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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

January 14, 1994

THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Leon E. Paparella  
Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Memorandum Establishing a Civil Rights Working Group

SUMMARY: This forwards for your consideration a proposed memorandum, prepared by this office, that would establish a Civil Rights Working Group.

BACKGROUND: The proposed memorandum would establish a Civil Rights Working Group ("Working Group"). The Working Group would be co-chaired by the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and it would comprise the Secretaries of Commerce, the Treasury, Agriculture, the Interior, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Chair of the Commission on Civil Rights and all other Cabinet officers and agency heads would be invited to participate in the Working Group.

The Working Group would be tasked to: (a) evaluate and improve the effectiveness of Federal civil rights missions, policies and enforcement activities; (b) identify barriers to equal access and impediments to effective enforcement of the law; and (c) identify effective strategies to promote tolerance and understanding in work places and communities. Among other things, it would be specifically charged to examine each Federal agency with a significant civil rights mission and to provide the President with an analysis of the agency's implementation of the mission. It would be charged to examine cross-cutting civil rights enforcement challenges (such as environmental racism and voting rights). It would be charged to develop opportunities to promote equal opportunity within and across Federal programs. The Working Group would report to the President and to the Cabinet every six months.

None of the affected agencies objects to the proposed memorandum.

RECOMMENDATION: I recommend that you sign the proposed memorandum.

Attachment

**MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

**SUBJECT: CIVIL RIGHTS WORKING GROUP**

I write concerning our responsibility to promote equal opportunity for all Americans. As we celebrate the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King on the occasion of his birthday, we recall that Dr. King dreamed of a society that included all Americans. His dream inspired us to begin the process of opening our hearts to the humanity of every person and opening our eyes to the injustices around us. Twenty-six years after his death, Dr. King's legacy endures, and his hopes remain our hopes.

Throughout the nation, all of us must rededicate our efforts to promote an open and inclusive society, and those of us who enjoy the honor of being public servants have a special duty in that regard. At the Federal level, we must reevaluate the civil rights missions, policies, and resources of Federal agencies; improve and expand government-wide coordination; and ensure that agencies carry out the Administration's missions in a manner consistent with our commitments to equal opportunity and access. In reviewing our activities, we must seek not only to eliminate barriers but also to identify opportunities for innovation. And we must encourage State and local governments using Federal funds to do the same.

Today, I have issued an Executive Order establishing a Fair Housing Council, chaired by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Working across agencies and programs, this Council will bring new focus to one of the most difficult and critical elements of the Administration's civil rights agenda. Because there are additional areas in which we must similarly search for creative and effective means of exercising leadership, I hereby establish a Civil Rights Working Group, under the auspices of the Domestic Policy Council, to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of Federal civil rights missions, policies, and enforcement activities. The Civil Rights Working Group will identify barriers to equal access, impediments to effective enforcement of the law, and effective strategies to promote tolerance and understanding in our communities and work places. Most important, I expect the Working Group to develop, collaboratively, new approaches to address these concerns.

The principal focus of the Working Group will be our civil rights enforcement efforts. We must recognize, however, that public and private enforcement resources will never be fully adequate to the task, and all of the remaining obstacles to opportunity cannot be removed through litigation alone. Therefore I direct the Working Group to identify innovative strategies that can leverage our limited resources to provide new avenues for equal opportunity and equal rights. Among those potential strategies are new measures relying on civic education and affirmative voluntary efforts to involve citizens in

overcoming the effects of past discrimination and the denial of civil rights. These new strategies should be designed to complement our improved, reinvigorated enforcement efforts.

The Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget will co-chair the Working Group. The following Administration officials will serve as members: the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I also have invited the Chair of the Commission on Civil Rights to participate in this crucial endeavor, on an informal basis respectful of the independent and critical voice we expect of that Commission. Finally, this membership list is not exclusive. I invite and encourage all Cabinet officers and agency heads to participate in the Working Group.

The Working Group will advise me and appropriate Administration officials on how we might seek to modify Federal laws, rules, and regulations to strengthen protection under the law and on how to improve coordination among the vast array of Federal programs that affect civil rights, either directly and indirectly. I direct the Working Group to provide the Cabinet and me with a brief progress report no less than every six months, and specifically to:

- (a) examine each Federal agency with a significant civil rights mission and provide me with an evaluation of how well that mission is being implemented. These analyses should examine whether each agency uses the experience gained from enforcement activities of other agencies and other levels of government. Counterproductive and inconsistent practices should be identified and proposals for change recommended;
- (b) examine cross-cutting civil rights enforcement challenges (such as environmental racism, voting rights, and equal access to government benefit programs) and identify innovative means of coordinating and leveraging resources;
- (c) develop better measures of performance for Federal civil rights programs, which should take into account the real impact of programs on the daily lives of our people; and

- (d) support and advise all agencies as we reinvent our strategies for the promotion of an open and inclusive society.

With this interagency effort, I underscore the commitment of this Administration to bring new energy and imagination to the promotion of an open and inclusive society. In departments and agencies throughout the Federal government, this work has already begun. The Working Group will provide a mechanism to expand and accelerate that vital work. And that work will be among our greatest contributions to the people we serve.