



Changing AMERICA

INDICATORS *of* SOCIAL *and*
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING *by*
RACE *and* HISPANIC ORIGIN

BY THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS



FOR THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE ON RACE

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September 1998

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The data on which charts are based, and a copy of *Changing America*, can be found online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/publications.html>.

Presidential Foreword

As we approach the 21st century, America is once again a nation of new promise, with the opportunity to become the world's first truly multiracial, multiethnic democracy. In as few as 50 years, there may be no majority race in our nation. This rich and growing diversity should be a source of great pride and strength as we enter the new millennium.

In June 1997, I launched The President's Initiative on Race: One America in the 21st Century, in part to educate Americans about the facts surrounding the issue of race in America. I appointed an Advisory Board of seven distinguished Americans to help lead this national conversation. I also asked my entire Administration to participate in this effort and called upon all Americans to recognize the lingering problems and limitless possibilities of our diversity. We face a variety of racial challenges in our country, many of them deeply rooted in our history. If we are to harness the great opportunities within these challenges, we must better understand the contours and nature of racial issues.

By providing much needed information about racial disparities, this statistical chartbook provides the basis for an informed discussion about the problems faced by people of different races and backgrounds in America. There is much good news here, with improvements over the past 20 years for all Americans in education, in economic status, and in health. But in far too many areas, there are still troubling disparities between people of color and other Americans.

Understanding the disparities highlighted in this book is important, but to widen the circle of opportunity for all Americans, we must also continue to act. We must make sure that our federal, state, and local governments, our public schools, our health care system, and our courts deal fairly with all people and provide equal opportunities for every American to participate fully in our society. We must also reach out to our neighbors and co-workers of other races or ethnicities, for it is only by getting to know one another that we will realize that what unites us is far stronger than what divides us.

Only by honestly confronting the walls that continue to separate us, can we break down those walls and move closer to creating a community in which we recognize diversity as a source of strength rather than a cause of division. A decade from now, I hope that people will look back and see that this Initiative made a difference by supplying much needed information, encouraging conversation, and inspiring concrete actions to provide equal opportunity for all Americans. I hope that when we revisit the facts and trends presented in this book, we will see much progress in closing racial gaps. Above all, I hope we will continue to build on that progress, and continue to build one America in the 21st Century.

Bill Clinton

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