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ONE AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

"In the end, more than anything else, our world leadership grows out of the power of our example here at home, out of our ability to remain strong as one America...We are the world's most diverse democracy, and the world looks to us to show that it is possible to live and advance together across those kinds of differences...Building one America is our most important mission...money cannot buy it. Power cannot compel it. Technology cannot create it. It can only come from the human spirit."

-- President Clinton, February 4, 1997

WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S RACE INITIATIVE?

This initiative is a year-long effort, led by the President, to present to the nation his vision of a stronger, more just and more united American community, offering opportunity and fairness for all Americans. The President's initiative will combine constructive dialogue, study, and action -- an examination of the current state of race relations and our common future, looking at the laws and policies that can help to ensure that we remain One America, and enlisting everyone in an effort to understand our differences as we appreciate the values that unite us.

WHY A MAJOR INITIATIVE ON RACE, AND WHY NOW?

President Clinton's personal, life-long commitment. Growing up in the South, he saw for himself the great harm caused by racial discrimination, and the difference that can be achieved by changing both policies and attitudes. That longstanding, deeply personal commitment has led him to make this initiative one of his major second-term priorities. He knows that America can reach its full potential only by enlisting the full energies of all our people, and giving all our citizens, of every background, the chance to make the most of their own God-given talents.

Not a crisis, but an opportunity. This effort builds on the President's record throughout his first term (defending affirmative action, major speeches on race and reconciliation, etc.). But unlike previous Presidential efforts in this area, President Clinton's initiative is the result not of a crisis, but of a unique opportunity:

America is strong enough to look to the future. Having moved aggressively in the first term to get the country back on the right track -- reversing the rising tide of crime, welfare, budget deficits, unemployment and income inequality -- the President believes that it is time for America to address these issues as we prepare for the 21st Century.

Many "wedge" issues have been defused. On many of the issues that had been used to divide the country -- crime, welfare, and affirmative action -- the President has changed the terms of the debate, pointing to solutions instead of pointing fingers, and defusing tensions so that a real dialogue about race can begin.

It's about responsibility, community and citizenship. This initiative will encourage

Americans to take responsibility -- for ourselves and our families, for our community, at home with one another. It is a call to citizenship, because the President believes that being a good citizen includes recognizing the promise of America, an America free of destructive bigotry, a nation that welcomes those who play by the rules, serve their community, and reach out to make all Americans feel at home. This is a great nation, and the true measure of our greatness is in the human heart.

WHAT WILL THE INITIATIVE INCLUDE?

The initiative will have five central goals:

- 1) To articulate the President's vision of racial reconciliation and a just, unified America;
- 2) To teach the nation the facts surrounding the issue of race;
- 3) To promote a constructive dialogue to confront and work through the difficult and controversial issues surrounding race;
- 4) To recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help bridge racial divides;
- 5) To find, develop, and implement solutions in critical areas such as education, economic opportunity, housing, health care, crime and the administration of justice -- for individuals, communities, corporations and government at all levels.

The President hopes to achieve these goals through the following:

Presidential leadership. The President will begin a national examination of race and reconciliation -- explaining why the goal of One America is so important to preparing for the 21st Century, addressing the facts about race, encouraging others to discuss difficult racial issues that we too often avoid, and reaching out to Americans of every race to get them engaged in the process. Unlike previous national efforts, this initiative will be directly and personally led by the President throughout.

Dialogue, study and action -- increasing our understanding of race, and proposing and promoting policies and solutions that can make a difference.

Dialogue can help to inform, and to build support for constructive solutions to the issues of race. For an entire generation growing up after the civil rights movement, there has been little or no public articulation of the values and ideals of racial reconciliation. (And too often the rhetoric has been negative, helping to confirm derogatory stereotypes.) This initiative will employ the power of the Presidency in encouraging open, candid debate about difficult issues and highlight actions by individuals, communities, businesses and government that are working in this area now.

Study. The issues to be addressed will include: different perceptions and different experiences of Americans of different races, confronting harmful stereotypes and examining serious problems. While the initiative will be largely forward looking, it is also

important to teach about the past -- so that the nation has a clear sense of what has come before, recognizing the unique experience of African Americans throughout our history.

Action. Throughout this effort, attention will go to policies that can make a difference and solutions that can be implemented by individuals, community groups, state and local governments and the federal government. Examples of issues to be addressed include the lack of economic progress among Hispanic Americans and the greatly reduced number of black and Hispanic students in California. This nation has made real progress, but we know that there is more that must be done.

- On June 7 the President announced a White House Conference on Hate Crimes this November 10th, bringing together victims and their families, law enforcement experts, and community and religious leaders. The Attorney General has begun a thorough review of the laws concerning hate crimes, and how we can build a plan of action to combat them.

ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE

Advisory Board. This small group will advise the President and assist him in outreach efforts and consultations with experts. (Names to be added after 6/12.)

Significant Presidential event/actions throughout the year. Events held throughout the year will include town hall meetings in different regions of the country , meetings with the advisory board, and other events which will enable the President to carry out his goals for the initiative.

Outreach, consultation, and leadership recruitment: The effort will include outreach to community leaders, religious leaders, state and local elected officials, members of Congress, business leaders and individuals, encouraging them to become involved in reconciliation and community building projects.

The President's Report to the American People will be issued next summer, in which the President will:

- Present his vision of One America, including an illustration and assessment of the growing diversity of our nation, and the consultations with his advisory board;
- Reflect the work that has occurred during the year, including the conversations and suggestions made at town hall meetings and other venues;
- Report on how the nation has evolved on the issue of race over the past 30 years, including the studies commissioned for the initiative;
- Provide recommendation and solutions that enable individuals, communities , business and organizations, and government address the difficult issues and build on the best possibilities.

PRESIDENT NAMES MEMBERS OF ADVISORY BOARD TO THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

President Clinton today announced his intent to appoint seven members to the Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race.

The Advisory Board will provide advice and counsel to the President to improve the quality of race relations. The Board will advise the President on the means to promote a national dialogue on race issues; to increase our understanding of the history and future of race relations; to identify and create plans to calm racial tension and promote increased opportunity in education, housing and health care; and to address crime and the administration of justice. President Clinton is determined "to improve the ability of all Americans to realize their full potential so we can, as one country equal and indivisible, move forward into the 21st Century." Advisory board members will reach out as surrogates for the President to create and implement solutions to improve race relations.

JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN, of Durham, North Carolina, is a retired historian and educator, who most recently served as Professor of Legal History at Duke University Law School from 1982 to 1992. President Clinton awarded Dr. Franklin the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995. Dr. Franklin's scholarly work has focussed on the Civil War and Reconstruction era, and includes the 1946 landmark study *From Slavery to Freedom*. Dr. Franklin received his A.B. degree from Fisk University in 1935, an M.A. from Harvard University in 1936 and a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1941.

WILLIAM F. WINTER, of Jackson, Mississippi, is the former Democratic Governor of Mississippi and is currently in private law practice with the law firm of Watkins, Ludlam & Stennis. Governor Winter serves as Chair of the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service and the National Issue Forum Institute. While Governor, he fought for education reform to benefit African-Americans, civil rights and better relations between the races. He received his B.A. in 1943 and LL.B. in 1949 from the University of Mississippi.

LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON, of Washington, DC, is an Executive Vice President with the AFL-CIO. Ms. Chavez-Thompson has twenty-nine years experience in the labor movement. She joined American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in 1971 and became the first person of color to be elected to office at the AFL-CIO.

ROBERT THOMAS, of Coto DeCaza, California, currently serves as President and CEO of Nissan Motor Corporation, U.S.A. Mr. Thomas recently created a partnership with the Los Angeles Urban League to increase opportunities for women and minorities in automobile manufacturing. Mr. Thomas holds a B.S. in Engineering from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1967.

ANGELA E. OH, of Sirenas, California, is an attorney with the Los Angeles law firm of Beck, De Corso, Daly, Barrera & Oh, specializing in state and federal criminal defense. Following the riots in Los Angeles, she served as Special Counsel to the Assembly Special Committee on the Los Angeles Crisis. Ms. Oh received a B.A. and M.P.H. in 1981 from the University of California and a J.D. in 1986 from the University of California.

SUZAN D. JOHNSON COOK, of New York, New York, is Senior Pastor of the Bronx Christian Fellowship in the Bronx. She is also the first female chaplain of the New York City Police Department. In 1983 Dr. Cook became the first African American woman to serve as Senior Pastor at Mariners' Temple Baptist Church, the oldest American Baptist Church in New York City. From 1993 to 1994, Dr. Cook was a White House Fellow, working for the White House Domestic Policy Council. Dr. Cook received a B.S. from Emerson College in 1976, an M.A. from Columbia University Teachers College in 1978, an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary in 1983 and a D. Div. from United Theological Seminary in 1990.

THOMAS H. KEAN, of Madison, New Jersey, is the former Republican Governor of New Jersey. Governor Kean currently serves as President of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. He also served on the United States Delegation to Women's Rights Conference in Beijing in 1995. Governor Kean holds numerous awards from environmental and educational organizations, including more than 25 honorary degrees. Governor Kean received a B.A. from Princeton University and an M.A. from Columbia University Teachers College.

ALSO, CONSULTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND ADVISORY BOARD NAMED

CHRISTOPHER EDLEY, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, will serve as a consultant to the Advisory Board. Mr. Edley has been a Professor at Harvard Law School since 1981 and is co-director of The Civil Rights Project, a recently launched think tank based at Harvard University. Mr. Edley served as Special Counsel to President Clinton, where he directed a review of affirmative action. Mr. Edley received a B.A. from Swarthmore College in 1973 and an M.P.P. from the Kennedy School of Government and a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1978.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(San Diego, California)

For Immediate Release

June 14, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SAN DIEGO COMMENCEMENT

Rimac Field
University of California at San Diego
San Diego, California

10:47 A.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, ladies and gentlemen, the first thing I would like to say is that Coleen spoke so well -- (laughter) -- and she said everything I meant to say -- (laughter) that I could do us all a great favor by simply associating myself with her remarks and sitting down. (Applause.)

I would also like to thank Dr. Anagnostopoulos for reminding us of the infamous capacity of faculty members to be contrary with one another. (Laughter.) Until he said it, I hadn't realized that probably 90 percent of the Congress once were on university faculties. (Laughter.)

Let me say to Chancellor Dynes and President Atkinson, to the distinguished regents and faculty members, to the students and their families and friends who are here today, I'm honored to be joined by a number of people who reflect the kind of America that Coleen Sabatini called for: Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Dan Akaka from Hawaii; your Congressman, Bob Filner; Congresswoman Maxine Waters, the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus; Congresswoman Patsy Mink; Congressman Jim Clyburn; Congressman John Lewis, a great hero of the civil rights movement; Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald; Congressman Carlos Romero-Barcelo from Puerto Rico; your Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis; the Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater; of Labor, Alexis Herman; of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown; of Education, Dick Riley; our distinguished Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson; our distinguished Administrator of the Small Business Administration, Aida Alvarez, the first American of Puerto Rican descent ever to be in a Presidential Cabinet.

I would like to ask them all to stand along with the members of the White House staff who are here, including Thurgood Marshall Jr. whose father has a college named for him at this great university. Would you please stand? (Applause.)

And I can't help but noting that there's another person here that deserves some special recognition -- the University of California at San Diego Class of 1977 -- a Filipino-American woman that became the youngest Captain of the Navy and my personal physician, Dr. Connie Mariano. Where is she? (Applause.)

I want to thank you for offering our nation a shining example of excellence rooted in the many backgrounds that make up this great land. You have blazed new paths in science and technology, explored the new horizons of the Pacific Rim and Latin America. This is a great university for the 21st century.

Today we celebrate your achievements at a truly golden moment for America. The Cold War is over and freedom is now ascendant around the globe, with more than half of the people in this

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old world living under governments of their own choosing for the very first time.

Our economy is the healthiest in a generation and the strongest in the world. Our culture, our science, our technology promise unimagined advances and exciting new careers. Our social problems, from crime to poverty, are finally bending to our efforts.

Of course, there are still challenges for you out there. Beyond our borders, we must battle terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the prospect of new diseases and environmental disaster.

Here at home, we must ensure that every child has the chance you have had to develop your God-given capacities. We cannot wait for them to get in trouble to notice them.

We must continue to fight the scourge of gangs and crime and drugs. We must prepare for the retirement of the baby boom generation so that we can reduce that child poverty rate that Coleen talked about. We must harness the forces of science and technology for the public good, the entire American public.

But I believe the greatest challenge we face, among all those that Coleen talked about, is also our greatest opportunity. Of all the questions of discrimination and prejudice that still exist in our society, the most perplexing one is the oldest, and in some ways today, the newest: the problem of race. Can we fulfill the promise of America by embracing all our citizens of all races, not just at a university where people have the benefit of enlightened teachers and the time to think and grow and get to know each other within the daily life of every American community. In short, can we become one America in the 21st century?

I know, and I've said before, that money cannot buy this goal, power cannot compel it, technology cannot create it. This is something that can come only from the human spirit -- the spirit we saw when the choir of many races sang as a gospel choir.

Today, the state of Hawaii, which has a Senator and a Congresswoman present here, has no majority racial or ethnic group. It is a wonderful place of exuberance and friendship and patriotism. Within the next three years, here in California no single race or ethnic group will make up a majority of the state's population. Already, five of our largest school districts draw students from over 100 different racial and ethnic groups. At this campus, 12 Nobel prize winners have taught or studied from nine different countries. A half-century from now, when your own grandchildren are in college, there will be no majority race in America.

Now, we know what we will look like, but what will we be like? Can we be one America respecting, even celebrating, our differences, but embracing even more what we have in common? Can we define what it means to be an American, not just in terms of the hyphen showing our ethnic origins but in terms of our primary allegiance to the values America stands for and values we really live by. Our hearts long to answer yes, but our history reminds us that it will be hard. The ideals that bind us together are as old as our nation, but so are the forces that pull us apart. Our founders sought to form a more perfect union; the humility and hope of that phrase is the story of America and it is our mission today.

Consider this: We were born with a Declaration of Independence which asserted that we were all created equal and a Constitution that enshrined slavery. We fought a bloody civil war to abolish slavery and preserve the union, but we remained a house divided and unequal by law for another century. We advanced across the continent in the name of freedom, yet in so doing we pushed Native Americans off their land, often crushing their culture and

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their livelihood. Our Statue of Liberty welcomes poor, tired, huddled masses of immigrants to our borders, but each new wave has felt the sting of discrimination.

In World War II, Japanese Americans fought valiantly for freedom in Europe, taking great casualties, while at home their families were herded into internment camps. The famed Tuskegee Airmen lost none of the bombers they guarded during the war, but their African American heritage cost them a lot of rights when they came back home in peace.

Though minorities have more opportunities than ever today, we still see evidence of bigotry -- from the desecration of houses of worship, whether they be churches, synagogues or mosques, to demeaning talk in corporate suites. There is still much work to be done by you, members of the class of 1997. But those who say we cannot transform the problem of prejudice into the promise of unity forget how far we have come, and I cannot believe they have ever seen a crowd like you. (Applause.)

When I look at you, it is almost impossible for me even to remember my own life. I grew up in the high drama of the Cold War, in the patriotic South. Black and white southerners alike wore our nation's uniform in defense of freedom against communism. They fought and died together, from Korea to Vietnam. But back home, I went to segregated schools, swam in segregated public pools, sat in all-white sections at the movies, and traveled through small towns in my state that still marked restrooms and water fountains "white" and "colored."

By the grace of God I had a grandfather with just a grade school education but the heart of a true American, who taught me that it was wrong. And by the grace of God, there were brave African Americans like Congressman John Lewis, who risked their lives time and time again to make it right. And there were white Americans like Congressman Bob Filner, a freedom rider on the bus with John Lewis, in the long, noble struggle for civil rights, who knew that it was a struggle to free white people, too.

To be sure, there is old, unfinished business between black and white Americans, but the classic American dilemma has now become many dilemmas of race and ethnicity. We see it in the tension between black and Hispanic customers and their Korean or Arab grocers; in a resurgent anti-Semitism even on some college campuses; in a hostility toward new immigrants from Asia to the Middle East to the former communist countries to Latin America and the Caribbean -- even those whose hard work and strong families have brought them success in the American Way.

We see a disturbing tendency to wrongly attribute to entire groups, including the white majority, the objectionable conduct of a few members. If a black American commits a crime, condemn the act -- but remember that most African Americans are hard-working, law-abiding citizens. If a Latino gang member deals drugs, condemn the act -- but remember the vast majority of Hispanics are responsible citizens who also deplore the scourge of drugs in our life. If white teenagers beat a young African American boy almost to death just because of his race, for God's sakes condemn the act -- but remember the overwhelming majority of white people will find it just as hateful. If an Asian merchant discriminates against her customers of another minority group, call her on it -- but remember, too, that many, many Asians have borne the burden or prejudice and do not want anyone else to feel it.

Remember too, in spite of the persistence of prejudice, we are more integrated than ever. More of us share neighborhoods and work and school and social activities, religious life, even love and marriage across racial lines than ever before. More of us enjoy each other's company and distinctive cultures than ever before. And more

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than ever, we understand the benefits of our racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity in a global society, where networks of commerce and communications draw us closer and bring rich rewards to those who truly understand life beyond their nation's borders.

With just a twentieth of the world's population, but a fifth of the world's income, we in America simply have to sell to the other 95 percent of the world's consumers just to maintain our standard of living. Because we are drawn from every culture on earth, we are uniquely positioned to do it. Beyond commerce, the diverse backgrounds and talents of our citizens can help America to light the globe, showing nations deeply divided by race, religion and tribe that there is a better way.

Finally, as you have shown us today, our diversity will enrich our lives in non-material ways -- deepening our understanding of human nature and human differences, making our communities more exciting, more enjoyable, more meaningful. That is why I have come here today to ask the American people to join me in a great national effort to perfect the promise of America for this new time as we seek to build our more perfect union.

Now, when there is more cause for hope than fear, when we are not driven to it by some emergency or social cataclysm, now is the time we should learn together, talk together and act together to build one America. (Applause.)

Let me say that I know that for many white Americans, this conversation may seem to exclude them or threaten them. That must not be so. I believe white Americans have just as much to gain as anybody else from being a part of this endeavor -- much to gain from an America where we finally take responsibility for all our children so that they, at last, can be judged as Martin Luther King hoped, "Not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." (Applause.)

What is it that we must do? For four and a half years now, I have worked to prepare America for the 21st century with a strategy of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and an American community of all our citizens. To succeed in each of these areas, we must deal with the realities and the perceptions affecting all racial groups in America.

First, we must continue to expand opportunity. Full participation in our strong and growing economy is the best antidote to envy, despair and racism. We must press forward to move millions more from poverty and welfare to work; to bring the spark of enterprise to inner cities; to redouble our efforts to reach those rural communities prosperity has passed by. And most important of all, we simply must give our young people the finest education in the world.

There are no children who, because of their ethnic or racial background, who cannot meet the highest academic standards if we set them and measure our students against them, if we give them well-trained teachers and well-equipped classrooms, and if we continue to support reasoned reforms to achieve excellence, like the charter school movement. (Applause.)

At a time when college education means stability, a good job, a passport to the middle class, we must open the doors of college to all Americans and we must make at least two years of college as universal at the dawn of the next century as a high school diploma is today.

In our efforts to extend economic and educational opportunity to all our citizens, we must consider the role of affirmative action. I know affirmative action has not been perfect in America -- that's why two years ago we began an effort to fix the

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things that are wrong with it -- but when used in the right way, it has worked. (Applause.)

It has given us a whole generation of professionals in fields that used to be exclusive clubs -- where people like me got the benefit of 100 percent affirmative action. There are now more women-owned businesses than ever before. There are more African American, Latino and Asian American lawyers and judges, scientists and engineers, accountants and executives than ever before.

But the best example of successful affirmative action is our military. Our armed forces are diverse from top to bottom -- perhaps the most integrated institution in our society and certainly the most integrated military in the world. And, more important, no one questions that they are the best in the world. So much for the argument that excellence and diversity do not go hand in hand. (Applause.)

There are those who argue that scores on standardized tests should be the sole measure of qualification for admissions to colleges and universities. But many would not apply the same standard to the children of alumni or those with athletic ability. (Applause.)

I believe a student body that reflects the excellence and the diversity of the people we will live and work with has independent educational value. Look around this crowd today. Don't you think you have learned a lot more than you would have if everybody sitting around you looked just like you? I think you have. (Applause.)

And beyond the educational value to you, it has a public interest because you will learn to live and work in the world you will live in better. When young people sit side by side with people of many different backgrounds, they do learn something that they can take out into the world. And they will be more effective citizens.

Many affirmative action students excel. They work hard, they achieve, they go out and serve the communities that need them for their expertise and role model. If you close the door on them, we will weaken our greatest universities and it will be more difficult to build the society we need in the 21st century. (Applause.)

Let me say, I know that the people of California voted to repeal affirmative action without any ill motive. The vast majority of them simply did it with a conviction that discrimination and isolation are no longer barriers to achievement. But consider the results. Minority enrollments in law school and other graduate programs are plummeting for the first time in decades. Assuming the same will likely happen in undergraduate education. We must not resegregate higher education or leave it to the private universities to do the public's work. (Applause.)

At the very time when we need to do a better job of living and learning together, we should not stop trying to equalize economic opportunity. To those who oppose affirmative action, I ask you to come up with an alternative. I would embrace it if I could find a better way. And to those of us who still support it, I say we should continue to stand for it, we should reach out to those who disagree or are uncertain and talk about the practical impact of these issues, and we should never be thought unwilling to work with those who disagree with us to find new ways to lift people up and bring people together. (Applause.)

Beyond opportunity, we must demand responsibility from every American. Our strength as a society depends upon both -- upon people taking responsibility for themselves and their families, teaching their children good values, working hard and obeying the

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law, and giving back to those around us. The new economy offers fewer guarantees, more risks, and more rewards. It calls upon all of us to take even greater responsibility for our education than ever before.

In the current economic boom, only one racial or ethnic group in America has actually experienced a decline in income -- Hispanic Americans. One big reason is that Hispanic high school drop-out rates are well above -- indeed, far above -- those of whites and blacks. Some of the drop-outs actually reflect a strong commitment to work. We admire the legendary willingness to take the hard job at long hours for low pay. In the old economy, that was a responsible thing to do. But in the new economy, where education is the key, responsibility means staying in school. (Applause.)

No responsibility is more fundamental than obeying the law. It is not racist to insist that every American do so. The fight against crime and drugs is a fight for the freedom of all our people, including those -- perhaps especially those -- minorities living in our poorest neighborhoods. But respect for the law must run both ways. The shocking difference in perceptions of the fairness of our criminal justice system grows out of the real experiences that too many minorities have had with law enforcement officers. Part of the answer is to have all our citizens respect the law, but the basic rule must be that the law must respect all our citizens. (Applause.)

And that applies, too, to the enforcement of our civil rights laws. For example, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has a huge backlog of cases with discrimination claims -- though we have reduced it by 25 percent over the last four years. We can do not much better without more resources. It is imperative that Congress -- especially those members who say they're for civil rights but against affirmative action -- at least give us the money necessary to enforce the law of the land and do it soon. (Applause.)

Our third imperative is perhaps the most difficult of all. We must build one American community based on respect for one another and our shared values. We must begin with a candid conversation on the state of race relations today and the implications of Americans of so many different races living and working together as we approach a new century. We must be honest with each other. We have talked at each other and about each other for a long time. It's high time we all began talking with each other.

Over the coming year I want to lead the American people in a great and unprecedented conversation about race. In community efforts from Lima, Ohio, to Billings, Montana, in remarkable experiments in cross-racial communications like the uniquely named ERACISM, I have seen what Americans can do if they let down their guards and reach out their hands.

I have asked one of America's greatest scholars, Dr. John Hope Franklin, to chair an advisory panel of seven distinguished Americans to help me in this endeavor. He will be joined by former Governors Thomas Kean of New Jersey and William Winter of Mississippi, both great champions of civil rights; by Linda Chavez-Thompson, the Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO; by Reverend Suzan Johnson Cook, a minister from the Bronx and former White House Fellow; by Angela Oh, an attorney and Los Angeles community leader; and Robert Thompson, the CEO of Nissan U.S.A. -- distinguished leaders, leaders in their community.

I want this panel to help educate Americans about the facts surrounding issues of race, to promote a dialogue in every community of the land to confront and work through these issues, to recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help breach racial divides, and to find, develop and recommend how to implement concrete

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solutions to our problems -- solutions that will involve all of us in government, business, communities, and as individual citizens.

I will make periodic reports to the American people about our findings and what actions we all have to take to move America forward. This board will seek out and listen to Americans from all races and all walks of life. They are performing a great citizen service, but in the cause of building one America all citizens must serve.

As I said at the President's Summit on Service in Philadelphia, in our new era such acts of service are basic acts of citizenship. Government must play its role, but much of the work must be done by the American people as citizen service. The very effort will strengthen us and bring us closer together.

In short, I want America to capture the feel and the spirit that you have given to all of us today. I'd like to ask the board to stand and be recognized. I want you to look at them, and I want you to feel free to talk to them over the next year or so. Dr. Franklin and members of the board. (Applause.)

Honest dialogue will not be easy at first. We'll all have to get past defensiveness and fear and political correctness and other barriers to honesty. Emotions may be rubbed raw, but we must begin.

What do I really hope we will achieve as a country? If we do nothing more than talk, it will be interesting but it won't be enough. If we do nothing more than propose disconnected acts of policy, it would be helpful, but it won't be enough.

But if ten years from now people can look back and see that this year of honest dialogue and concerted action helped to lift the heavy burden of race from our children's future, we will have given a precious gift to America.

I ask you all to remember just for a moment, as we have come through the difficult trial on the Oklahoma City bombing, remember that terrible day when we saw and wept for Americans and forgot for a moment that there were a lot of them from different races than we are.

Remember the many faces and races of the Americans who did not sleep and put their lives at risk to engage in the rescue, the helping and the healing. Remember how you have seen things like that in the natural disasters here in California. That is the face of the real America. That is the face I have seen over and over again. That is the America, somehow, some way we have to make real in daily American life. (Applause.)

Members of the graduating class, you will have a greater opportunity to live your dreams than any generation in our history, if we can make of our many different strands, one America -- a nation at peace with itself bound together by shared values and aspirations and opportunities and real respect for our differences.

I am a Scotch-Irish Southern Baptist, and I'm proud of it. But my life has been immeasurably enriched by the power of the Torah, the beauty of the Koran, the piercing wisdom of the religions of East and South Asia -- all embraced by my fellow Americans. I have felt indescribable joy and peace in black and Pentecostal churches. I have come to love the intensity and selflessness of my Hispanic fellow Americans toward la familia. As a Southerner, I grew up on country music and county fairs and I still like them. (Laughter.) But I have also reveled in the festivals and the food, the music and the art and the culture of Native Americans and Americans from every region in the world.

MORE

In each land I have visited as your President, I have felt more at home because some of their people have found a home in America. For two centuries, wave upon wave of immigrants have come to our shores to build a new life drawn by the promise of freedom and a fair chance. Whatever else they found, even bigotry and violence, most of them never gave up on America. Even African American, the first of whom we brought here in chains, never gave up on America.

It is up to you to prove that their abiding faith was well-placed. Living in islands of isolation -- some splendid and some sordid -- is not the American way. Basing our self-esteem on the ability to look down on others is not the American way. Being satisfied if we have what we want and heedless of others who don't even have what they need and deserve is not the American way. We have torn down the barriers in our laws. Now we must break down the barriers in our lives, our minds and our hearts.

More than 30 years ago, at the high tide of the civil rights movement, the Kerner Commission said we were becoming two Americas, one white, one black, separate and unequal. Today, we face a different choice: will we become not two, but many Americas, separate, unequal and isolated? Or will we draw strength from all our people and our ancient faith in the quality of human dignity, to become the world's first truly multi-racial democracy. That is the unfinished work of our time, to lift the burden of race and redeem the promise of America.

Class of 1997, I grew up in the shadows of a divided America, but I have seen glimpses of one America. You have shown me one today. That is the America you must make. It begins with your dreams, so dream large, live your dreams, challenge your parents and teach your children well.

God bless you and good luck.

END

11:23 A.M. (L)

ONE AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

"In the end, more than anything else, our world leadership grows out of the power of our example here at home, out of our ability to remain strong as one America... We are the world's most diverse democracy, and the world looks to us to show that it is possible to live and advance together across those kinds of differences... Building one America is our most important mission... money cannot buy it. Power cannot compel it. Technology cannot create it. It can only come from the human spirit."

-- President Clinton, February 4, 1997

WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S RACE INITIATIVE?

This initiative is a year-long effort, led by the President, to present to the nation his vision of a stronger, more just and more united American community, offering opportunity and fairness for all Americans. The President's initiative will combine constructive dialogue, study, and action. It will examine the current state of race relations and our common future, look at the laws and policies that can help to ensure that we remain One America, and enlist individuals, communities, businesses and government at all levels in an effort to understand our differences as we appreciate the values that unite us.

WHY A MAJOR INITIATIVE ON RACE, AND WHY NOW?

President Clinton's personal, life-long commitment. Growing up in the South, the President saw for himself the great harm caused by racial discrimination, and the difference that can be achieved by changing both policies and attitudes. That longstanding, deeply personal commitment has led him to make this initiative one of his major second-term priorities. He knows that America can reach its full potential only by enlisting the full energies of all our people, and giving all our citizens, of every background, the chance to make the most of their own God-given talents.

Not a crisis, but an opportunity. This effort builds on the President's record throughout his first term (defending affirmative action, major speeches on race and reconciliation, etc.). But unlike previous Presidential efforts in this area, President Clinton's initiative is the result not of a crisis, but of a unique opportunity:

America is strong enough to look to the future. Having moved aggressively in the first term to get the country back on the right track -- reversing the rising tide of crime, welfare, budget deficits, unemployment and income inequality -- the President believes that it is time for America to address these issues as we prepare for the 21st Century.

Many "wedge" issues have been defused. On many of the issues that had been used to divide the country -- such as crime and welfare -- the President has begun to change the terms of the debate, pointing to solutions instead of pointing fingers, and defusing tensions so that an honest dialogue about race can begin.

Responsibility, community and citizenship. This initiative will encourage Americans to take responsibility -- for ourselves and our families, for our community and at home with one another. It is a call to citizenship, because the President believes that being a good citizen includes recognizing the promise of America -- an America free of destructive bigotry, a nation that welcomes those who play by the rules, serve their community and reach out to make all Americans feel at home. This is a great nation, and the true measure of our greatness is in the human heart.

WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVE'S GOALS AND METHODS?

The initiative will have five central goals:

- 1) To articulate the President's vision of racial reconciliation and a just, unified America;
- 2) To help educate the nation about the facts surrounding the issue of race;
- 3) To promote a constructive dialogue, to confront and work through the difficult and controversial issues surrounding race;
- 4) To recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help bridge racial divides;
- 5) To find, develop and implement solutions in critical areas such as education, economic opportunity, housing, health care, crime and the administration of justice -- for individuals, communities, corporations and government at all levels.

The President hopes to achieve these goals through the following methods:

Presidential leadership. The President will begin a national examination of race and reconciliation -- explaining why the goal of One America is so important to preparing for the 21st Century, addressing the facts about race, encouraging others to discuss difficult racial issues that we too often avoid and reaching out to Americans of every race to get them engaged in the process. Unlike previous national efforts, this initiative will be led directly and personally by the President throughout.

Dialogue, study and action. Through dialogue, study and action, we will increase our understanding of race, and propose and promote policies and solutions that can make a difference.

Dialogue. Dialogue can help to inform, and to build support for constructive solutions to the issues of race. For an entire generation growing up after the civil rights movement, there has been little or no public articulation of the values and ideals of racial reconciliation. (And too often the rhetoric has been negative, helping to confirm derogatory stereotypes.) This initiative will employ the power of the Presidency to encourage open, candid debate about difficult issues and to highlight actions by individuals, communities, businesses and government that are working in this area now.

Study. The issues to be addressed will include: different perceptions and experiences of Americans of different races, confronting harmful stereotypes and examining serious problems. While the initiative will be largely forward-looking, it is also important to help educate Americans about the past -- so that the nation has a clear sense of what has come before, recognizing the unique experience of African Americans throughout our history.

Action. Throughout this effort, attention will go to policies that can make a difference and solutions that can be implemented by individuals, community groups, state and local governments and the federal government. Examples of issues to be addressed include the lack of economic progress among Hispanic Americans and the greatly reduced number of black and Hispanic students in California. This nation has made real progress, but we know that there is more that must be done.

- An example of dialogue, study and action is the President's 5/16/97 apology to the survivors of the Tuskegee Study, which was combined with concrete actions and further study (establishing a bioethics center at Tuskegee; studying ways to involve minority communities in research and health care; new training materials for medical researchers on ethics and how to apply them to diverse populations; and new postgraduate fellowships in bioethicists for minorities).

ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE

Advisory Board. This small, diverse group will advise the President and assist him in outreach efforts and consultations with experts. They were chosen based on their outstanding leadership on this issue and their contributions to America's ongoing dialogue about race and reconciliation.

Significant Presidential events/actions throughout the year. Events held throughout the year will include town hall meetings in different regions of the country, meetings with the advisory board and other events which will enable the President to carry out his goals for the initiative.

Outreach, consultation and leadership recruitment. The effort will include outreach to community leaders, religious leaders, state and local elected officials, members of Congress, business leaders and individuals, encouraging them to become involved in reconciliation and community-building projects.

The President's Report to the American People. The President will issue a report next summer, in which he will:

- Present his vision of One America, including an illustration and assessment of the growing diversity of our nation and of his consultations with his advisory board;
- Reflect the work that has occurred during the year, including the conversations and suggestions made at town hall meetings and other venues;
- Report on how the nation has evolved on the issue of race over the past 30 years,

including the studies commissioned for the initiative;

- Provide recommendations and solutions that enable individuals, communities, businesses, organizations and government to address difficult issues and build on our best possibilities.

RACE INITIATIVE Qs & As

THE INITIATIVE

Q: Is systemic racism and bigotry still a crucial problem for the United States? Is race still an impediment to opportunity and progress in America?

A: America is moving closer to fulfilling its fundamental promise of equality and the opportunity of advancement for all. President Clinton has worked to restore the American dream by expanding the economy, investing in education and making our communities safer. However, more needs to be done. We face new challenges and a very different America in the next century.

For instance, there is a school district across the river (in Virginia) where the school children represent over 150 nations and speak over 100 different languages -- all in a single district. We should embrace such diversity.

Unfortunately, there are some disturbing examples of going backward: the lack of economic progress among Hispanic Americans; the greatly reduced number of African-American and Hispanic students in California and Texas universities; and the young, African-American boy in Chicago who was dragged from his bicycle and beaten just because of his color.

Q: How was this initiative developed? Who did the President call on among the White House staff?

A: The President charged Erskine Bowles and Sylvia Mathews with developing the parameters of an initiative that would move to fulfill America's promise of opportunity and fairness for all Americans and that would promote unity while preserving cultural differences.

Sylvia convened an internal working group of approximately 25 individuals from different offices within the White House and from different races. The group met regularly starting in March, and daily for the past few weeks. Erskine and other members of the senior staff participated periodically in the working group meetings. The President received regular updates on the group's direction and progress.

Q: How can the President ask others to "get their houses in order" on this subject, when the White House itself lacks diversity, especially in its upper ranks?

A: President Clinton is proud of the record diversity of his Administration. He has appointed more African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans than any other President.

Cabinet: 15% African American [Alexis Herman (Labor), Rodney Slater (Transportation), Jesse Brown (Veterans Affairs) and Frank Raines (OMB)]; 12%

Hispanic [Bill Richardson (UN), Aida Alvarez (SBA), Federico Pena (Energy)].

Presidential Appointments: 13% African American (twice as many as any previous Administration); 8% Hispanic; 3% Asian American; 1% Native American.

Q: Isn't this just the President's reactionary position after the Administration has neglected to take stronger stances on behalf of minorities?

A: The President has consistently said he had three goals in running for the office: to keep the American Dream alive for everyone who wanted to work for it; to keep America a force in the world for peace and democracy; and to keep us "One America," a nation coming together instead of coming apart.

The Administration has made real progress on issues of economic opportunity, strengthening families, reducing crime rates, and foreign policy (the first two goals).

Economic policies that have helped the entire country have also helped minorities.

- The unemployment rate for Hispanic Americans in May was about 7 percent, down from 11 percent when President Clinton took office.
- The African-American poverty rate dropped to 29 percent in 1995 -- its lowest level since data was collected.
- The Administration has approved more than \$2 billion in Small Business Administration loans to Asian Americans.

The time is right to move forward more aggressively on the President's third goal. Already the President has taken action in this area with his apology, on behalf of the federal government, to the victims of the Tuskegee experiment and his commitment to a White House conference on hate crimes. In addition, an interagency group is exploring how to address the problem of declining diversity in student bodies.

PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT

Q: The President seems to waiver in his commitment to this issue. One day he asks the Supreme Court not to hear an affirmative action case and the next day he announces an initiative on improving race relations. How serious is he about this initiative?

A: The President is very serious about this initiative. He has been steadfast throughout his life and professional career in his pursuit of equality and opportunity for all.

- The President's experiences with discrimination are rooted in the South's legacy of slavery.
- As a candidate, the President has consistently said one of his main goals in running for the office was to keep the American Dream alive for everyone who wanted to work for it and to keep us "one America," a nation coming together instead of

coming apart.

- As President, he has been a constant voice in pressing racial healing and unity. For instance: speeches in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1993 and Austin, Texas, in 1995; inaugural and State of the Union addresses this year; and remarks at the Jackie Robinson anniversary commemoration.

President Clinton's personal history and conviction to lead this country in finding strength in our diversity make him well-suited to help forge alliances and reconcile differences among us. The President will be actively involved in the initiative and will help provide its intellectual leadership.

Q: Does the President really expect this initiative to make a difference or is it just a way for him to get more media attention?

A: The President wants *this issue* to get more media attention. This initiative will attempt to identify and create solutions for improving race relations and the circumstances of Americans of all races. Those solutions will be designed for individuals, communities, religious congregations, educational and non-profit organizations, businesses, state and local governments, and other groups to implement. The Administration will develop wholly new policy and refocus existing policy. Some policies will respond to information arising as the initiative moves forward. Other policies will attempt to address longstanding problems in new and creative ways.

EXPECTATIONS

Q: Will this initiative address the serious imbalances in opportunity that can be attributed to race?

A: This initiative will study the imbalances in opportunity that can be attributed to race, open channels for discussion about those imbalances and create or refocus policy to address those imbalances.

We will strive to identify and create solutions for improving race relations and the circumstances of Americans of all races. Those solutions will be designed for individuals, communities, religious congregations, educational and non-profit organizations, businesses, state and local governments, and other groups to implement.

Q: How can the President hope to improve race relations and the lot of minorities without dedicating significant funds to the problems that arise from racism?

A: Different times call for different solutions. The choice is not between massive programs and nothing. Much can be done within the confines of tighter federal spending that we face today and going forward. As they were in the balanced budget agreement, funds can be reallocated to provide health coverage to five million uninsured children. And we can

seek creative ways to generate new funds, not just from federal and state spending.

Q: What can we expect to see change as a result of this initiative?

A: We will promote a better understanding of and a greater respect for both the similarities and differences between people of different races.

We will challenge leaders and "doers" to step forward, in communities throughout the nation, to find and put into practice ideas to improve race relations and stimulate opportunity for all.

We will identify and disseminate proven practices for promoting racial harmony.

We will analyze critical issues affecting race relations in this country and propose government actions and policies to address these issues.

Q: How does the President intend to keep this from becoming just a big talk fest?

A: The effort will be a balance of study, dialogue and action -- including fact finding and policy.

We will seek to promote honest dialogue on the issues of race and to develop real solutions that can be implemented by individuals, communities, religious congregations, educational and non-profit organizations, businesses, state and local governments, and other groups. We will undertake fact finding (e.g.: what are the stereotypes and what are the facts), dialogue and policy/action (e.g.: best practices, positions on minority enrollment in higher education) concurrently and through an iterative process.

Q: Civil rights groups have expressed dissatisfaction that they have not been consulted and dismay at the lack of substance to the initiative. How do you respond?

A: In the process of defining this initiative, we sought comments and ideas from numerous individuals and organizations. More importantly, we have created plenty of opportunities for future consultation. This is only the beginning of an initiative that will be a uniquely inclusive and broad-ranging year-long effort. We encourage those willing to engage in tough, honest dialogue to join us.

The President is prepared to design wholly new policy and to refocus existing policy. We will look for solutions to implement in areas such as economic opportunity, housing, health care, crime and the administration of justice. We have said all along that we will not outline a full set of proposals and recommendations at the outset. The Administration will unfold policy changes and developments over the course of the year.

LOGISTICS

Q: When will the advisory board hold its first meeting? When will it conclude its

work?

A: The advisory board will meet for the first time in the next six weeks or so. An exact date has not yet been determined. At this point, the board will likely disband after the President submits his report to the American people.

Q: When can we expect to see the first action or policy recommendations from the advisory board?

A: As a result of this initiative, we expect the President to implement wholly new policies as well as to reshape existing policies. The Administration's actions and policy changes will take place over the course of the year-long initiative. We cannot say when the first announcement will be. It will be several weeks before the advisory board, the initiative staff and Administration representatives start working.

ADVISORY BOARD

Q: Why did the President appoint an advisory board rather than an independent commission?

A: This initiative is designed to use presidential leadership to prepare the American people for the next century. President Clinton's personal history and conviction to lead this country in recognizing the strength in our diversity make him well-suited to help forge new alliances among citizens. The President will be actively involved in the initiative and will help provide its intellectual leadership. He will also involve the American people in an unprecedented way.

The board members will serve as partners in the initiative by reaching out to various communities, amplifying the President's efforts and recruiting more leaders on this issue. The advisory board members were selected based on the concept that they would excel in these responsibilities and be respected, if not well known, in what is a Presidentially-led effort.

Q: Wouldn't you have been better off with individuals with name recognition?

A: In identifying an advisory board, the working group sought individuals who could reach out on behalf of the President to various communities, provide guidance and analysis on topics concerning race and recruit more leaders to implement solutions that will improve race relations.

We also looked for a group of individuals who would provide diversity on a number of fronts, be respected in their fields and work well together exemplifying the relationships we hope the whole initiative will engender.

Many of the advisory board's members are familiar ones, especially in their communities or areas of expertise.

Q: How much is this initiative going to cost?

A: We are working with the appropriators on a Justice Department reprogramming of funds for the initiative. The approximate cost of the initiative is \$2.9 million.

Q: What is the \$2.9 million for?

A: The funding will enable us to bring the advisory board to the American people and for providing staff who will study the issues and reach out to the American people.

Q: Why are there no Native Americans on the advisory board?

A: The advisory board is small in number. These individuals represent diversity in race, age, gender, background and political perspective. There will be many, many opportunities (for example: staff appointments, Presidential town hall meetings, advisory board outreach) over the course of the initiative for the President and the advisory board to work with and hear from individuals whose diversity is not reflected on the board.

PRESIDENT NAMES MEMBERS OF ADVISORY BOARD TO THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

President Clinton today announced his intent to appoint seven members to the Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race.

The Advisory Board will provide advice and counsel to the President to improve the quality of race relations. The Board will advise the President on the means to promote a national dialogue on race issues; to increase our understanding of the history and future of race relations; to identify and create plans to calm racial tension and promote increased opportunity in education, housing and health care; and to address crime and the administration of justice. President Clinton is determined "to improve the ability of all Americans to realize their full potential so we can, as one country equal and indivisible, move forward into the 21st Century." Advisory board members will reach out as surrogates for the President to create and implement solutions to improve race relations.

JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN, of Durham, North Carolina, is a retired historian and educator, who most recently served as Professor of Legal History at Duke University Law School from 1982 to 1992. President Clinton awarded Dr. Franklin the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995. Dr. Franklin's scholarly work has focussed on the Civil War and Reconstruction era, and includes the 1946 landmark study *From Slavery to Freedom*. Dr. Franklin received his A.B. degree from Fisk University in 1935, an M.A. from Harvard University in 1936 and a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1941.

WILLIAM F. WINTER, of Jackson, Mississippi, is the former Democratic Governor of Mississippi and is currently in private law practice with the law firm of Watkins, Ludlam & Stennis. Governor Winter serves as Chair of the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service and the National Issue Forum Institute. While Governor, he fought for education reform to benefit African-Americans, civil rights and better relations between the races. He received his B.A. in 1943 and LL.B. in 1949 from the University of Mississippi.

LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON, of Washington, DC, is an Executive Vice President with the AFL-CIO. Ms. Chavez-Thompson has twenty-nine years experience in the labor movement. She joined American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in 1971 and became the first person of color to be elected to office at the AFL-CIO.

ROBERT THOMAS, of Coto DeCaza, California, currently serves as President and CEO of Nissan Motor Corporation, U.S.A. Mr. Thomas recently created a partnership with the Los Angeles Urban League to increase opportunities for women and minorities in automobile manufacturing. Mr. Thomas holds a B.S. in Engineering from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1967.

ANGELA E. OH, of Sirenas, California, is an attorney with the Los Angeles law firm of Beck, De Corso, Daly, Barrera & Oh, specializing in state and federal criminal defense. Following the riots in Los Angeles, she served as Special Counsel to the Assembly Special Committee on the Los Angeles Crisis. Ms. Oh received a B.A. and M.P.H. in 1981 from the University of California and a J.D. in 1986 from the University of California.

SUZAN D. JOHNSON COOK, of New York, New York, is Senior Pastor of the Bronx Christian Fellowship in the Bronx. She is also the first female chaplain of the New York City Police Department. In 1983 Dr. Cook became the first African American woman to serve as Senior Pastor at Mariners' Temple Baptist Church, the oldest American Baptist Church in New York City. From 1993 to 1994, Dr. Cook was a White House Fellow, working for the White House Domestic Policy Council. Dr. Cook received a B.S. from Emerson College in 1976, an M.A. from Columbia University Teachers College in 1978, an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary in 1983 and a D. Div. from United Theological Seminary in 1990.

THOMAS H. KEAN, of Madison, New Jersey, is the former Republican Governor of New Jersey. Governor Kean currently serves as President of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. He also served on the United States Delegation to Women's Rights Conference in Beijing in 1995. Governor Kean holds numerous awards from environmental and educational organizations, including more than 25 honorary degrees. Governor Kean received a B.A. from Princeton University and an M.A. from Columbia University Teachers College.

ALSO, CONSULTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND ADVISORY BOARD NAMED

CHRISTOPHER EDLEY, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, will serve as a consultant to the Advisory Board. Mr. Edley has been a Professor at Harvard Law School since 1981 and is co-director of The Civil Rights Project, a recently launched think tank based at Harvard University. Mr. Edley served as Special Counsel to President Clinton, where he directed a review of affirmative action. Mr. Edley received a B.A. from Swarthmore College in 1973 and an M.P.P. from the Kennedy School of Government and a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1978.