed 12 years of trickle-down economics and failed policies, and created the conditions for the strongest economy in decades. He launched a new economic strategy of fiscal discipline, strategic investments in the American people and opening foreign markets so that American workers can compete abroad.

- Enacted the 1993 Economic Plan, which passed Congress without a single Republican vote and put the country on the path of fiscal discipline. The 1993 economic plan was responsible for keeping interest rates low, cut taxes for 15 million American families and 90 percent of small businesses and eliminated 92 percent of the federal budget deficit.
- Placed a new emphasis on making sure that all Americans benefit from a strong economy by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, raising the minimum wage, increasing investments in education and expanding college opportunity. President Clinton also launched the New Markets Initiative to help bring economic development and renewal to communities that have not benefited from the soaring economy. The Clinton Administration insisted on a welfare reform bill that moved millions of families from welfare to work, and provided responsible critical child care, child support, ~~job training~~ and job placement provisions.
- Opened markets around the world to American goods, leading the difficult fight to pass NAFTA and GATT through the Congress, creating the world's largest free trade zone and allowing American workers and businesses to compete in a freer, fairer, and more effective global trading system. President Clinton also concluded a historic agreement with China and won passage of Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, opening China's markets for U.S. goods and services, strengthening U.S.-China relations and continuing to pave the way toward economic freedom for the Chinese people. The United States has also led the world in developing successful responses to international crises in Asia, Mexico and Russia.

### **The Results: Longest Economic Expansion in History**

After eight years, the results of President Clinton's economic leadership for the American people are clear. America remains the strongest economy in the world, and Americans are benefiting from the longest economic expansion in our nation's history.

- The deficit was \$290 billion in 1993 and expected to grow to \$455 billion by this year. Instead, we have a projected surplus of \$211 billion and we are on track to pay off the entire debt by 2012.
- The economy has created over 22 million jobs in less than eight years -- the most jobs ever created under a single administration, and more than were created in the previous twelve years.
- Unemployment has dropped to the lowest level in more than 30 years, down from more than 7 percent in 1993 to just 3.9 percent in September 2000.

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- Inflation is at the lowest rate since the Kennedy Administration, averaging 2.5 percent -- down from 4.7 percent during the last administration.
- The homeownership rate is the highest on record, and minority homeownership rates were also the highest ever recorded. In contrast, the homeownership rate fell from 65.6 percent in the first quarter of 1981 to 63.7 percent in the first quarter of 1993.
- Economic gains have been made across the spectrum as incomes are up for all Americans, and poverty rates for African American families and single mothers are the lowest ever recorded.
- Produced the lowest federal tax rates for average middle class families in than 20 years through targeted tax cuts such as the child tax credit and the HOPE scholarship and Lifetime learning tax credit.
- After increasing under the previous two administrations, federal government spending as a share of the economy has been cut from 22.2 percent in 1992 to a projected 18.5 percent in 2000 – its lowest level since 1966.

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