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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 26, 1999

John Palenicek, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Policy and Program Development
HRSA, HIV/AIDS Bureau
Park Lawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, RM 7-20
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Palenicek:



On June 15, 1999, the White House Office of National AIDS Policy will be hosting a meeting to discuss the feasibility of a prevention effort targeted toward youth/young adults who reside in public housing. The meeting will be held from 10:00 a.m. until Noon at our office at 736 Jackson Place, Washington DC. We would like to extend an invitation to you and/or your designated representative(s) to participate.

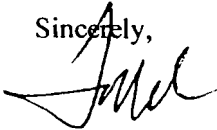
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that at least 40,000 new individuals are infected with HIV every year. Nearly half of the new infections are among people under the age of 25 with higher rates among women and minorities. We would like to explore together the opportunity of a special effort targeting prevention efforts (drugs, HIV, STDs, etc.) toward young residents of public housing.

The goal of the meeting is to bring together agency representatives from the Federal community with an interest and a stake in HIV/AIDS, STD, and drug prevention. To meet this challenge, it is our hope that through our meeting we could begin to examine the possibility of implementing a pilot prevention project. Such a project could initially build on existing prevention efforts taking place in selected cities across the country and could be replicated in other cities if proven successful. We are excited about the possibilities and creative approaches that we can collectively develop to ensure that our prevention message continues to be heard.

Please RSVP to Rusty Bennett in my office to indicate your participation by faxing the enclosed attendee fact sheet to (202) 456-2438 on or before June 10, 1999.

Please feel free to contact Rusty or me if you have questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing you June 15, 1999.

Sincerely,



Todd Summers
Deputy Director
The White House Office of National AIDS Policy

Enclosure(s)

cc: Sandra Thurman, Director, The White House Office of AIDS Policy



OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO:
Phill Wilson

FROM:
Todd Summers

COMPANY:

DATE:
May 7, 1999

FAX NUMBER:
(323) 666-8846

TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER:

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RE:

☐ URGENT ☐ FOR REVIEW ☐ PLEASE COMMENT ☐ PLEASE REPLY ☐ PLEASE RECYCLE

NOTES/COMMENTS:

736 Jackson Place
Washington, DC 20503
(202) 456-2437
(202) 456-2438 (fax)

I went on my first sojourn to Africa in 1994. During a layover in London, a friend asked if I felt like I was going back to my roots. "No," I said, "~~My~~my roots are firmly planted in Louisiana and Mississippi." I had a strong identification with the struggles of Black People in America from slavery, through reconstruction and the civil rights movement to the present day. And I had been told in no uncertain terms by two Nigerian foreign exchange students when I was in college that American ~~blacks~~Blacks were NOT African. "This trip," I said, "~~was~~is not a personal journey but a professional one." As an AIDS activist fortunate to be paid for my work, it was important for me to learn about AIDS in Africa. I did not expect my experiences on this trip to be the start of a new journey that was intensely personal. As a Black American, and as a person living with AIDS, my efforts to support my brothers and sisters living in Africa has fueled my passion in ways that still surprise me. ~~I would soon learn that everything in Africa is personal.~~

~~As the plane began its~~It began on the final approach to Nairobi's airport. ~~S-~~something began to happen, something I've never been able to explain. When the rubber tires touched the tarmac~~—~~, I knew for the first time in my life I was home~~and~~. I began to weep.

But was I "home" as an African-American? as a Black man sharing in the struggle against AIDS? Does it matter? What I do know is that my experiences of Africa and its people from that point forward have continued to be intense, personal, and energizing.

~~Africa brings people of all races and ethnic backgrounds home.~~Like many, I had read some about t~~some we only ever read about~~the devastation of AIDS in Africa. But this did not begin to prepare me for the ~~While the devastation cannot be overstated and should not be minimized~~I have witnessed. And the hope. The story of the AIDS pandemic in Africa is a story of its people, struggling against so much adversity with their hope for the future still strong. ~~I believe the real Africa AIDS story is the people.~~

~~We've~~We have tried our best to introduce ~~them~~some of these people to you in this

323-666-8846

issue. Our hope is that AIDS in Africa will challenges the sincerity of our activism.
Force us to ask the hard questions. What have we been fighting for? Is goal of the
“AIDS movement” to eliminate HIV/AIDS or to create yet a another measure of the
widening gap between North and South, rich and poor, Black and white. This is a
paradoxical time in the battle against AIDS and HIV. AIDS in Africa begs the question:
Will AIDS become the chronic and systemic realization of the insights gained or lost?.[I
DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS QUESTION]

Despite recent set-backs, ~~There~~ there is a desperate knee-jerk need to stand on the
benefits ~~declare victory~~ brought on by the incredible effectiveness of new therapies and
to declare victory in our efforts to stop AIDS. And m~~Maybe~~, just maybe, for the first time
since the beginning of the epidemic there is real hope. ~~for~~ For some.

I've been on my high horse about the epidemic not being over for three years now.
This is particularly true for Africa where 95% of all people living with HIV/AIDS live. I
pray for AIDS to be over. I want it to be over with every fiber of my being. I have no
need to visit anymore death beds or delivery any more eulogies. But, I know in my soul
that AIDS can never be over until ~~we take real strategic and comprehensive action to~~
~~defeat this pandemic globally~~ it is over for all of us.

To put it into perspective during my interview with Edwin Cameron he said AIDS in
Africa today is where the US was in 1984. It reminded me of something my partner
Chris Brownlie wrote about AIDS shortly before his death nearly a decade ago: “It is
caring for your friends in a way you never have before. Intimate ways, horrible ways,
ways that take more of your love than you knew you had...

It is the fighting back. It is the building of places to care for the living and for the dying.
It is courage, it is honor, it is integrity. It is people joining forces in a time of great need.
It is hope, it is sharing the burden. It is people caring for their own and finding love, and
surviving, and believing in the future even when we are hurting more than we have ever
hurt before...

It is bearing the unbearable, enduring the unendurable, and hoping in the face of hopelessness..."

As you read this magazine, ~~I~~we hope you gain insights into what it's like to live with HIV or AIDS without clean water, transportation, among war and starvation. ~~I hope you comprehend~~We have tried to bear witness to the miracles that are happening as people in Senegal, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa come together with hope, faith and determination to save their families and villages from the ravages of AIDS and HIV. ~~I~~We hope you are inspired by the heroism of Scovia Kasolo of Uganda, Elliot Magunje from Zimbabwe, Joe Muriuki from Kenya, Edwin Cameron from South Africa and Marie from Cameroon. ~~I~~We hope you are enraged by the brutal murder of Gugu Dlamini and ~~hope your heart goes out to~~empathetic with the family and friends of Simon Nkoli.

~~Facts I want to fit in~~

~~95% of all people with HIV/AIDS live in Africa or Asia where even the oldest and cheapest of the drugs are only a pipe dream, and a vaccine still seems more than a decade away.~~

~~Zimbabwe: Average life expectancy is expected to fall from 61 to 39 by the year 2010.~~

~~AIDS is on track to surpass every African catastrophe of this century~~

~~28% of adults in urban areas of Zambia are infected~~

~~Uganda has reduced infection rates by 25% over the past decade~~

40 Zimbabwean journalists have formed a working group to discuss guidelines for reporting AIDS prejudices, vulnerability and fear

Only two of the 310,000 Cameroonians living with HIV have ever publicly disclosed their HIV status.

South Africa has formed a treatment action committee to force the government to make new therapies available.

Stiel 911 words

OFFICE OF
AIDS
RESEARCH

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Deputy Director

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MAY 21 1999

Mr. Todd Summers
Deputy Director
Office of National AIDS Policy
Executive Office of the President
736 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Summers:

Dr. Neal Nathanson and I are scheduled to visit Russia in June to explore opportunities for U.S. and Russian scientists to collaborate on HIV/AIDS research with particular emphasis on the development and testing of a vaccine against HIV. We have been invited by Dr. Andrei Koslov, Director of the Biomedical Center and Coordinator of the Russian HIV Vaccine Project and will be accompanied by Dr. William Paul, Chief of the Laboratory of Immunology here at the NIH and Dr. Michail Sitkovsky in Dr. Paul's lab and who is from Russia but now a U.S. citizen. We feel this is a critically important fact finding trip that we hope will be beneficial to both U.S. and Russian HIV research interests. As often happens on such visits to other countries, we are scheduled to meet with policy-makers as well and we welcome this opportunity as these individuals are critical in forming bilateral agreements under which the scientists can pursue their research.

I understand that Dr. Koslov has met you on several occasions, the most recent being the World Bank meeting held in Paris, and is inviting you to visit Russia to learn more of their research activities in vaccine development. Dr. Nathanson and I encourage you to accept this invitation and join our team on the visit scheduled in June. Your experience in policy and good judgement would add considerable strength to our assessment of the collaborative opportunities that exist in Russia today. The Office of AIDS Research is prepared to support the cost of your travel and handle logistical arrangements for you. I am sure your presence with our team will be viewed as reinforcing the commitment the President has made to the G8 to promote worldwide participation in developing an effective vaccine against HIV and the pandemic.

We sincerely hope you will give favorable consideration to our invitation and commitment to support your travel and I look forward to a productive and useful visit to Russia.

Sincerely yours,



Jack Whitescarver, Ph.D.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Thomas A. Swann
39366 Peter son Rd Space 100
Rancho Mirage, CA
92270-3098

Dear Tom,

5/26/99

My thanks for helping to organize
the recent delegation visit here — you're
a great advocate for people living with
HIV and AIDS. Keep up the fight!

Regards, Todd

Deputy Director, Office of National AIDS Policy

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: May 17, 1999

From:

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Number of Pages Follow

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May 17, 1999

Hand Delivered to District Office and Sent by
Facsimile (202) 225-2961

The Honorable Mary Bono
Member of Congress
516 Cannon Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bono:

Thank you for taking the time from your hectic schedule to meet with me and other AIDS Watch '99 delegates in the House Judiciary Committee conference room on May 4. You were one of the few California officials who met with constituents during this national event in Washington, D.C. I was delighted you remembered meeting me earlier at the opening of the Palm Desert Veterans Outpatient Clinic. When I told you I was legally blind you moved your chair closer to me so I could see you better. I wrote a news story using Braille equipment, which quoted your support for the people living with AIDS in your congressional district. Your voting record shows your support for funding and housing for people like me. Thank you again.

In addition to being a legally blind client of Desert AIDS Project I am secretary of Democrats of the Desert and liaison officer of Desert Stonewall Democrats. I am a board member of Lambda Letters Project, California's oldest Statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, women, people of color and AIDS civil

rights organization. I am a member of numerous civic organizations like the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, ACLU and the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA). This Summer I will be a delegate to the California American Legion convention and the National Organization for Women (NOW) national convention.

Congressmember Bono, you are one of only two women majority party members of the House Committee on National Security (Armed Services Committee) Subcommittee on Military Personnel. On three occasions in history the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations has invited testimony from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) officials to testify before an informal hearing and have their statements recorded in the Congressional Record. There has been no testimony from LGBT veterans since 1994 before the Republicans took control of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congressmember Bono – you made history when you became the first Member of Congress to present a Proclamation to the GLBVA national convention held three months ago in Palm Springs. I request that you make history again by chairing an informal hearing of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel to discuss the topic: *"Human Rights and the Military."*

Testimony would include the following:

Tom Swann, a constituent of Palm Springs is a retired GS-11 Navy civilian on AIDS disability. As security coordinator of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Program Office at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division in California, he received a mutilated doll from a Marine Corps sergeant. The doll has a profane message, broken condom and spears through the belly and head. Later Swann received a profane flyer and was assaulted by

two Marines at a Marine Corps retirement party. Swann will present to the subcommittee the doll and flyer as tangible evidence of harassment and human rights violations in the military. Swann will conclude his remarks by saying, *"If you think the military human rights abuse of civilian co-workers is bad – wait until you hear the other testimony."* (Swann's ACLU case added sexual orientation protection for Navy civilian workers in May 1994).

Edward Clayton of Birmingham Alabama is the national President of the GLBVA. He was a Marine Corps Senior Drill Instructor and Marine of the Year for the 1st Marine Air Wing. He was investigated and arrested for being gay. Ed was assaulted and became infected with HIV in a military brig. In 1997 he lead a delegation to a historic meeting at the Pentagon to discuss military pursuit (witch hunts) in violation of the 1994 Congressional Law known as *"Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue."*

Michelle Benecke is a civil rights attorney and co-director of Servicemembers' Legal Defense Network (SLDN). She has a report outlining allegations that the military is pursuing rumored and suspected LGBT Servicemembers in violation of the law. Michelle has evidence those women Servicemembers who report sexual harassment by their male superiors are accused of being a lesbian and their legal and human rights are violated. Michelle feels the investigation of sexual harassment should focus on the accused harasser and not the woman filing the complaint.

I know that as a woman and Mother you will be shocked when you hear Michelle's testimony that women cannot file a sexual harassment complaint without fear of retaliation in the military. How equally shocking that openly gay civilian workers are assaulted by the military – men and women who take a solemn

oath to protect all Americans. Ed Clayton was the Marine Corps' finest and to be attacked in a military brig and infected with HIV is outrageous.

I do not expect the informal subcommittee hearing to take any votes or necessarily change the ban on homosexuals serving in the military. The Pentagon has delayed for two years a comprehensive report containing guidelines for military commanders to use so they do not pursue which is a violation of the law. I do believe that Pentagon officials will realize that your Subcommittee and the American people expect them to abide by the law and protect human rights of Department of Defense civilian and military employees.

This is a great opportunity for you. The topic is an area you have already demonstrated leadership and independence. Mark Repass, secretary-treasurer of the GLBVA – DC Chapter and I would like to meet with you on Thursday June 10 at the Capitol. You and your staff can look at the tangible evidence and schedule the historic informal hearing. My prayers are for your good health and happiness.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Swann
Proud Gay Veteran
Civil Rights Activist

Copy to:
Michelle Benecke
Ed Clayton
Mark Repass
Mel Tips