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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Atlanta, Georgia)

For Immediate Release

May 11, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN DISCUSSION ON NEW MARKETS

Sweet Auburn Market
Atlanta, Georgia

2:55 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first, Mayor Campbell, Mayor Jackson, Mayor Young, my friends, it's wonderful to be back in Atlanta. I will be very brief because I want to spend most of my time listening to our panelists, but I'd like to try to put what the Mayor has said into the perspective of what we're trying to do with our administration. And I have with me our Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo; our Small Business Administrator Aida Alvarez; my Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste. We had other members of the Cabinet with us earlier today, along with my National Economic Advisor Gene Sperling, who helped to put this whole event today together.

But let me try to tell you why I'm here. When I became President in 1993 I had traveled around America and I had seen with my own eyes for many years, as governor and then as a candidate for President, people able to start businesses in places that had high unemployment or low income or other economic problems, if they just had access to capital and they had the right technical support, marketing support, loan guarantees or whatever.

So when we started our administration we put into our first economic plan this whole idea of empowerment zones which would give tax credits, loan guarantees, technical assistance and direct investment, and community development financial institutions which would make direct loans to people who otherwise might not have access to it.

We've also been greatly aided in this national endeavor by some of our own financial institutions, and I think the leading one plainly has been Nations Bank in terms of what you have done to try to loan money to people who couldn't get it otherwise.

Now, after six years, watching these empowerment zones work, we can see examples like this. But what I want to say to you now is, I think it's important that we try to take this example to the whole nation. Our economy now is in the best shape it's been in at least a generation; some people think it's the best economy America has ever had. We have the lowest recorded rates of unemployment since we've been keeping separate statistics for African Americans and Hispanic Americans. We have record numbers of new small businesses starting in each of the last six years. We've got

the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957.

Now, that's all good, but we also know that we have neighborhoods in big cities, we have small- and medium-sized cities, we have rural areas and Native American reservations where there has been almost no new investment, almost no new

businesses, almost no new jobs. So I am trying to highlight, first of all, for the American people -- you, and people like you all over the country -- so people will know this can be done.

Secondly, I'm trying to build support for an initiative I have before the Congress, which is called the New Markets Initiative, designed to give tax credits for people who put equity money, investment money, into low per capita income areas, high unemployment areas in our country, and to provide loan guarantees, up to two-thirds per total investment for people who will do that, and to increase our community development loaning all over the country, not just in the empowerment zones.

Because I believe we ought not to leave anybody behind when we go into the 21st century. I think that every American who is willing to work ought to have a chance to do it. (Applause.)

And so, that's why I'm here. I want people to see you and believe it can be done in their neighborhoods, in their communities, rural or urban. I want to listen to you and I want to try to build support.

The last point I want to make is, in July I am going to take two or three days and go to places in America that need this help, and try to highlight for the American people in the midst of all our prosperity both the obligation and the opportunity we have to do better. And I'm going to ask the American business leaders to help me. And a lot of these folks came with me today from all over the country. I just want to mention who is here. They're all the leaders of their various organizations.

Duane Ackerman from Bell South and Dan Amos from AFLAC, both of Georgia; Don Carty of American Airlines, Emma Chappell of the United Bank of Philadelphia, Jon Corzine of Goldman Sachs, Ted Gifford of Bank of Boston; Martin Grass of Rite Aid, Dan Hesse, AT&T Wireless, Richard Huber, Aetna; Debra Lee of BET; Leo Mullin of Delta Airlines, another home base here; Frank Newman of Bankers Trust; Maceo Sloan of Sloan Financial Group; Sy Sternberg of New York Life; and Sandy Weil, head of City Group. I'd like to ask all them to stand. They are giving a day of their lives to try to help replicate this elsewhere, and we thank them. (Applause.)

Now, that's enough of our talk. We want to hear from you. Who would like to go first? I also want to say, I've got some of this good coffee from the Cameroon, and I gave myself a refill on the way out here; I hope you'll forgive me. And I had a little of

that sweet potato cheesecake, and I have lifted things from almost every entrepreneur here. This is a beautiful market, and I want to thank all of those who had anything to do with it. This is something the entire city can be proud of, and

especially because of its roots to the rich history of 20th century Atlanta. So I'm very pleased.

But I would like to hear from all of you now. Who would like to go first and talk about what your experience was, how you got your business started, or what progress has been made here? Would you like to start?

Q Sure. Thank you, Mr. President. It's a pleasure being here. I tell you, it was rather fascinating, exciting for my company, myself to be invited here. We couldn't believe it when it first happened. The group with me -- I have my partnership here with me, which is Danny Gartner and Chanel Wickerson Slaughter, who is also my wife. And it's just a pleasure and honor to meet you and to really tell you that we really support your programs, and it's because of your programs that we're successful today.

And we just wanted to give you all the credit for that, because, I'll tell you, you've really put a lot of work and effort into making these things happen. And we have been great benefits of those programs. And in fact, we're right now benefitting highly with the empowerment zone and also the welfare to work program. And the biggest benefit we have there is not necessarily the tax credits and other benefits, but we've got good people working with us. And to me, just everybody needs an opportunity to perform, and we've given them that opportunity. They're doing a very good job for us.

So I think that's the biggest thing we've learned, is that give anybody and opportunity and they'll do well. And the tax credits are good. But I think the most important thing for us is we're making a positive difference in the community.

So our benefit has been the gain from the empowerment zone, even though we currently are not in the empowerment zone from a manufacturing perspective. We have, I'll tell you, truly been blessed. When working with the SBA, I'd say that program really helped us considerably, and along with Heller Financial -- we invested our own money years ago -- when I say years ago, it seems like years ago -- it's been about three years ago. All our equity that we had went into the company and we ran short. And we're manufacturers of -- made in the USA, that's us.

We ran out of money and SBA came in and Heller Financial came in to rescue us. And I think it was a true partnership of a preferred lender and also the SBA stepped up. And because of that, we've taken a little, small \$150,000 company to over -- this year over \$13 million in about three and a half years. (Applause.)

And one of the things from an employment perspective, we went from 12 to over 60 employees now. And we're still growing, we haven't stopped. In fact, we're sort of graduating to that conventional loan level now. And a lot of good things happened for us and again a lot of that is because of the programs that you put in place. It's truly making a difference in America. And I think we've been given an opportunity to make that difference and we're proud to have that. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Give him another hand. That was great. You were great. Jason, you might be interested to know that earlier today when we were meeting in the White House a lot of these business leaders -- and many of them have thousands and thousands of employees, but they repeatedly said to us, look, what we've got to do is to get capital out there to folks. They need that more than anything else. If they can get that first investment money -- because you can't borrow it all unless you're able to put something up -- that will make a big difference.

And you're living proof of it. The way I figure it, if you can keep growing at this rate, by the time I'm ready to draw Social Security you will be a billionaire and you can hire me to sort of work in my off hours. (Laughter.) I accept right now in advance. I'll be here, you get ready. That's great.

Would you like to talk a little bit about the role of your bank here and what you're trying to do?

Q Yes, I would. I'm very proud, Mr. President, of the commitment that Nation's Bank has made to the inner city and communities all over the country. We were the first bank chartered community development corporation, chartered back in 1977. And since that time we have developed and redeveloped over 15,000 units of affordable housing. And that represents a commitment of over \$300 million.

Now, in Atlanta, we opened our public community development corporation shop in 1993. And what we choose to do in Atlanta in the empowerment zone, we try to partner with a local community development corporation -- one of our first partners is in the audience, in Tamanika Youngblood. Stand up wherever you are -- back there -- from the Historic District Development Corporation. (Applause.) And Tamanika and her husband are really pioneers. They started the Historic District Development Corporation, and they have built a number of new homes and redeveloped homes here.

We also have partnered with another empowerment zone, Summer Hill Neighborhood Development Corporation -- a CDC. And in Atlanta, since 1993, we have developed or redeveloped over 4,200 units of affordable housing, and that represents a commitment of \$125 million. So we're proud of that commitment. And we feel that it's important to stabilize the housing in a community, and that will also bring in new business, just as John Aderhold has done with the Fulton Cotton Bag Mill. And then Tricia wanted to come in with a new

business after that. So we think that's an important role that we can play.

And we challenge some of the other banks here -- Mr. Weil -- to match our investment in the community.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say, many years ago, before I ever became President, my wife and I had a long talk one night with Hugh McCall about investment in low income areas in America. And we told him -- we talked about the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh which basically was the pioneering bank in the Third World, starting very poor people out in businesses and actually making good money doing that.

And both Hillary and I at various times in the last, probably 10 years, have had other conversations with him about it and with others involved with Nation's Bank. But I was particularly pleased that not long after you announced your merger plans that the bank's ten-year plan for reinvestment in communities, including direct loans to provide initial capital to people who otherwise wouldn't have it, was announced.

And I want to tell you I very much appreciate that. I think it will make a huge difference. These people prove that they need a hand up and they do right well if they get it.

Vivian, would you like to talk about your experience?

Q Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of the Sweet Auburn Market, I'd like to say welcome. I'm operations manager for the Cafe Shop. My sister and I and husband started the business about a year and a half ago, but we started on our trek about two and a half years ago, going around Atlanta to see which area we'd like to put the business in. My -- working a full-time job, and she wanted to create something that we can pass on to our nieces and nephews and the grandchildren, and for us to work and do what we do best.

We looked on the Auburn Avenue side, we looked in this area. Fortunately, we had a sister that had a business here in the Curb Market -- he told us to come over here to find out if we'd like to open up a business here. It so happened there was a coffee shop, and we would always tease my sister saying that if she opens up a bookstore, we'd do the coffee and the bagels, because that's what we really love to do; we're really coffee drinkers.

So it just came about that way, and -- coffee to the manager and coffee to the vendors and -- here in the market, we had -- and one thing that really impressed us as a part of our family, is being -- generations here. On a weekly basis, we get to see someone else's children and grandchildren running around through the market, so that automatically set off a -- good feeling that -- family business that are working hard, and we want to be a part of it.

So we started the business about 18 months ago. It's been going well, we have our base from -- Spalding House we open up at 7:30 p.m. for them to come in to get their coffee and their espressos and cappucino. And now, what's growing as a part of our business is the lunch, the lunch crowd. So we're doing well, we will always need more assistance and ideas of how to grow.

Hopefully, the market will put together a marketing campaign, a major marketing campaign for the market and for the individual businesses. I think that's what we're lacking right now is really the customer bases coming in thinking the Sweet Auburn Market is the place to come every day and every week, not just for holidays.

We can't last for each holiday; we have to have a continual walk-in traffic. But we're doing well and it's been a success and not even with the outside customers, but the vendors and businesses here in the market; we all support each other, so that's what makes it work. We're happy to be here.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Let me say, I think you hit on an important point, because I can just say, I was really looking forward to coming down here because I've always loved Atlanta and I love the history of the place. But when I got here, I saw a lot of things I didn't know were here, so I think you do need a marketing plan that tells people what it's like now and where you're going with it.

You know, you had so many different kinds of just food establishments, just different kinds, and the other thing that impressed me, you talked about the family businesses. The other thing that impressed me was the diversity of people working here. You have a lot of Asian American families here. You have -- there is a lady back there who is in a food store who told me she is from Ghana, and she said "Aquava" -- when I saw the Ghana word for welcome, which I first heard about a half a million people in Accra -- and I think this is something that ought to be highlighted, that there are people here from all over the world, so that you get the best of Atlanta's past and a picture of Atlanta's future here. And I think there is a way for you to market it that would even increase the rate of growth that the merchants are enjoying.

That's what I'm going to do when I get out of the White House, go around and give people advice like this.

Go ahead. Ken.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. We wanted to thank you and your administration for really playing a critical role in helping us bring jobs into the inner city. Under the leadership of Duane Ackerman who was our first chairman and Mayor Campbell, we as an initiative, following the Olympics, wanted to try to create more jobs in the inner city as one of the legacies of the Olympic Games. And

our goal was to put in a business park that would operate as a modern business park, but be right in the center of the city near the neighborhoods where people could literally walk to work. And we struggled in how to put that deal together until we were able to get empowerment zone funding to be our initial seed funding of \$5 million, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded us an additional grant of \$2 million for environmental cleanup, and the combination of those two grants and we hope EDA will be funding a third grant here shortly, will trigger, we believe, \$100 million of private investment in the park. We have already purchased the property, we have two major tenants interested. The first of those tenants will bring 500 jobs, at least half of which will go to residents in the area.

We're hopeful that at the end of three years, this business park will generate about a \$20-million payroll in some of the neediest inner-city neighborhoods in the city of Atlanta. And it really wouldn't have happened without your leadership and the leadership that HUD has exhibited to make this happen.

THE PRESIDENT: Give him a hand; that was great. (Applause.) I would like to emphasize just one of the points that Ken made. And that is the funds the federal government put into environmental cleanup. Most people don't ever think about this as an economic development issue. But one of the things that has retarded the comeback of many areas in our cities are so-called brownfields, areas that have been subject to some measure of environmental pollution and areas, therefore, that can't get new investment and new support and can't even very often get permits to do what people want to do unless the cleanup is done.

But if the people who want to put the plan in or the business in have to bear the cleanup costs, then the financing doesn't work out. There's no reasonable way they can make the economics of their business work in the early years. So this is something the Vice President pointed out to me fairly early on in our work together, because he was heading this empowerment task force that we had. And we've spent a lot of time and effort trying to give communities funds to clean up the Brownfields, because -- and it's just breathtaking what we've found happens, the way it sort of cascades on itself -- the money. And I appreciate what you're doing.

Thank you, and congratulations. You too. That's great.

Now, this is my cheesecake lady who destroyed my diet today, and I loved every bite of it. Do you want to tell us a little about your experience here and how you got started and what you're doing?

Q Yes, I would love to. And again, I'm really happy to have you here today. I guess a little bit about my background.

I'm professionally trained as a chef. I was a chef instructor here in Atlanta, and I've always had the dream of owning my own business. And that dream was fulfilled through the Empowerment Zones Initiative.

One thing I will say about it, initially, they're very aggressive about helping you fund your business. There are a lot of locations within these inner cities that are viable for great businesses. This location is really good because of the revitalization of the downtown area, which would have a big effect on the growth of my business. I want my business to grow and actually help support this community.

I've been in business about a year and a half now, and at this point, I'm thinking one problem that I am having is being able to get -- being able to attract qualified people to my business. It's like, what do I have to offer them. I mean, I had a dream that was fulfilled through you all, but I need to be able to offer benefits and certain things to be able to get a qualified person to keep my business.

So as far as what you're doing as having the other executives here and the things that they could look into is maybe do some joint venture with some of the companies here, make sure that they are aware of us in these areas. I think some people may think that we are here, but they may have a question as to whether or not we are actually qualified or could we really fulfill some of their needs. And I would like to say that I know that we can, and we need to be able to reach these people and they need to be able to reach us.

Also, as far as being able to offer benefits and things for our companies within the inner city -- yes, for employees, to attract employees, which is a problem that I'm having, a really big problem that I am having for my business. I've heard it from other people also. It seems like we should be able to pool together within the area, get some company from these big companies to have us get the type of benefits for the employees, and really for yourself as the business owner.

But I think what you're doing, you're headed in the right direction and you're really getting the right people together. Being here today -- I was very happy to meet Mr. Slaughter and we're already talking business. And I've told -- I don't know any other way I would have gotten to meet him. But he's going to take the sweet potato cheesecake. (Laughter.) He trusts your taste. (Laughter.)

But I really want to thank you, and really, to keep doing what you're doing. And you're going in the right direction. I think, like I said, there was aggressiveness in the beginning, but it needs to be maintained and monitored. Because what we need and how things are going -- you need to get the feedback from us. And in turn, we should be able to help other people, because this is

definitely something that is needed and can be successful. I feel that I am successful at this point, but you looking to grow for your business and ways to expand your business.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me ask you this -- are the principal needs you have to attract and keep good employees child care and health care?

Q Definitely.

THE PRESIDENT: Those are the principal ones?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: One more than the other?

Q They're right together, actually, I would say.

THE PRESIDENT: I do believe this year, at the end of the year when Congress has to pass the budget, I still think we have quite a good chance to pass our health care initiative -- I mean our child care initiative, which would provide more tax credits and more direct subsidies for people with modest incomes to afford quality child care. And one of the things -- there must be a child care center very close to this market with all these people down here; if there's not, that's something that ought to be looked at. But when you get a certain number of employees in the market and then people near here, you may be able to quite economically establish something for the neighborhood if there's not.

But if we pass this program, people like the people who would get a job working for you will have access to a lot more financial help to pay for that child care.

On the health care side, the only places that I know that have been really, really successful at this are people that have offered pool coverage to small businesses so, in effect, both the employers and the employees can buy health care at the same cost, more or less, per person that some of these large employers can. I don't think there is presently available another alternative to that, and so I think it's -- except for when some states allow people who make relatively low incomes to buy into the Medicare/Medicaid program for -- you know, they pay something, but not the full range.

Those are the only two options that I'm aware of. But if there's not such a pooled arrangement here in this area, that's the next thing you ought to try to get the empowerment zone to organize. They can't do it until they have a certain number of employees, because it doesn't work economically. But once you cross a certain threshold with a certain profile for the employees, and a lot of them are young restaurant workers and healthy -- you know, for example, you can do this and make the economics work. So that's

something I think the empowerment zone can do.

Q What I was going to tell you is, as you know, this is a large convention and tourist city. We have helped to fund a day care center that does just what you've spoken about. In fact, they have 24-hour day care for many of the employees of our hospitality industry, and that helps them to be able to not only work effectively, but also have the day care, which assists in the most pressing need. It's hard to be a good employee if you're worried about your child care or if you don't have adequate child care.

And we think that's the kind of initiative, working with -- in the context of your new policy administrations that will help us to fund not only Welfare to Work, but also when you're making that transition where your children are going to be located in an effective day care program. So we're trying to do that, but it's on a very small scale; we need to expand it a great deal.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, it's very interesting. One of the things that -- I saw a study of Georgia about -- oh, this was six-eight months ago, we were looking at the impact of the welfare reform law. And at the time, one of the big problems was that Georgia was growing jobs like crazy, but most of them were growing were in the suburbs and most of the people who were losing their welfare benefits lived in the cities, and there wasn't an adequate transportation link.

Here's something that's been done here that has the potential to grow where are all of you are working folks in the urban areas, and there may be some way that the state's welfare reform program -- and I think the person who ran it at least for Governor Miller is here -- I don't know if the Commissioner is here or not, but he was out at the airport -- but there may be some way that they can use some of the money that they still have from welfare reform to subsidize child care centers in the city of Atlanta around here.

Because when we -- when I signed the Welfare Reform Bill, one of the things we did was we gave every state the amount of money they were receiving in February of 1994 when welfare caseloads were at an all-time high. Now, they have dropped more than at any period in history, they're almost 50 percent lower than they were in February of '94; the state still has that dollar amount. So they've got the same amount of money they had then, minus inflation, which hasn't been very much. So it may be that you could go there and try to get them to help the empowerment zone locate child care here for you.

Q Mr. President, thank you very much for getting this group together. Our situation is a little bit different than some of the others, as you would imagine. As far as advocating the empowerment zone, you've got one sitting right here, and all of our group feel very strongly about the important part that it has played in what we're trying to do.

A little background. Thank you. Our mill, the Fulton Cotton Mill, which is the one we've talked about most at the moment, is about a half a mile from here, as the crow flies. It's on 12 acres of land and it's got 888,000 square feet, at one point in time most of which was completely dilapidated, square footage. Now, Secretary Cuomo came down about three years or a little bit earlier than that and helped us dedicate what we were going to try to do with this 888,000 dilapidated square foot group of buildings.

The Mayor obviously was with us, and so that's what we've been working on since that time. Now, the big thing that helped us get started when we didn't have any real big preconceived plans as to what we were going to be and how we were going to be able to do it, was the empowerment zone money that became available -- not a gift, it was a loan, \$1 million, but that got us started and got our banks started thinking about us in a manner of speaking. So we've taken that, with HUD financing additionally to that. We will wind up with the biggest rehab project in the United States one half a mile from downtown where we are right here -- and we're proud of that.

Now, we'll have 504 apartments there. We'll have over 800 people living on 12 acres -- downtown Atlanta. Now, Atlanta, as you know, like a lot of urban cities, have had a lot of sprawl out into the hinterlands, and Atlanta was losing citizens.

We found, when the Olympics came, that citizens probably would move back in if there was a place for citizens to move to. Well, we're going to furnish 504 units -- over 200 of which are already ready right now, and 100 percent leased. And there's none that comes on line that doesn't get leased up; people are moving back into the city of Atlanta, largely because of the help that the empowerment zone gave us to begin with.

Now, I don't recommend that a lot of people do what we did, because it was a mess, and the Secretary can tell you it was a mess when he was here, raining and everything else you could think about it being bad.

But it seems to be working. I grew up in Atlanta. I didn't like to see an old mill go down, down, down. I didn't like to see people leaving Atlanta; I stayed in Atlanta myself. And so we're trying to help that come about.

It's not a risk-free business, however.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you for taking a chance on it. And I think that, if someone like you is willing to take a chance of that magnitude, at least the modest amounts of money that the government put up is the least we can do to share the early risk.

Q One other thing I want to mention -- and this you might keep in mind as you go around to other places with empowerment zone money. The way that the city cooperates with the dispensing of

the funds, the empowerment funds, and the way they encourage the right kind of funds to be dispensed, has an awful lot to do with the power that those funds have, to add or multiply the value of those funds.

Mayor Campbell did an excellent job with that, and he let it be known that what we were doing was what the city wanted to be done, and he wasn't very subtle about the whole project. And he's been a very tremendous big help to us, and we appreciate that very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (Applause.) Yes, give them a hand, that's great. (Applause.)

I didn't mention this earlier, but we are having, two weeks from today -- maybe, and maybe it starts two weeks from yesterday; but either two weeks from yesterday or today -- we're having our annual Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community national convention that the Vice President hosts, and we're doing it in South Texas this year, in a small town, rural empowerment zone area we had down there. I think it's in McCallum. And it's a great place to go if you've never been there.

And we're going to all gather down there, and, Mayor, if either you're going, or whoever is going from Atlanta representing you -- I'm sure you'll be represented there -- I think the point that John just made is one that ought to be made there. Because we have now had enough experience with these empowerment zones that we can see differences in the rate of effectiveness. And I think this is a point that ought to be hammered home.

So if either you go, or if you will instruct whoever is going on behalf of Atlanta, to make that point, I'd appreciate it.

Tricia?

Q Hi, welcome. Thanks for coming to Atlanta. You're the first guy to get me off a day of work, so -- (laughter) -- since we've opened.

THE PRESIDENT: Glad to do it.

Q Definitely, like, the soul and mission in our restaurants has always been about community. And that is what we did when we first started, in East Atlanta, in '95, when we were pioneers, and could not get anyone interested in us to go in an up-and-coming neighborhood.

And we got some money from -- we got federal money from HUD Housing. And that was what really sparked the initiative for other people to start getting interested in us. And we could not have started without that.

And that was four years ago, where it's now called East Atlanta Village. I put my house there, I bought a house there, and my business there. And that enabled us to start going into Cabbagetown -- and 800 apartments also made us think it was a good move to go. We're right next to the Fulton Cotton Mill -- the new restaurant, Eureka. And that's been open since November, and where I actively go out and find employees in the neighborhood, which is about more where personally we come from, where we want to get the community involved in, and actively go out and find employees, and where we get a great tax wage cut benefit for having employees working there in their neighborhood. You know, that makes the most sense to me.

And we're going into Oakhurst Village, which is another up and coming neighborhood, at the end of this year. And we did that -- we're now independently financed because of, I believe, the help we got initially from the one-stop capital shop and the federal money.

I think also a good point is that all of us are saying how we -- we're looking inside the circle and I'm going to get some help from Sonya, I'm going to get some help from Mr. Slaughter, and this meeting, just putting us in all the empowerment zones really shows the strength what empowerment zones can do outside of if we just all look within. And that's it. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, that was great. I said this morning when I was meeting with all the CEOs, I don't think any of us ever conceived this as a charitable operation. We thought that if we could build a community where everybody had a chance to make a living, that it would help all the rest of us, that we would all be stronger if people who were willing to work and had skills and had gifts to give to the community had a chance to do it and be paid an appropriate amount for it.

I think that this is a -- it is really -- America is very good at creating jobs. And compared to almost every other country in the world with an advanced economy, we've got a very low unemployment rate. But we still have a problem when places have been down for a long time, going back and getting that economic opportunity there and bringing people into the circle of success.

And if we can't do it now when the economy is good, we'll never get around to doing it. So that's why I wanted people to see and hear all of your stories and your philosophy, and see how this can work, because this is what we would like to do in every community in America where it is not now being done.

Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR CAMPBELL: Well, first of all, again we want to thank you for bringing this group of business leaders, because I think it's important for them to see how the inner city is flourishing, but the opportunities that continue to exist. And

always it's the absence of capital that's been a main impediment. That's why the empowerment zone has been so effective. That's why the SBA has helped us so much and of course, HUD -- we could not have done it without that.

But mostly, it's been because your administration has had a cogent urban policy -- whether it is in putting cops on the street, which has allowed our crime rate to go down -- just to give you some sense of that, 10 years ago, in 1989, we had 249 homicides; last year 148. And this year we're down again. Our crime rate is going down, as it is in other major cities, because of your COPS program.

Your economic policies to spur job growth and job creation; your empowerment zone initiatives have helped us to rebuild the empowerment zone. So we couldn't do it without you, without the Vice President, without your administration. So you come to a city that I think is revitalized, it's reborn. Much

like our sign, the phoenix bird rising, we're on the move. And we appreciate all that you've done. And the best is yet to come. And we wish you well and we thank you for your assistance.

And we thank all of you who have participated.
(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Let's give all our participants a hand here. They're great. Thank you. (Applause.) Great job.

END

3:35 P.M. EDT

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