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001. note	re: personal story (1 page)	10/00/1999	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Josh Gottheimer
OA/Box Number: 21929

FOLDER TITLE:

Homeless Language

2016-0201-S

rc2175

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

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Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

Date: 12-20-00 ACTION / CONCURRENCE / COMMENT DUE BY: ASAPSubject: Topper on the Environment

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	☒	☐	SIEWERT	☐	☒
PODESTA	☒	☐	MARSHALL	☐	☐
ECHAVESTE	☒	☐	MOORE	☐	☐
RICCHETTI	☒	☐	NASH	☐	☐
LEW	☒	☐	NOLAN	☐	☐
BAILY	☐	☐	REED	☐	☐
BERGER	☐	☐	SPERLING	☐	☐
BLUMENTHAL	☐	☐	STREETT	☐	☐
BRAIN	☐	☐	TRAMONTANO	☒	☐
BURSON	☐	☐	UCELLI	☒	☐
CAHILL	☐	☐	VERVEER	☐	☐
EDMONDS →	☒	☐	<u>Ballentine</u>	☒	☐
FRAMPTON	☒	☐		☐	☐
IBARRA	☐	☐		☐	☐
JOHNSON, B.	☐	☐		☐	☐
JOHNSON, J.	☒	☐		☐	☐
LANE	☐	☐		☐	☐

REMARKS:

Comments to Josh Gottheimer

RESPONSE:

Office of the Staff Secretary

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 & St Leger Street → equestrian, etc
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Draft 12/20/00 10:15pm
Josh Gottheimer

00 DEC 20 PM 10:23

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
TOPPER ON THE ENVIRONMENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
December 21, 2000**

Before I begin, I'd like to announce new steps we're taking to preserve our environment, keep our air clean, and protect the health of all our citizens, ~~young and old~~. Today we're taking new action to dramatically reduce pollution from trucks and buses powered by diesel fuels. They build on the steps I announced a year ago today to reduce pollution from cars and sport utility vehicles. Taken together, these measures will preserve our environment, and protect thousands of children from the agony of asthma and other respiratory diseases. They represent the most sweeping effort ever to protect our air and our health from the pollution caused by cars and trucks. By the end of the decade, every new vehicle sold in the United States will be up to 95% cleaner than those rolling off the assembly line today. Once again, we're proving that we can protect the environment and grow the economy at the same time.

A PRIVATE OPTION IN FAILING SCHOOLS

5 Poor New York Performers Could Be Run by Company

By EDWARD WYATT

In its first effort to turn entire public schools over to private operators, the New York City Board of Education plans to let Edison Schools Inc., a for-profit company that is the nation's largest commercial manager of public schools, run up to five of the city's worst-performing schools beginning next fall.

Under a privatization plan outlined yesterday by Chancellor Harold O. Levy, most parents at a school would have to vote to convert it to a charter school and let Edison provide the management, curriculum and instructional system. If they do not consent, the school will stay under Board of Education management.

If Edison takes over, all students, teachers and administrators now at the school would have the option to remain in the school or go elsewhere. Edison could hire new teachers who were not union members, but Edison officials said they intended to work closely with the teachers' union, which has given a less-than-enthusiastic nod toward working with the company.

Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers, said that while the union would work with Edison, "we urge parents to weigh carefully the proposed benefits and potential problems of this kind of for-profit management."

While the five-school privatization effort is smaller than similar programs under way or tried and abandoned in cities like Baltimore, Hartford and Dallas, it is likely to attract

widespread attention because New York City's school system is the country's largest, with 1.1 million students and 70,000 teachers and administrators.

The effort also comes as President-elect George W. Bush, a proponent of offering students choice in what type of school they want to attend, is expected to begin pushing elements of his education program through Congress early in his term.

The program is a victory for Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, who has pushed for privatization and who set aside \$80 million of the Board of Education's \$11 billion budget for a private management program. Mr. Giuliani had hoped for a far larger effort, however, encompassing at least 20 of the approximately 100 New York City schools that are on the state's list of low performers.

Mr. Levy and two board members who oppose the privatization took pains yesterday to stress that the Board of Education was not a failure at managing schools; in fact, they said, the system has turned around nearly 100 failing schools, getting them removed from the state's roster of schools under registration review.

But Mr. Levy said that this experiment was worthwhile if it led the public school system to new ways of dealing with schools whose students, year after year, were unable to meet state standards in reading and math.

"My hope is that this will set us on a course that not only will chart new ground but will also allow us to learn how we might go about our own business differently," Mr. Levy said.

While New York City has turned around the performance of some of its worst schools, it also has failed with some.

Two schools included in the program announced yesterday were scheduled to be closed after the current school year because the Board of Education had not made enough progress in turning them around, and one — Intermediate School 111, the Enrico Fermi school in Brooklyn — has been on the state's list of underperformers since 1989. Earlier this month, the State Education Department returned to its list of schools under registration review

five New York City schools that had been taken off the list.

The five schools in the program are three middle schools in Brooklyn, one elementary school in Manhattan and one school in the Bronx that has kindergartners through eighth graders. In all, almost 5,000 students would be enrolled in Edison-managed schools if all five proposed conversions were carried out.

Many details of Edison's effort remain to be negotiated between the company and the Board of Education. Not least of those is money. The state charter school law provides that those schools receive only about \$6,600 per student in operating money, about \$4,000 less than the Board of Education now spends per student at each of its schools on the state's list of failing schools.

Charter schools, which are financed by local tax dollars but are free of most local regulation, are eligible to apply for additional federal and state money to make up the difference. In addition, in its request for proposals for its privatization program, the Board of Education said that it "will make every effort to maintain that level of per-child funding after schools make the transition to charter status." Mr. Levy said yesterday that those financing questions would be part of the negotiations with Edison.

Benno C. Schmidt Jr., the former president of Yale University who is now chairman of Edison, said that Edison had invested roughly \$1.5 million in each of the 113 schools it managed around the country. Much of that spending is on technology, including home computers for each student beginning in the third grade. Those computers are typically distributed in the second year of Edison's management of a school.

The Board of Education is expected to vote on a contract with Edison in January, and a majority appears to favor the proposal. In a news release yesterday, the board said Edison had committed to invest at least \$250,000 in each school and to attract additional resources to the schools.

The schools included in the program are Middle Schools 246 and 320 and I.S. 111, all in Brooklyn; P.S. 161, in Manhattan; and P.S. 66, in the Bronx.

Clinton Approves Rules to Curb Emissions of Big Rigs and Buses

Large Cuts in Diesel Pollutants in Next 10 Years

By DOUGLAS JEHL

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 — President Clinton has approved final pollution-control rules that will force drastic reductions in heavy-duty truck and bus emissions over the next 10 years.

Under the new rules, the big diesel-powered vehicles that are the heaviest polluters on the roads would be subject to requirements that together would reduce their emissions of soot and smog-producing material by more than 90 percent.

More so even than the tightened standards for cars and light-trucks that Mr. Clinton announced a year ago, the new regulations for buses and big rigs will reduce by millions of tons pollutants that pose a major hazard to human health.

"In terms of the environment, it just doesn't get any bigger than these smudge pots on wheels," a senior official at the Environmental Protection Agency said.

The changes are not scheduled to take effect until 2006, but they will be announced by the White House and the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday as part of a final flurry of regulatory action designed to withstand any challenge by the incoming Bush administration.

Some critics, including the oil industry and some Senate Republicans, have accused the White House of rushing to judgment, warning that provisions of the rules could result in dangerous shortages and price surges in the fuel on which truck and bus transportation depends. Within the administration, the Energy, Transportation and Commerce Departments joined in saying that those warnings might be valid.

But the White House concluded that the benefits of the action far exceeded any risk, one administration official said, and approved a plan little changed from one first proposed last spring by Carol Browner, the E.P.A. administrator.

President-elect George W. Bush has not said whether he agrees with the approach taken by the White House. But in Texas, Mr. Bush's policies have been aligned closely with those of the oil industry. Senator James M. Inhofe, Republican of Oklahoma, has warned that he would seek early in the next Congress to roll back the new rules.

Senator Inhofe and other lawmakers tried and failed this fall to prevent the White House from announcing the new plan before Mr. Clinton left office.

Until now, heavy-duty trucks and buses have all but escaped the increasingly stringent pollution-control standards that have been imposed on cars and light trucks over the last 25 years. With word of the changes, environmentalists were beginning to celebrate today what they called the closing of a loophole and the possibility of further gains.

"In our view, these rules are going to result in the biggest air pollution advance in a generation," said Richard Kassell, a lawyer with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Among the new heavy-duty vehicle rules, the most controversial aspect lies at the very heart, which would transform the diesel fuel burned by heavy-duty trucks and buses. These vehicles account for just 6 percent of highway miles driven, but produce one-fourth of the smog-producing pollution and one-half of the soot.

As a component of diesel fuel, sulfur not only contributes to the soot but has also made impossible the incorporation of advanced pollution-control devices into heavy-duty trucks and buses, much as lead content in gasoline once served as a barrier to the adoption of the catalytic converter.

Environmentalists and others have contended that only the virtual elimination of sulfur from diesel could lead to a pollution-control breakthrough for heavy-duty trucks and buses, but the oil industry has argued that a smaller reduction would be sufficient.

In discussions with the administration, industry representatives have warned that the costs and difficulty of meeting the new requirement would prove so onerous that some refiners would stop producing diesel fuel altogether, leading to shortages and severe price volatility.

Those warnings gained significance after last summer, administration officials said, when gasoline prices in the Midwest soared to levels not seen elsewhere in the country, as a result of shortages brought on by pollution-control rules that re-

quired a new additive. With that experience in mind, Energy Secretary Bill Richardson argued that the E.P.A.'s proposed rule be modified so that the diesel-reduction rules would be phased in gradually, to allow refiners more time to adjust.

But that approach found little support, even from the oil industry, and the White House settled on a plan that would take effect in two steps, with 80 percent of all diesel fuel to be virtually sulfur-free beginning in 2006, and the rest by 2010.

At the American Petroleum Institute, the industry's leading trade group, top officials warned again today that the new rules could lead to disruption. "This is really going to test the system," said Edward Murphy, a general manager of the group.

The two other main provisions of the new rules would affect engine manufacturers. One, requiring a 95 percent reduction in emissions of nitrogen oxide, the main ingredient in smog, would apply to half of all new heavy-duty vehicle engines manufactured in 2007, with the rest to follow in 2010. The other, requiring a 90 percent reduction in emissions of particulates, or soot, would take effect in one step, in 2010.

Both targets will require the engine manufacturers to incorporate advanced new pollution control devices, experts said, and adoption of the rules was opposed by the manufacturers' main industry groups.

Estimates of just how much the new rules might cost have varied widely. A study sponsored by the oil industry said they would add 15 cents to a gallon of diesel gasoline, but an E.P.A. study put the cost much lower, at about 4 to 5 cents a gallon.

The E.P.A. study also concluded that the price of a new heavy-duty truck or bus would increase by between 1 and 5 percent. But the study said the public health benefits, including reduced rates of cancer, asthma and other diseases, along with gains from lower levels of acid rain, would easily justify the cost.

"Is it going to cost more? Yes," said S. William Becker, who represents state and local air pollution officials around the country who led in pressing for the new federal rules. "Will that cost be passed on to consumers? Probably. But is it cost effective? Absolutely."

**Office of Executive Scheduling**

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Date of transmission: 12/21/00

Total number of pages (Including cover sheet): 5

From: Lamar Robertson

Phone: 708-0614 Ext: 2114

Comments: _____

If there are any problems with this transmission please call (202) 708-1238.

HUD Radio Address – December 23, 2000

Good morning.

Eight years ago, Vice-President Gore and I vowed to “reinvent” the federal government. To make it work more like a business. To make it more flexible, streamlined, and responsive to the needs of the people. This was a promise made and a promise kept.

Today, we have the smallest federal workforce since the Eisenhower Administration, and we are doing more than ever to empower individuals so they may build better lives for themselves and their families.

There is no better example of our success in reforming government and making it work than the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For years, HUD was a symbol of government failure. Today, thanks to the leadership of Secretary Andrew Cuomo, it is at the forefront in the battle for justice and equal opportunity in America. Management expert David Osborne, who literally wrote the book Reinventing Government said “The pace and breadth of the HUD reform effort has been astonishing. Essentially every part of the organization has been significantly and positively impacted in some way.”

Thanks to the reforms put in place by Secretary Cuomo, HUD is not only transforming government, it is transforming people's lives.

The Department has given more Americans a sense of dignity and belonging by helping them realize the American dream of homeownership.

When I entered office, the national homeownership rate had dropped to 64%. Today, it stands at 67.7% -- the highest in our nation's history. FHA, which is HUD's mortgage insurance program and the federal government's primary instrument for promoting homeownership, has been a driving force behind this record. FHA guarantees loans for Americans who are otherwise rejected by private lenders, and since 1993, it has helped more than 4 million first-time homebuyers and over 2 million minorities become homeowners. More than 1 million Americans buy a home with FHA each year, and FHA currently insures over 7 million loans.

But HUD and FHA can do more, and that is why today I am proud to announce that we are raising the limit for maximum loan that FHA can guarantee from \$219,000 to \$239,000. This will help more families to become homeowners in areas where they are being priced out of the market by rising housing costs, and help us raise that record homeownership rate to even greater heights.

The new HUD is also restoring dignity to the lives of people living in public housing. We are tearing down 100,000 units of the nation's most distressed public housing and replacing them with low-density, mixed-income communities that residents can be proud of.

In addition, we are also taking affirmative steps to break down racial and economic concentrations in public housing. Failing public housing tends to be separate and unequal. Residents are often segregated by income and race – and the poorest residents live in the worst housing with least access to economic opportunity. Two years ago, I signed into law historic public housing reforms that were aimed at ending this segregation. As a result of that legislation, I am announcing a new regulation today which says public housing authorities must deconcentrate poverty and take affirmative steps to promote integration. My One America initiative said that if we can't live together, we can never come together. With this regulation, we are moving one step closer to making One America a reality.

HUD is also restoring dignity to the lives of the homeless. The essential truth underlying the 'One America' initiative is that we all contribute equally to the rich American tapestry. In this nation of equals, there can be no 'least among us'. So during this holiday season, as millions of Americans gather to celebrate with family and friends, we are frustrated that thousands of our fellow citizens have no home to return to and little to celebrate. The challenge of homelessness reminds us that for all of our success as a nation, we still have work to do if we hope to live up to our ideals.

We as a nation must recognize that homeless does not mean hopeless – nor should it mean helpless. I want to thank every American who – in the true spirit of the season – gives of themselves by serving in soup kitchens and shelters across the country. You are not alone, and you are not without support. That's why today, I am directing the Secretary Cuomo to release the largest funding package in history to combat homelessness in America. Over \$1 billion will fund the 'Continuum of Care' program – widely recognized as one of the most innovative programs in government. Through the 'Continuum of Care' the Federal government works in successful partnership with state and local governments and non-profit organizations to fund housing and support services for homeless Americans. Our solution to homelessness is more than a roof, a cot or food – it's building a bridge to self sufficiency and with that, dignity.

There is nothing more American than the equal opportunity to fulfill your potential and maximize your contribution to this great nation. I pray that today's announcements and our reinvented and revitalized government will empower more Americans to realize that dream. Hillary and Chelsea join me in wishing you and your family a safe and joyful holiday season. Thank you for listening.

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2 Samuel 7:9-11 :: *New International Version (NIV)*

2 Samuel 7

- 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.
- 10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning
- 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:

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1 Chronicles 17:8-10 :: *King James Version (KJV)*

1 Chronicles 17

- 8 And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth.
- 9 Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning,
- 10 And since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house.

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Comments? Questions? Tell us what you think.

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**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES OVER \$1 BILLION IN GRANTS
TO HELP HOMELESS AMERICANS ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY
AND ANNOUNCES HOUSING INITIATIVES FOR WORKING AMERICANS
December 23, 2000**

Today President Clinton will make several announcements that will provide more opportunities for housing and supportive services for thousands of Americans – whether they are homeless, live in assisted housing, or seek to purchase their own home. The President will announce that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is awarding over \$1 billion in grants to help more than 200,000 homeless people obtain housing and vital social services to reach self-sufficiency – the largest amount ever in U.S. history. These grants, called Continuum of Care Grants and Emergency Shelter Grants, will be provided to all fifty states and will fund more than 2,600 projects to create safe, affordable housing and break the cycle of homelessness. The President also will announce the publication of a final rule requiring Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to promote economic integration in public housing. Finally, the President will announce the raising of the Federal Housing Administration's loan limits by 9 percent to a maximum \$239,000, expanding homeownership opportunities for working families throughout the nation. These announcements build on the Clinton-Gore record of promoting self-sufficiency for homeless persons and increasing home ownership in America.

NEW GRANTS TO HELP HOMELESS AMERICANS ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

The President today will announce over \$1 billion in grants that will empower more than 200,000 homeless people to find housing and to access the services they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

Continuum of Care Grants. The President will announce \$895 million in Continuum of Care grants to help homeless persons in over 350 communities across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Included in this amount is nearly \$29 million in one-year Shelter Plus Care renewal grants. The Continuum of Care grants provide homeless people with transitional and permanent housing and fund social services such as job training, child care, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services. The grants are provided under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and will fund 2,632 individual projects. Non-profit organizations receiving funds include local chapters of the Salvation Army, Volunteers of America, and Catholic Charities.

Emergency Shelter Grants. The President also will announce \$150 million in funding for the Emergency Shelter Grants program to 312 local jurisdictions located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Under this program, states and cities select local projects to receive funding for emergency shelter and other homeless needs. These funds can be used to improve the quality of existing emergency shelters, to make available additional shelters and transitional housing, to meet the costs of operating shelters and of providing essential social services to homeless individuals, and to help prevent homelessness. The funds are distributed through a formula based on a community's housing and poverty needs.

**PRESIDENT RE-EMPHASIZES HIS "CONTINUUM OF CARE" STRATEGY TO
HELP END THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS.** Today's grants are the product of

* Our admin
at 10 to rule
everget
have lost 0.1%.

200,000 housing vouchers in last 3 years

President Clinton's Continuum of Care strategy, initiated in 1993. This strategy requires local public and private agencies to collaborate on creating a comprehensive plan to address the needs of poor and homeless people, and to coordinate services most efficiently. The goal of the Continuum of Care strategy is to ensure that communities respond to homelessness not simply by providing emergency assistance, but also by putting into place comprehensive and long-term approaches to help homeless people become self-sufficient. The key elements are outreach and assessment; emergency shelter; transitional housing and services; permanent housing; and permanent supportive housing. Last year, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and the Ford Foundation recognized the Continuum of Care strategy as a winner of their Innovations in American Government Award.

from being poor
buying own home to those who
live in
assisted
housing
they don't
have
money
to buy
home

TAKING NEW STEPS TO INCREASE CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITY IN ASSISTED HOUSING.

The President will announce the publication of a final rule requiring PHAs to promote economic integration in public housing. Also, the rule provides clarification to PHAs on what they must do to affirmatively further fair housing in their admissions policies. As a result of this rule, PHAs will now be required to make reasonable efforts to assure that families of various incomes and races have maximum opportunities in the public housing and voucher programs. This action builds on the Clinton-Gore Administration's previous efforts to move toward decent, safe, and affordable housing for all securing nearly 200,000 new housing vouchers in the past three years. In addition, the Administration increased fair market rents in difficult markets to improve access to a larger number of rental units for voucher holders, helped PHAs use some housing vouchers to expand tenant rental opportunities, improved public housing by demolishing the worst developments and offering former tenants new housing choices, and fought housing discrimination by increasing the number of fair housing enforcement actions.

those who
live in
assisted
housing
they don't
have
money
to buy
home

MAKING HOMEOWNERSHIP POSSIBLE FOR MORE FAMILIES. The President will also announce the raising of the Federal Housing Administration's loan limits by 9 percent to a maximum \$239,000, expanding homeownership opportunities for working families throughout the nation. This action comes at a time when the nation is celebrating the highest homeownership rates in history - 67.7 %, exceeding the goal set by the President five years ago of 67.5%. [source?] [Can we add something to put it in more human terms such as: "This means nine million more families own homes today than at the beginning of this Administration."] The percentage of FHA loans to first time home buyers has increased from 62 percent in 1992 to 82 percent in 2000. Over the same period of time, the percentage of loans to minorities has doubled, from 22 percent to 40 percent. FHA insures about forty-two percent of all home mortgages to African-American and Hispanic homebuyers. The Administration also recently finalized a rule allowing qualified working families to use housing vouchers to purchase a home.

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help work family especially those begin a house
for low
income
families

claim to help own home is highest
homeownership ever

today taking new steps to help
people who own own homes.
to those who are low
(- assisted housing)

people like — who

to
take more
opt + choice
for those
who live
in
assisted
housing

Since 1999
we
have
helped
low
income
families
to
own
homes
Let's
help
more
families
find decent
& affordable
housing

The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life. --William Faulkner

"The ideal woman which is in every man's mind
is evoked by a word or phrase or the shape of her wrist, her hand.
The most beautiful description of a woman is by understatement.
Remember, all Tolstoy ever said to describe Anna Karenina
was that she was beautiful and could see in the dark like a cat.
Every man has a different idea of what's beautiful,
and it's best to take the gesture, the shadow of the branch,
and let the mind create the tree."
--William Faulkner

Always dream and shoot higher than you know how to. Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself."
-William Faulkner

"A writer strives to express a universal truth in the best possible way that he can; in the way that rings the most bells in the shortest amount of time." --William Faulkner,

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

January 25, 1996**CITE:** 32 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 108**LENGTH:** 4423 words

see p. 5

HEADLINE: Remarks to the U.S. Conference of Mayors**BODY:**

Mayor Rice; Mayor Daley; Mayor Helmke, my old classmate, it's good to see you here. Mr. Vice President, you are the only person in the country that could have transformed a straight man routine into the best comedy act in America. [Laughter]

I used to be able to be on a platform with someone I liked, and when they cracked a joke, I'd just write it down. And when no one else was looking I would use it. [Laughter] All of his jokes are now so carefully bound to the persona he has created -- [laughter] -- they aren't stealable. They don't even need to be patented anymore. [Laughter]

We are, all of us, very glad to have you here. I speak for Secretary Cisneros, Secretary Pena, for Carol Browner. We're glad to have you here in your house.

I want to say a word of thanks to Tom Cochran for being a good representative of your interests and your concerns and of working so closely with Marcia Hale and others here in the White House. I want to thank you for the work you do every day and for, so many of you, who have made me feel welcome over the last 3 years as I've come to your cities.

As I said in the State of the Union a couple of days ago, the state of the Union is strong. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation we've had in 27 years. We've had 7.8 million new jobs. Those big numbers don't mean much to people; they really want to know how they are doing in their communities; how is it on my block? But I think we can take some encouragement from knowing that the unemployment rate has dropped 3 1/2 percent in Detroit; it's about 4 1/2 percent total in Chicago; it's dropped to under 5 percent in Philadelphia; 2 percent decline in Los Angeles; 2 1/2 percent decline in New York. We could go through city and city and community after community to say that. That is good news.

It is good news that our country is helping peace to take root around the world, from the Middle East to Bosnia. It is good news that all over our country we see a lot of the social indicators that have troubled so many of us for so long turning around. The crime rate, the welfare rolls, the food stamp rolls, the poverty rate, the teen pregnancy rate, all down over the last 2 to 3 years. That is very, very good news.

But we also know that we've got a lot of work to do. And we know the world is changing very quickly. And we know that there are an awful lot of Americans that have not been privileged to participate in this recovering economy. And we know that saying that all these things are going down masks the fact that the crime rate, the welfare rolls, the food stamp rates, the poverty rolls, the teen pregnancy rates, they're all still far too high, unacceptably high.

In the State of the Union Address, as I was preparing for it, I really tried to say to myself, if I were in anybody's living room, what would I say to them. If I were just talking to one family about what the future of our country would be like 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 20 years from now, what is it I would say that we have to do to keep the American dream alive for all of our people, to keep this country coming together and moving together around its basic values, and to maintain the leadership of the United States in the world?

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

That is what I tried to talk about on Tuesday night. I think we should start with our families because we know now that families that work together and stay together are almost never in poverty. We know that their children are far less likely to have the problems which have consumed so much of our time and our emotions and so much of the public treasure.

An important of helping our families is passing the right kind of welfare reform, not the wrong kind of welfare reform. I believe, since almost every parent in America has to work to make ends meet, whether in a one or a two-parent household, it is perfectly acceptable to require people on welfare who can work to work. I think we ought to do that. We ought to be moving people from dependence to independence. But it's also important to remember that we want people to succeed as parents and as workers, and that all of us have -- our first job is to our children.

That's why I say that I hope we can reach a bipartisan agreement on a welfare reform bill that will be very tough when it comes to work requirements and time limits and child support enforcement but will understand we need adequate child care, and we need adequate support for those children because what we really want in America is for every single parent to be able to succeed at home and at work.

The second great challenge we have is to provide our people with the educational opportunities they need for the 21st century. The 1990 Census had, if you went through all of the data, it had one stunning piece of information that I personally felt was the most important information I got out of the '90 Census. It was the first time we could see from 1990 and 1980, looking backward, one clear reason for the growing inequality in America. Why were so many middle class people working harder and harder and not getting ahead? Why was the rising tide not lifting all boats? If you look at the '90 Census, you will see Americans who had at least 2 years of education after high school tended to get jobs that they were able to keep, where the incomes tended to grow; those who didn't were in the other boat.

We have got to create a whole set of opportunities in education that will sustain the American dream for everyone. We've got to get more parents and teachers able to run their own schools and able to have flexibility from redtape, but they ought to have national standards of excellence and a recognized way of measuring it. And people should be held accountable for results -- more flexibility to meet higher standards. And one of the things that we can do together, one of the things the National Government can do is to implement this initiative that the Vice President has worked with the telecommunications industry to develop to hook up every school in every library in America to the Internet by the year 2000, every single classroom, and make sure that we not only have a hook-up, but that we have good software and skilled teachers, so that every single one of our children will be part of the information age. We're committed to that.

The third thing I think we have to recognize is that in this increasingly mobile economy we have to redefine what security means to a working family. It's amazing, the Fortune 500 companies keep laying off people, but there have been more people hired by just -- only by businesses owned by women in the last 3 years than have been laid off by the Fortune 500. Interesting statistic. There is that much dynamism in this economy. And all this change is real exciting, unless -- except in the times when you come out on the short end. Golly, elections are exciting, unless you don't win them. [Laughter] Then they're less interesting.

So the big picture is very exciting. But we have always recognized that the American people who are working hard and playing by the rules, obeying the law and doing the very best they could were entitled to some level of security.

Let me just give you one example about how the old security systems don't work. And a lot of you, particularly before you become public officials, I'm sure were involved in the unemployment system as employers or employees, where you paid -- if you were an employer you paid tax to the unemployment system. The unemployment system was a great idea the way it worked for decades. You paid the money in, and then when times were tough and you had to lay your workers off they

could at least draw a living wage, a little less than they were making but a living wage until you called them back.

For decades, 85 percent of the people who were laid off from work were called back to the job from which they were laid off. Today, over 80 percent of the people who are laid off are not called back to the job from which they were laid off because of the changes in the economy. So how do we deal with that?

For decades people had a pension they could rely on in addition to Social Security if they worked for a big company because they knew they'd go to work for one company, and they'd stay there until their work career was over. And the same thing with health insurance. But a million people in America lost their health insurance in the last 2 years, and we've had real trouble trying to maintain the integrity of pension systems. In December of 1994, an almost unanimous vote of the Congress in both parties basically stabilized the pensions of 8 million Americans that were in real trouble and 32 million more that could have gotten in trouble.

So how are we going to define this kind of security for the working families that you represent? I think, at a minimum, we have to do the following things:

We have to give people access to affordable health insurance that they don't lose when they change jobs or when somebody in their family gets sick. And there's a bipartisan bill before the Congress today which they could adopt which would do that.

Secondly, we ought to recognize that people know their own best interests when they're laid off, and we ought to do what we , can to move help to them as quickly as possible. And what I favor doing is collapsing 70 of the Government's training programs, which were each developed for little problems -- collapse them, put the big pot of money there, and when somebody in your community is laid off or is grossly underemployed and they would qualify for these training programs, instead of having to figure out what training program for which they should sign up, just send them a voucher and let them go to the local community college or whatever training institute is there.

Then the third thing I think we have to do is to figure out a way to make it easier for small businesses, and farmers particularly, to take out their own pension plans for themselves and their employees. There's a bill in the Congress today -- it hardly costs any money, but it would make some changes. I think it was one of the top of the three or four priorities of the White House Conference on Small Business. It would make some changes which would make it possible for almost every business that could possibly afford to do it, including a lot of them that cannot even afford the legal costs today, to begin a pension program.

So these are good beginnings. And they would strengthen your communities by enabling your families that are working out there in this more dynamic economy to succeed.

The fourth thing we have to do is do a better job of helping you to bring the crime rate down. But you -- this is a great success story in America. The crime rate is going down in most communities in this country, thanks to the efforts that you and your police chiefs, your police officers, and your community leaders are making. Finally, a couple of weeks ago there was a big cover story in one of our major magazines acknowledging that, saying we can have some hope that we can drive crime down.

Yesterday I was with Mayor Abramson in Louisville, and we sat and talked to the citizens and the community police officers that were working together in Louisville. Just a few days ago I was with Mayor Lanier in Houston. We were conducting a funeral service for our friend Barbara Jordan. And he was telling me about the work that they have done there to drive down juvenile crime. They have 3,000 young people in a soccer program. And 2,500 of them get their uniforms and shoes from the city. They are kids that would never otherwise be able to afford to participate in that sort of activity.

These things are going on all over our country, and we are taking our streets back. And I want to say

a little bit about this because this is -- the model we've had together in fighting crime is the model that I believe we should try to replicate in other places. We've worked together. We passed the crime bill of 1994. We passed the Brady bill. That needed to be a national law, uniform standards; 44,000 people with criminal records have not gotten handguns as a result of it. We passed the assault weapons ban. That needed to be a national law. It wouldn't be worth -- you know, a city ordinance on assault weapons? A State law on assault weapons? It wouldn't have worked.

We passed the crime bill, and we said, "Okay, this money can only be used for police," but that needed to be a national standard. Why? Because for 30 years we saw the violent crime rate triple and the aggregate size of America's police force only went up 10 percent. But the Attorney General worked very hard to clean away all the sort of bureaucratic hassles to getting the money. No one said the cities decided whom to hire, how to train them, where they'll be deployed, how they'll work. The cities decide what the relationship with the communities are. You make all the decisions of any significance within the framework of saying, we've got to go to community policing; we've got to drive this crime rate down.

That is the kind of community-based partnership that I think ought to be the model. And the results are pretty hard to quarrel with, as all of you know. Now, the only thing I want to say about that is we have made progress bringing the crime rate down, but everybody knows it's still too high. You go out and interview any 20 citizens in America, and they'll tell you it's still one of their deepest concerns.

We have to keep working on this. What should our goal be? Our goal should be to make crime the exception rather than the rule. It's a simple goal. Our goal should be to make crime the exception rather than the rule so that people feel comfortable when their kids are on the street playing, people aren't afraid to walk down the street to the movie. We know that we will never abolish crime in America. You will never take -- we can't transform what is inside every human being, but we could go back to a time when it's the exception rather than the rule. And we have to keep working until we achieve that goal.

The other challenges that I put before the country were, obviously, the important ones that you've worked on: to make sure that we continue to protect the environment and that we find even more ways to grow the economy while we're cleaning up the environment instead of the reverse; to maintain our country's leadership in the world; and to give our Government greater and greater and greater capacity to do more while it costs less and serve the people better.

And we don't have -- the era of big Government is over, but the era of strong, effective Government in partnership with people is not over. We're not going back to a time when people can fend for themselves. Why do people come to cities in the first place? What do cities give people? The ability to make more of their lives together than they could if they were apart. I mean, the whole concept of cities is the symbol of what it is we ought to be trying to do in America. People live together because they think they'll all be better off than if they were all out somewhere else by themselves.

That is the idea. And that is, to me, the model that we ought to all have in our minds of what the role of Government ought to be as we move into the 21st century, to make people to make more of their own lives, not to do anything for anybody that they ought to do for themselves but to help people make more of their own lives.

And that is the kind of partnership we have tried to have with you. It is very difficult to do that and to say you're doing it in Washington because everything here compulsively is filtered out to you through party politics, no matter how hard we try to avoid it. You don't have to worry about that quite as much as we do. I think it was Mayor LaGuardia who once said, "There is no Republican or Democratic way to clean the streets." [Laughter] And I believe we need to take some of that wisdom and bring it back here. There is, yes, a Democratic and a Republican way to balance the budget. I understand that. But there is also a whole lot of overlap, and that's what we ought to be focused on.

So let me just mention four things very quickly that I know you'll be discussing here that I think ought to be the basis of our partnership within this framework that I outlined in the State of the

Union.

First of all, I want to thank again the Vice President and Secretary Cisneros for the work they've done on the empowerment zones and the enterprise communities. We are trying to find ways to take the lessons we learned there and apply them to other communities. And as we work through this budget and next year's budget, I believe that there should be a bipartisan consensus to find ways to use the power of the Federal Government in ways that essentially help build public-private partnerships to redevelop our cities. And I would urge you to support that and to give us any other ideas you have for that.

We have the HOME initiative, which all of you are familiar with, which provides funds for you to build and rehabilitate houses for your citizens. We continue to strongly support the community development block grants. They've been around a long time, but they really are the symbol of what it is we're trying to do: Here are the subjects; you do it; be accountable at the end; if you mess up, we'll tell you, but otherwise why should we be telling you how to do all this. Those community development block grants have worked well for America. This is a stronger country because of the way that program worked.

We have, secondly -- let me just make one other comment. I believe that the way the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development has worked with you on the problem of homelessness has worked well, too. You know how to move the **homeless** people off your streets. Every community has a slightly different **homeless** problem. And one of the things I would like to say is, while we do this budget, I know we're going to have to cut a lot of things, but I think we've made some real progress in dealing with homelessness in the last few years, and I think it would be a great mistake if we reverse that progress. I think it would be a great mistake if we reverse that progress. We need to continue to reduce the number of **homeless** people on our streets. This, again, should not be a partisan issue. I don't believe there is a single person in America that really believes that we should weaken our effort to do that.

The second thing we've done is to work on these community development banks. They're quite controversial now in the Congress because they seem like an easy thing to cut because they haven't been fully implemented. But if you look at the experience of the South Shore Development Bank in Chicago, or if you look at the experience of any of the other microenterprise loan programs that have been done in the United States, or if you look at how much our aid program has done in other countries, setting up development banks in places where they would be a lot harder to start than it would in most of your cities, it is obvious that if we had a source of capital to start more new businesses and small businesses, no matter if they're just one-person businesses, in a lot of our poorest areas, we could grow the economy more quickly there than anywhere else.

What's the greatest opportunity for American business today? The distressed neighborhoods in our urban and rural areas. Where do the largest number of people live in America that we could use to expand the work force in a hurry, or to expand the number of our consumers in a hurry? In the distressed neighborhoods of our urban and isolated rural areas.

AID gave a \$ 1-million grant several years ago to a Central American country to set up a loan program. An average loan was \$ 300 apiece. That loan program now accounts for one percent of all of the jobs in that country, and the \$ 1-million fund that AID put down there now has -- there's \$ 4 million in that bank account now. Those loans have been paid back several times with interest over and over again.

If we really believe that free enterprise and not Government spending is the answer to the problems of the inner city, we're going to have to give them some free enterprise. And free enterprise begins with capital. And there is lots and lots and lots of evidence that this can be successful. So I urge you to support that.

The third thing that I know is very important -- I think more mayors have mentioned this to me than any other single issue -- is our Brownfields initiative, and I want to thank Carol Browner for the work

that she has done on it. We were getting ready to come over here, and I was preparing it and I said we ought to call this Browner's Brownfields. [Laughter] It sounds like a kids' softball team, you know? It was great.

This is a very important thing. If we can get these vacant spaces that you have to put fences around, that basically divide neighborhoods and are inviting targets for all kinds of destructive things, to turn back into safe, sustainable economic endeavors we could do more in less time, with less money to move our cities forward than nearly anything else we can do. So we want to help communities clean up old waste sites by giving tax incentives to those who will buy and clean them up. We want to clear away regulatory burdens. We want to do whatever we can to support you.

But I know that the mayors have been on this issue, and I just want to assure you that we want to be there with you. And I believe, again, we can build broad bipartisan support for the Brownfields initiative.

The fourth thing that I want to comment on is the reinvention of HUD that Mayor Cisneros is overseeing. I call him "mayor" when he starts talking to me about this. HUD has now got 81 field offices. They've moved huge numbers of people out of Washington. They're collapsing their divisions down to four basic programs. For communities of over 150,000 there will be a single point of contact in the community so you can do all your business in one place. Grants that once required 12 separate applications will now require only one.

So that's the kind of flexibility that I think we ought to have. Our goal is to reach, by the year 2000, 67 1/2 percent homeownership in America. We're already at a 15-year high fight now. We're moving. And if we can keep going in this direction and you'll help us and we work together we can get up to the point where 67 1/2 percent of the people are in their own homes. That has never happened in the United States before. And that, again, will carry with it a certain amount of economic growth and development in all your communities.

And let me just say one other word since Secretary Pena is here. We have been quite successful and, again, have had a good support from the Congress in our efforts to maximize the amount of money we're putting out through the Department of Transportation in communities for infrastructure development. That's one place where we have worked together with hardly a hitch. And because we have it's attracted hardly any notice. [Laughter] But we're moving in the right direction there, and I want to thank you for doing that.

So these are the things that we believe we can do with you. And I hope that they will be symbolic and will exemplify the kind of partnership that will take this country a long way down the road.

Let me just say one other thing about the budget. Since I gave the State of the Union Address, there have been some encouraging things said by the congressional leaders about the prospects of our getting a budget agreement and continuing to work to bring the deficit down. But I would remind you that we still have some roadblocks in the way that I think need to be cleared away.

I urge Congress to keep the Government open and to pass the straightforward continuing resolution until we pass the rest of the appropriations bills for this year.

We've also seen news that just today -- of the serious consequences that could result if the Congress was to default on the debt limit. No mayor would ever consider doing such a thing. The repercussions would be far too harmful. And the Congress should not, either. Congress must choose not to shut the Government down again, and must choose to honor the full faith and credit of the United States.

We are a very great nation, and we are a very great nation not just because we're big, not just because we're wealthy, and not just because we've got a powerful military. It's because people know that we stand for certain things. They know we can be trusted. They know we keep our word.

When the United States of America borrowed that money, the United States gave its word it would

honor its obligations. And we should not, under any circumstances, for any reason, ever, ever, not a single one of us, break the word of the United States of America.

Let me say, too, to all of you, I have been very honored to fight the battles that we have fought together, across party lines, for the crime bill, to end unfunded mandates. You have been a source of great inspiration to me. But this organization has been a source of inspiration for progressive, positive change ever since you convinced a reluctant President Hoover to sign a municipal assistance bill in the Depression.

So I ask you to keep working with us. Help us to pass the "Community Flexibility Act." Help us to protect the community development banks. Help us to support the reform of HUD. Help us to get real welfare reform. Help us to keep the crime rate coming down. Help us to do these things. We can do these things if we do them together.

The cities are the model. Why did people begin to live in cities? Because they knew instinctively they could do things together that they could never do on their own. America can do what we have to do if we do it together. And the mayors, the cities, the community leaders can lead the way.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m., in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Conference of Mayors officers Mayor Norm Rice, Seattle, WA, president; Mayor Richard Daley, Chicago, IL, vice president; Mayor Paul Helmke, Fort Wayne, IN, advisory board chair; and John Thomas Cochran, executive director.

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
THE EAST ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JANUARY 25, 1996**

cc. Gabrielle
Bushman

Acknowledgments: Mayor Rice and Mayor Daley were my guests at the State of the Union. The two former mayors who serve in my Cabinet, Henry Cisneros and Federico Pena, also attended. I am gratified that none of them seem the worse for wear.

CAROL BROWNER

TOM COCHRAN
(E.D. USCM)

Before I came to Washington, it seemed to me that our national city and our nation's cities lived light years away from each other. So from the moment I had the privilege to move into this great old house, it has been very important to me to close the distance, to work with you as neighbors.

We have the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. In the last three years we have created more than 7.8 million new jobs.

[Unemployment drops for cities from 1992-1995 --

Detroit: 8.5% to 3.9%; Chicago: 5.2% to 4.6%;

Philadelphia: 7.1% to 4.8%; LA: 9.5% to 7.5%; NY: 10.2% to 7.4%.]

America is helping peace take root around the world.

And perhaps most importantly, Americans are coming together around our basic values of family, work, and community. We are finding common ground as we work together to solve our problems, and we are succeeding.

After all, that's how we started out. When the United States Conference of Mayors first organized in 1933, it set up shop in one of those brownstones just across the street from here -- on Jackson Place. Living almost side by side, we were always able to keep one another in mind. You've been uptown for a few years now, but I know that in our working relationship we are neighbors still -- pulling together, and never losing sight of one another.

In fact, in the time that I've served as your President, I've had the honor of speaking to you several times. In those three years, our country has grown progressively stronger. Our economy is thriving.

The crime rate, the welfare rate, the food stamp rate, the poverty rate and the teen pregnancy rate are all down. As they go down, prospects for our future go up.

But good lives are made up of something more intangible than simple material conditions. That is at the heart of what I spoke about two nights ago when I had the honor of delivering the State of the Union. I asked us all to consider how we as a nation can strengthen the American community.

I set forth seven great challenges we face as we stand at the dawn of a new century.

First, a challenge to cherish our children and strengthen our families . . . As I said on Tuesday night, we are close to agreement on a tough, bipartisan welfare reform bill with time limits, work requirements, and child support enforcement -- but one that also allows for child care, so mothers who work can do so without worrying about their children.

Second, a challenge to provide Americans with the educational opportunities we will need for this new era. I called on parents, teachers, businesses and cities across our nation to meet the highest of educational standards, and to join together to connect every classroom to the Information Superhighway by 2000.

Third, a challenge to help every American who is willing to work for it, achieve economic security through training, retirement security, and access to health care. . . . I challenged the Congress to pass the GI Bill for workers, which I know you support, to convert our outdated worker training system into a voucher that can be used at community colleges or in a new job.

Fourth, a challenge to take our streets back from crime and gangs and drugs . . . a challenge we have worked together to meet through our support for community policing and the Crime Bill. Violent crime is down across America.

In New York City, murders are down 25 percent; in St. Louis, 18 percent; in Seattle, 32 percent. Community policing is working. We provided funds for police officers. You put the police officers where you need them. Those good officers have also become good neighbors. Increasingly, people are coming out from behind closed doors and shuttered windows to take back their own streets.

I also spoke of challenges to leave our environment safe and clean for the next generation; to maintain America's leadership in the fight for peace and freedom throughout the world; to reinvent our government and give our democracy back to the people.

I believe we can meet these challenges not through centralized big government -- the era of big government is over...Not by going back to a time when our citizens were left to fend for themselves...But only by going forward as one America. Only by working together across the entire spectrum of government, religious, and civic associations, can we enable our people to make the most of their lives. Only by working together can we truly redeem this age of possibility.

That is what you do each new day. America is on your doorstep. When you walk out of your office, the great challenges of our time are before you -- not in newspaper articles or briefing books -- but face on.

Human-size. Daily. And there's nothing you can do but reach out to your fellow citizens and try to fix them.

Garbage needs to be picked up. Buses have to take workers to their jobs and children to school. Those schools need to be safe and clean every single day. But schools only work when parents make sure their children study hard and make it to the bus on time.

Every 911 caller depends on a calm voice at the other end of the line. But 911 only works when neighbors watch out for neighbors and report a break-in.

You rarely have time for party politics or ideological grandstanding.

As Mayor LaGuardia said, "There is no Republican way or Democratic way to clean the streets."

Look around this room: It is a model of bipartisan partnership for the rest of us. Republicans and Democrats alike working to strengthen Community Development banks...backing our Empowerment Zones... fighting to revive "Brownfields" in our urban areas...forging a new role for mayors in public education...showing us that by being more flexible with our regulations and more creative with our investments we can expand the circle of hope and prosperity.

If we are to help you strengthen your cities, we must extend this spirit to our relationship...not in government that works top-to-bottom, but with government that works side-by-side.

This idea of community teamwork has been the inspiration for my administration's urban policy over the past four years. We are working with you...~~to give you the freedom you need to do good work...to help you get away from one-size-fits-all government to create a partnership with which we can rebuild our cities.~~ No more one-size-fits-all blueprints from Washington.

National objectives. Local methods.

We want government to act as a catalyst for your efforts, not as a barrier to them.

Let me mention ⁸⁴ ~~four~~ ways we have set this to work, ways I briefly touched on in my State-of-the-Union address.

First, under the leadership of the Vice President and Secretary Cisneros, we have created Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. We awarded tax incentives and grants to spur economic growth. We waived rules that were blocking progress. We did our part. And you did yours. You came up with innovative strategies tailored to your cities.

You reached out to businesses for their investment and communities for their enthusiasm. And because of that, 72 urban neighborhoods around the country are coming back from decay to real vitality.

We are building on the lessons of the Empowerment Zones, giving ~~own~~ communities the resources, the flexibility, and the tools they need to get the job done.

It is you, not us, who know best what type of affordable housing the people of your city need. So we have the Home Initiative, which provides funds for you to build and rehabilitate houses for your citizens. You know best how the people of your city want to live.

~~supported the~~

So we have ~~the~~ **Community Development** block grants, which provide funds so you can meet a community's needs: repair a street...build a day-care center...create jobs...put swings in a park. You know **what** it takes to get the **homeless** of your city off the streets and back into society. So we have an initiative that gives you funds so you can provide a continuum of care...guiding people from treatment to training to jobs and a roof over their heads.

Second, our effort to create a new network of **Community Development Banks** grew out of the idea that what cities needed was not bureaucracy, but capital so people could buy homes, open businesses, create jobs.

That's why this program made it through Congress with bipartisan support -- and that is why Congress should give it a chance to work. → all over world

→ + in US when given a chance

Third, we are moving forward with our brownfields initiative, which I know you have been working on for so long. [Thank Browner] This initiative will bring back to life land sitting idle in the heart of our cities.

Vacant spaces, surrounded by chain-link fences, that ^{keep} ~~keep~~ neighbor from neighbor, will be turned into safe, sustainable businesses, bringing jobs back to communities many had given up on. We will help communities clean up old waste sites by providing tax incentives to those who buy and clean up those sites.

We will make sure the brownfields purchasers are not liable for the mess someone else made. We will help hope find its way back to America's cities.

Fourth, under the inspired leadership of Secretary Cisneros, we have radically reinvented HUD, transforming it from a top-down to a bottom-up agency. *Moving people out of DC to*
~~There are~~ now 81 field offices around the country.

For communities over 150,000 people, there will be a single point of contact, so you can do all your business in one place. We've cut red-tape. Grants that once required 12 applications now ask for only one.

And HUD has brought these new, flexible approaches to the task of promoting homeownership. In the last three years, 3.6 million Americans have become

*400
25
15* homeowners. We are on track to raise homeownership to 67.5 percent -- an all-time high -- by the year 2000.

We are doing this not through big government programs, but by cutting the bureaucracy, speeding up loans, and make financing available for families who until now have been locked out of the market.

And we are cleaning house in public housing. From now on the rule for residents who commit crime and peddle drugs should be one strike and you're out.

We are changing the rent rules to reward people for going to work. And we're tearing down the concrete monoliths of yesterday and putting up smaller housing designed to offer not only shelter, but hope.

[BUDGET INSERT: I am proud of what we are doing together. I sincerely hope this spirit of cooperation will carry over into the budget negotiations. As I've said before, between our two plans, the Republicans and I have enough cuts in common to balance the budget and provide a modest tax cut. Yes, differences remain on a number of issues, and I am eager to work to resolve them.

But I ask the Republicans to consider that we should at least enact these savings that both plans have in common and give the American people a balanced budget.

In the meantime, I urge Congress to keep the government open and pass a straightforward Continuing Resolution and a ^{LONG-TERM} ~~short~~ extension of the debt limit.

We've seen new news today of the serious consequences that could result from Congress failing to extend the debt limit. [Moody's] No mayor would ever consider shutting down a city government. The repercussions would be too harmful. Congress has a choice today.

And it must choose never to shut down the government again. And never to jeopardize the full faith and credit of our Republic.]

I urge you, too, to make a choice. Stand up. From your first action... convincing a reluctant President Hoover to sign a municipal assistance bill...to the battles we have fought together for the Crime Bill and Unfunded

Mandates...this organization has been a force for ^{progressive} good. ^{concern} action

I ask you to join me in the days ahead...to pass the

Community Flexibility Act...to protect Community

Development Banks...to support HUD reform...to get

real welfare reform -- that ends welfare as we know it,

but does not abandon compassion as we've practiced it.

We can do this. Together. Think for a moment about now your city began. It may have been in the 1600s on the bank of a river. Or it might have been in the 1930s, on the edge of a desert. No matter where it happened, your city was built out of a simple human need: our need to live together. Individuals want to gather and create something greater, richer, than themselves. Our homes, our cities, our neighborhoods, our communities...all these represent who we are. Let us work together to reclaim and recreate our urban frontiers. Let us work together to make our cities and neighborhoods as beautiful as the lives that pass through them.

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

December 23, 1998**CITE:** 34 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 2522**LENGTH:** 2814 words

see p. 4

HEADLINE: Remarks at a Housing and Urban Development Grant Announcement in Baltimore, Maryland**BODY:**

Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, if Christa Spangler hasn't put us in the spirit of the season, I don't know who could. Didn't she do a magnificent job? Thank you very much. [Applause] Thank you. Thank you, Secretary Cuomo, for your remarks and your remarkable work.

I want to say at this holiday season, the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the season of Hanukkah for Jewish Americans, and Christmas for those of us who are Christians, when we are told we should count our blessings, one of the things that has been a great blessing for me in the last 6 years as President has been my proximity to and involvement with the city of Baltimore and the State of Maryland.

I have, as you heard Mayor Schmoke say, starting in 1992, I have visited the churches here; I have walked the streets here; I have seen the children here in their schools and their environmental projects and in other ways. I have loved this State. I have been to Annapolis and to Clinton, Maryland -- [laughter] -- and to Montgomery County -- and Wayne -- and to, obviously, so many times to Camp David and the environs there. And I feel very blessed.

But I was looking at your elected Representatives -- Elijah Cummings, who is very well named; he sounds like a prophet about half the time. And I was thinking that there is no State in the country that has a pair of Senators with quite the combination of intelligence, compassion, and energy, and plain old pull that Maryland does. And I am so grateful for the work that Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend have done.

As all of you know, I've had also a special friendship with Mayor Schmoke, and I sort of regret the fact that both of us will be retiring before you know it. [Laughter] But he did a remarkable job. He has done and he has some more remarkable things to do for this city, and I thank him for that.

I'd also like to thank the other State legislators, county officials, city council members who are here. I'd like to thank the AmeriCorps members who are here for the wonderful work they do and the residents of Pleasant View Gardens.

You know, there's been a lot of talk today about this project as an embodiment of the community America can become. There's been a lot of talk today about the spirit of one America, as Secretary Cuomo said. But I think it's important, if you'll forgive me just one religious reference at Christmas time, that we remember what Christa Spangler said: Anybody can become **homeless**. What does that mean? That means: There, but for the grace of God, go I. And it means that in our minds, we should be going there.

Most people, most Christians at the Christian season read the Christmas story in Matthew or Luke. But at the end -- along toward the end of the Book of Matthew, there is a great sermon where Jesus says -- and I won't go through the whole thing -- but basically, "even as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me."

Now, what that really means is not what most people think. It doesn't really mean go out and give a

bunch of money to poor people so you can feel righteous. That's not what it means. It means -- what it really means is, whether you're tall or short, whether you're fat or thin, whether you're black, brown, or white, whether you look like a movie star or a person who had one boxing match too many -- [Laughter] -- whatever the different circumstances of your life are, inside each of us there is a core that is the same and not one person is better than another. That's what it really means. That's what it really means.

So when I talk about one America, I don't mean that it makes me feel good to help people who are the least of these. What the real biblical message is, is that there is no "least of these." It is not an accident that the birth occurred in a manger. And it wasn't because I wanted to go out and get more votes because there's more poor people than rich people. Right?

So I just think it's important we think about that in this season, because every meaningful religion is trying to tell us the same thing. We organize our lives and our minds in categories; we have to do that. We want our kids to make good grades in school, not bad grades in school, so we tell them it's better to make good grades. We'd like to have a better job that pays more money so we can take better care of our families. We say, you know, it's better. It helped me to get reelected that we had a good economy instead of a bad economy. We all know that.

So we make judgments all the time, and we have to organize our lives so we are always putting people and conduct and things into categories, and that's good. It has to be done. But in order to have any meaning at all, underneath it all we have to know the real secret of life is that we have something that is no better than but, thank God, no worse than what anyone else has. And that is the gift we get from God; whatever our religious teaching and conviction and background, that is the gift we receive.

And our political conduct should at least -- we can differ on a lot of things -- about what's the best way to do this, the best way to do that or the other thing. But if we ever forget that what we have in common is far more fundamental than all these things that we differentiate among ourselves, we have forgotten the most important thing.

The reason the American idea has worked for over 220 years is it rests on the premise that what we have in common is the most fundamental thing. And it recognized in the beginning -- Thomas Jefferson -- "I tremble when I think of slavery to believe that God is just" -- they knew that they were nowhere near living up to their ideals. And we accept today we are nowhere living up to our ideals. But we recognize that we have to move closer. That's really what we all came here to talk about here today. That's what we're all here to talk about today.

So we want America not only to be a rich country but one where everybody has a place at the table. That's what we come to celebrate.

I want to thank all of you and the American people for the work we have done in these last several years to make more room at the table for more people, to give people a chance to live as if they were what they in fact are: equal before the law and in the eyes of God.

Now, we have a lot to celebrate -- some of it's been mentioned: 17 million new jobs; the fastest wage growth in two decades; the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years; the smallest percentage of Americans on welfare in 29 years; the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded; the highest home-ownership in history; crime, divorce, teen pregnancy, drug abuse rates falling. But I say until we know that everybody has a chance to be a part of this, we have more to do. And I believe when times are good, we have a heavier responsibility to look at the long run, to meet the long-term challenges of the country, and to give everybody a chance to be a part of what it is we celebrate.

At the dawn of the 21st century we have some big challenges. Not all our children have world-class educations, but all our children need them. You heard Elijah talking about the health care challenges. More and more people are having trouble finding health insurance. More and more people with health

insurance are in managed care plans where they need a Patients' Bill of Rights. We have a huge looming challenge when all of us baby boomers retire and there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security or on Medicare. And the young people of this country deserve -- deserve -- the right to live their lives, raise their children without their parents and grandparents bankrupting them. And so we have to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century without imposing on our children an unfair burden.

There's a lot of trouble in the world economy today, and we can't continue to grow unless we help our neighbors to get over that trouble and to stabilize the system. And again I say, underneath all that is our philosophy -- do we really believe that our ability to do well is connected to our neighbors' ability, and not only our neighbors down the street and across the town and across America but all of our neighbors on this increasingly small planet of ours? I think you believe that. That's one reason I enjoy coming here and being with you.

Now, I have watched -- I came here to Baltimore the first time before some of you were born. I was an 18-year-old college student, and my best friend, later my college roommate, was from Baltimore. So I have seen this place change breathtakingly since I first came here in 1964. I see it in Camden Yards and the Inner Harbor, but I also see it in the communities throughout this city. And the changes you see here are just as profound as you see in your beautiful ballpark or your beautiful harbor, and may have a longer lasting positive impact on the march of life in this city. You see it in west Baltimore, east Baltimore, Sandtown-Winchester, and of course, here in Pleasant View.

This is the model -- the reason I came here today, among other things, besides the fact that I like to come here and be with all of you -- is that I want people to understand what you have done. And I want people to understand that if you can do this here, this can be done anywhere in America. And I want people to understand that the National Government is committed to being a partner, but all we can be is a partner. What makes the celebration of today possible is what you have done. You needed our help. That's what Senator Mikulski said. And you need more. That's why Senator Sarbanes talked about the budget. [Laughter] But it's very important to understand that all I have done here, all Secretary Cuomo has done here, is to give you the tools to build a genuine community out of chaos and to give everybody a seat at the table.

And so I want to say again, we are committed to that. We want more empowerment zones like yours. We want more community development banks. We want more comprehensive housing reform like we see here. What did you do with your empowerment zone? Would you like to know? Baltimore's empowerment zone has produced more than 2,800 new jobs; crime down 20 percent; \$ 50 million in new private sector funding. It worked. So we're going to have, in the coming weeks, thanks to last year's budget, 20 new empowerment zones. Others can do it because you did it, and we want them to do it.

We have the best job market in a generation. But to really move people from welfare to work, we need more transportation, more child care, more housing vouchers to move people closer to the available jobs, and new commitments from civic, religious, business, and nonprofit groups. We will do that. We must build on the success of community policing, which prevents crime in the first place.

Already, we have helped to fund more than 92,000 of the 100,000 police officers promised by the crime bill of 1994. And here in Baltimore we're providing funding for another 100 officers -- on top of the 450 you've already hired -- specifically targeted to higher crime neighborhoods. If we want to build communities, our children have to feel safe on their streets.

One of the biggest things I am convinced we have to do is to do more to tap the potential of all our young people. We need more safe and more modern schools. We need desperately quality after-school programs for all the children, who otherwise will be on the street, not learning and getting in trouble. We need to give young people an opportunity to give something back to their community and to go on with their education.

I am very proud that Baltimore has one of the largest national service programs, AmeriCorps programs, in the entire United States here. There are more than 300 young AmeriCorps members building new homes, removing lead paint, restoring parks. Nearly 500 more will join you in the coming year. So I want to thank the young AmeriCorps members who are here today for their service. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. [Applause] Thank you.

And we can do more to break the cycle of homelessness. We are serving many, many thousands -- tens of thousands of more people than we were when I became President. I remember, when I first took office, and I used to run out of the White House in the morning on my morning jog, and I would go down 16th Street and 15th Street. And there were **homeless** people everywhere, and they would stop and talk to me. It was a great thing; the President could have a daily conversation with a **homeless** person. That was good for me but lousy for them because they were all spending the night on the street over the grates, waiting for the heat -- even built fancy little tents so that the heat would blow up and keep their roof over their heads.

And there are fewer of them now. But we have a lot to do. The Continuum of Care strategy that Secretary Cuomo developed acknowledged that people who are **homeless** need more than a shelter. They are **homeless** for a reason. You heard that from Christa.

Today I am pleased to announce that we are awarding \$ 850 million to communities in all 50 States to give **homeless** families a chance to rebuild their lives. Maryland will receive more than \$ 17 million; grassroots organizations here in Baltimore more than \$ 8 million. These grants will help you to reach out in innovative ways to **homeless** adults and children, to veterans and the disabled, to people with mental illness and with AIDS. They will help with emergency shelters and permanent housing, drug treatment and medication, job training and child care. They will help to give your fellow citizens a hand up. They will help you to give them the greatest benefit of all, the gift of self-sufficiency and hope.

Now, I am also pleased to announce that my next balanced budget will include a record \$ 1.1 billion for **homeless** assistance. If enacted -- if we can persuade the Congress to enact it, it will be the largest effort to combat homelessness in the history of America, and it will be done within the balanced budget.

Baltimore has always been known as the City of Neighborhoods. I want America to be known as the Country of Neighborhoods. And I want us to look at all people as our neighbors.

You know, not very long ago, Hillary and Chelsea and I took a brief trip to the Middle East to try to spur on the peace process there, to try to help the Palestinians and the Israelis become more reconciled to one another. And as a part of this trip we were able to go to Bethlehem, which, ironically, is now a predominantly Palestinian-Muslim city, where the Christians, in the birthplace of Christ, are in a minority but a respected minority. And we visited the Church of the Nativity, and we bent down and walked through that doorway that was built about 1500 years ago in that old church. And we went down into the crypt, where I'm sure some of you have been, where they believe the manager was where Jesus was born. And we were left there for a time, the three of us, by ourselves -- something that almost never happens to us -- to reflect on the meaning of that.

I say again, I came out of that, first of all, profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve, for the many gifts in my life and my family's life but also determined again to remember what I think the fundamental lesson is -- which is not that charity is the greatest virtue but that charity is an obligation because of our common humanity, because we are not better than those who, because of their circumstances, happen to need a hand up at any given moment in time.

So, as much as any place in our country, the State of Maryland and the city of Baltimore embodies that. You should be very proud and very grateful for what you have done and what you are. And it should make you more determined for what you can become.

I was sitting there looking at Christa Spangler, listening to her. She got a second chance -- maybe a

third or a fourth or a fifth chance. But here she is -- sounding good, looking good, got a life, got a job, got a house, got a husband. Stand up; stand up here. [*Applause*] Thank you; thank you. This ought to be a country of neighbors, a country of equals, a country of people committed to a hand up.

God bless you, and happy holidays. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. in the gym at the Boys and Girls Club. In his remarks, he referred to Christa Spangler, former recipient of **homeless** assistance services, who introduced the President; Prince Georges County Executive Wayne Curry; Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore; and Gov. Parris Glendening of Maryland.

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Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

November 22, 1995**CITE:** 31 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 2052**LENGTH:** 940 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony**BODY:**

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Rose Garden, and Happy Thanksgiving. I want to acknowledge, especially, Kenneth Rutledge, the chairman of the National Turkey Federation, his wife, Brenda, his son, John; Stuart Proctor -- Kenneth is the chairman; Stuart Proctor is the president of the Turkey Federation, his wife, Sherry. I also want to recognize the presence here of Congressman Cal Dooley. And I want to on this cold day warmly welcome the young people and the volunteers who are here from the Boys Club, the Girls Club of America, the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, and the members of the AmeriCorps program from Baltimore. [Applause] Thank you.

I also want to say that's the most multicolored, best looking turkey we've had here since I've been President.

You know, we're here today to have a little fun and to begin the official Thanksgiving in our country that we give every year at this time for the blessings that God has given us, for the personal gifts he's given us, the gifts of our families and communities and to our great country.

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday, as all of you know. It goes back to our foundations. But I think it's important to note that the first official proclamation of Thanksgiving, issued by a United States President, was issued by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, when our people were overwhelmingly preoccupied with their problems and indeed with whether our country would even continue to exist. Nevertheless, Mr. Lincoln reminded us that we had things to be thankful for.

On this Thanksgiving, here in America, we've got a lot to be thankful for. The combined rates of unemployment and inflation in our country are at their lowest in 27 years. Homeownership and new business formation and the stock market now are at an all-time high, all three of them. Maybe even more important, the crime rate, the welfare rates, the poverty rates, they're all down this year, and we're grateful for that. I'm grateful that the United States has been a force for peace, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland and to Haiti and now of course, we hope, in Bosnia.

But we should never forget that there are still people in our country that need our concern and our caring. The young people who are here today are interested in making the most of their own lives and serving those in their community. And that's an important part of Thanksgiving as well. We have obligations to our parents and to our children, to people who are disabled or otherwise, through no fault of their own, need a helping hand.

And just before I came here, I was with Secretary Cisneros and the First Lady at a **homeless** shelter here in Washington, DC, where we were feeding people. And I'm sad to say I saw a fresh and personal example of the fact that the fastest growing group of **homeless** people in our country are young women and their young children.

So on this Thanksgiving we should be thankful for our blessings, and we should redouble our resolve to do everything we can to make America a place of honor and decency and community, where we can all give thanks.

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

I'd like to say one other thing, too. I'm very proud of the United States negotiators who did so much to help to bring about the peace agreement in Bosnia yesterday. There will be many questions in the days ahead about all the things that have to be answered before we can go forward with this project. And I expect to be addressing the Nation about it shortly.

But let me just remind you of one thing on this Thanksgiving eve. Among other things, in that tiny country, so much smaller than the United States, there are one million **homeless** people. So I say, on this Thanksgiving, I hope God will bless the peace and bring those folks home again as well.

Let me now turn to the moment at hand, which I look forward to every day -- every year, I mean. This is a -- *[laughter]* -- I wouldn't mind having it every day, actually. In 1947, President Truman began this great tradition of accepting a Thanksgiving turkey and then granting it a Presidential pardon.

[At this point, the turkey gobbled.]

The President. You can see one person thoroughly agrees with my decision here.

[Laughter] This year, I guess we can say, since the Government is back to work, I can at least grant to one living thing in America, a permanent furlough. *[Laughter]*

Approximately 45 million turkeys will be consumed tomorrow all across our country but not this one. As in previous years, it will be donated to Kidwell Farms, a petting zoo in Fairfax, Virginia. I am glad to be able to give this turkey a pardon. And as I said, if you look at his very patriotic red, white, and blue face and feathers, it seems like the American thing to do on Thanksgiving.

I believe this turkey was born in the State of California and raised there. And we're delighted to have the turkey and the turkey's owner come all the way from California. And to all the farmers who raise turkeys in North Carolina, Minnesota, California, my home State of Arkansas, and throughout the country, let me say we appreciate what you do for our agricultural sector and for the nutrition of the United States.

But I'm very glad that one of your products is going to be exempt from the cruel fate that will make so many of us happy tomorrow. And by this action, I hereby pardon this turkey. There are so many turkeys in Washington, I should pardon at least one a year, I think. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

LOAD-DATE: December 20, 1995

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Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

November 22, 1995**CITE:** 31 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 2051**LENGTH:** 317 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks at the Blair **Homeless** Shelter**BODY:**

I'd like to just say one word, if I might. I want to say that Hillary and I came here to be with you at Thanksgiving and to celebrate Thanksgiving with our country because we wanted to thank the people who run this wonderful service here for their commitment, for their service.

I also want to say a word of thanks to my friend Henry Cisneros, the Secretary of housing and Urban Development, because he put together a **homeless** initiative for the District of Columbia that helps this project and many others, because after I became President, I said I was just tired of seeing people on the street. I want us to do something to give people some hope, to give people a place to be.

And on this Thanksgiving Day, Mr. Mayor, I say again, we are honored to be citizens of the District of Columbia. We are honored to have the chance to be with you and to work with people in DC to try to deal with the problems here. We know we have a lot of challenges in dealing with homelessness, not the least of which is that the fastest growing group of **homeless** people are women and their children. And we've got to stay after this.

I'd like to say one other thing, too, on this Thanksgiving. Yesterday I made an announcement that an agreement for peace has been made in Bosnia. A lot of people today are asking questions about how it will all be implemented. I'd just like to ask you to think of one human fact. In that little country so much smaller than ours, in that little bitty country, there are one million **homeless** families because of that war. So I hope on this Thanksgiving we can help more of our own people to find homes and we can help them to go home.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marion Barry of the District of Columbia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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Public Papers of the Presidents, December 22, 1993

Public Papers of the Presidents

December 22, 1993**CITE:** 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 2624**LENGTH:** 1006 words**HEADLINE: Remarks** Announcing Grants for Homelessness**BODY:**

Thank you, Reverend Steinbruck. He was so good I kind of hate to spoil the occasion. [Laughter] I want to thank all of you for being here, those of you who work in the field of homelessness. I want to thank Senator Riegle and Congressman Vento and Congressman Frank and Congressman Kildee for their support in the Congress. I want to say how good it is to see my friend Mayor Schmoke here who's done so much in the housing area. And I want to thank, too, Secretary Cisneros and Assistant Secretary Cuomo for the leadership they have shown.

I want to try to explain why, 3 days before Christmas, this is an important event not just because of the money involved but because this represents a different approach to what has become our most painful and, as a country, I think one of our most embarrassing social problems.

We have tried to look beyond the issue of temporary shelters to the question of permanent relief from the condition of homelessness. And I congratulate Assistant Secretary Cuomo and all the people at HUD, who worked with -- a lot of you who labor in housing and have for years for the **homeless**, a lot of you who worked with the mentally ill, with people who have other problems, and coming up with an approach that at least gives us a chance to try to go beyond the symptoms to the cause, to try to deal with this problem on a long-term basis.

For years, our Nation's attention has been properly focused on the emergency needs of the **homeless** and the efforts just to find people a place to stay on a cold night. That's an important thing. Nearly every day when I go out running I run by a group of **homeless** men who sleep on the grates within two blocks of my back door. And we've developed kind of a friendly relationship. They say hello to me. I say hello to them. I wish to goodness on the days that are cold and windy, when I find it difficult to find the courage to run, they at least didn't have to spend the night there. But I also know that there are other factors at work inside the minds and hearts of those people which make some of them reluctant to come in and which make it impossible for them to stay in.

So we have tried to ask some other questions with this proposal: What kind of skills and assistance do **homeless** people need to really move from the streets to places of their own? How do we help maintain their housing in more permanent and stable ways when lives themselves have often never been permanent or stable in any traditional sense?

For some of the **homeless** we may never find the answers. For whatever sad reason, some people do drift beyond the outer realm of society and never come back. But a lot of others, especially the parents and their children, can be lifted out of their helplessness and hopelessness if we relate to them in the right way.

You heard the Secretary say that yesterday the United States Conference of Mayors said that as much as 43 percent of the **homeless** population may now be parents and children. The mayors' press conference yesterday was the first one ever attended by an administration official since the mayors formed their task force on homelessness 10 years ago. And I want to thank again the leadership at HUD, starting with the Secretary, for bringing new energy and attention to this.

I didn't have much to do with it except to ask that simple question when my longtime friend Henry

Cisneros and I talked about this. I just said, "Will we ever be able to show the American people that there aren't so many people on the streets?"

On Sunday there was a wonderful piece in the New York Times Sunday Magazine about a woman who has transformed an old stereotype of single-room occupancy hotels and replaced it with a new model to help meet the long-term needs we're discussing. She's reinvented this single-room occupancy housing to create well-kept places and integrate services for people with special needs and disabilities. And in so doing, she's helping people regain control over their lives.

None of the initiatives of this administration -- strengthening work and family and community -- can be done without forming a partnership with people on the front-lines, like that lady and like so many of you in this room, the people who give of themselves not just on Christmas Day but every day. But as Christmas approaches, I hope the American people will, in all their Christmas prayers, save room for a simple one, that all of us somehow might realize the humility to know how blessed we are to be in this country, and still to remember those who are not blessed, though they are among our midst.

This Christmas all many of them wish for is a place to spend the night. But what we know is, if they're going to have a place to spend the night, they have to have a place where they can live and grow and deal with the demons that bedevil so many of us in this country.

I have a list -- I won't read it to you but I was -- that Henry gave me that kind of is representative of the kinds of people who are getting these grants. Sometimes I think we make them more inaccessible to ordinary Americans by talking about things like support services and transition services and this, that, the other thing. But in plain English, what we're trying to do is take people who are battered and bruised and broken, but who still have a lot of God's grace left in them, and find a way to bring all that back to the surface and put their own lives back more in their control.

I hope this new approach works. If it does, it will be because of a lot of you out there on the front-lines who are making it work, like this fine and funny man of the cloth. If it does, we will have given the American people a good Christmas present.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. John Steinbruck, pastor, Luther Place Memorial Church. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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