

NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 041 - Folder 002

**Race-Race Initiative - Enda
Interviews**

QUESTIONS PROVIDED BY JODI ENDA

Jodi Enda provided us with questions in the following areas: Race Initiative Goals, Affirmative Action, Stereotypes, Education, Civil Rights Enforcement, Discrimination by Police and Courts, and Conservatives. Also provided in this briefing are Q&As on related topics which may arise during the Enda interview, the Akron Town Meeting or other press interviews you may do on the day of the Akron Town Meeting.

Race Initiative Goals

What do you hope the race initiative will accomplish by the end of its year run? Are you satisfied with your progress thus far?

I hope the initiative will lead all Americans to respect each other's differences and, even more importantly, to recognize their common values - - values of community, opportunity and responsibility that will help build One America. If we do that, we can place the nation on a course to enter the next century even stronger and more united.

I believe that we will be better prepared for the 21st century, because more Americans will recognize the value of diversity as a source of strength for our nation. Those who work hard, play by the rules and take responsibility, should have the opportunity to achieve the American dream. And because of the work of the Initiative, I hope that more people will understand the importance of this goal, and act on these beliefs in their own community, in their business, and in their everyday lives.

With energy and focus, we can make progress on all fronts - fighting separation and discrimination and reducing the plight of the underclass, which has disproportionate minority representation, and in lessening the racial prejudice that can strike people of any class and background.

How is the Initiative Going to Achieve these Goals?

Policy Actions: We hope that action will occur in the private and public sector. I have already announced a program to get good teachers into poor districts that are underserved, many of which are largely minority districts. We have also announced better enforcement of our existing laws that prevent housing discrimination. Throughout the next year, we also plan to announce other policy initiatives in education, housing, enforcement of existing laws, and health care. We are also working with the private sector on actions they may take.

Recruiting Leaders: In order for our effort to succeed, we must have participation from all parts of the country. By recruiting leaders at the state and local level we hope to give our effort breadth, depth, and longevity. Based on advice from my advisory board, we are focusing particular effort on education, corporate, youth and religious leaders. After my religious breakfast two weeks ago, Board member Reverend Cook together with White House and initiative staff met with a group of religious leaders to discuss the role they will play in the initiative. Today, (Monday) in Miami, Secretary Slater and Board member Thomas are kicking off our corporate effort.

Promising Practices: In my experience, local communities are the source of some of the best ideas, as in other fields like law enforcement and economic development. That is what our promising practices are about: helping to highlight examples of communities and organizations that have ideas that help bring people together as One America - - so that other people can learn about these examples and perhaps bring them to their community, or adapt parts of them for their use. We have a promising practices section on our Web Site, and we will have a display at the Akron Town Meeting. Additionally, Mrs. Clinton will visit Boston on December 9 to highlight a program there, Team Harmony, that is bringing together youth of different backgrounds.

Dialogue: Through the initiative we hope to increase the dialogue in the nation, including those with different views. By discussing the things that bring us together as well as those that are obstacles to coming together as One America, we will make progress towards that goal. By discussing the stereotypes and the realities that shape people's views, we hope to educate each other regarding the differing perceptions we have of one another. Wednesday's dialogue with the community of Akron will build on dialogue throughout the nation and stimulate more dialogue. At least 65 "watch parties" will view the Akron town meeting. The Advisory Board, my Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet appointees will also be leading round table discussions throughout the country. The Advisory Board and Initiative staff have already spoken with over 10,000 people. The issue is one that I discuss with almost every group I see.

The Board and Consultants (Chris Edley and Laura Harris): I wanted an Advisory Board and our two Consultants to both give me advice and be my eyes, ears and voice on the issue of race. The Board has already guided our efforts by helping us focus our policy efforts on education and economics. They have advised me to focus on young people to create the strong leadership for the future on this issue. From the call to action to 25,000 young people that I sent out last Friday, to the PSA that we will announce on Tuesday that is targeted to young people, to the University setting of this first town meeting, I agree with the Board's advice that youth are an important part of our effort. Additionally, in their last meeting, they suggested that we focus on enforcement of existing laws, and I have asked my staff to do that. The Board has spoken to thousands of people already and are helping us find more promising practices and recruit leaders to make our effort extend deeper into the nation and carry on after the formal initiative ends.

Report to the Nation: My report to the nation will be a resource book for facts and a call to action addressed to all Americans. It will set out my vision of One America, where we respect each others differences while drawing together as one nation. The report will include promising practices and other actions that will help us move towards One America. It will also speak frankly to some of the obstacles that we face as we move into the 21st Century.

Are you satisfied?

Yes, I am now confident in the direction and the speed of the effort (e.g., two policy announcements and ongoing policy development, round table discussions led by the Cabinet, a PSA, call to action letter to youth, promising practices like Tom Manatos - the football captain who is building bridges across racial divides, religious leaders engaging, corporate leaders engaging, involvement of people with other points of view like Thernstrom, Board members and initiative staff talked to over 10,000, your own personal discussions with different groups etc.).

I don't think that one can overemphasize the difficulty of the task at hand. However, after my first meeting with the board, I asked the WH staff and the initiative staff to pick up the pace and they did. The actions that have taken place since that time are moving us towards our goal of taking the nation into the next century as One America where our differences are a strength and the values of community, opportunity, and responsibility unite us.

Affirmative Action

How can you accomplish your goals of diversity in the face of the current backlash against affirmative action, especially from those in the white community? What do you see as possible alternatives to affirmative action?

We should not pretend that achieving diversity has a quick and easy solution for individuals or for our nation as a whole. But there is no more important challenge facing us. Every American should have the chance to live out the American dream, and I am afraid that for many people of color and for women, the barriers still exist to achieving that dream.

Affirmative action isn't a perfect solution - - it only addresses certain aspects of the opportunity agenda, and shouldn't continue when it has served its purposes. In my San Diego speech, I asked for those with alternatives to come forward. However, alternatives must be effective at addressing the very real problems that exist today.

We have to approach affirmative action carefully, and always look for alternatives to making sure every American has an equal opportunity. But the alternatives cannot just sound good. The alternatives must be effective at moving us towards One America, closing the racial divisions and gaps.

At the same time, we should be taking the kinds of actions and building the kind of society that will make affirmative action less and less necessary. That is one of my goals for this initiative.

I believe that focusing on strengthening K-12 education and higher education is vital to addressing the problems of race, as well as keeping our nation strong economically, but that alone is not enough in the short term.

I am convinced that when the American people examine the issues - - of what our history has been, of where we are now, and what we need to do to become One America with equal opportunity for all - - they will agree that there is still a necessary role for narrowly-tailored affirmative action in our society. For example, recently the people of Houston rallied together to defeat an anti-affirmative action ballot initiative. There was clear language on the Houston ballot, and a broad range of interests, including business, came together to support Houston's successful efforts at building One America.

Stereotypes

How can the race initiative help curb destructive racial stereotypes? How can it help to change attitudes? How can the race initiative help deal with stereotypes promoted by the media itself?

The best way to confront stereotypes and change attitudes is for people to have honest exchanges and real life experiences with people who are not just like themselves. That's why dialogue is such an important part of the Initiative. That's why I'm going to Akron for our first Town Meeting, so people will see an example of the kind of conversation we're talking about.

And these meetings can have a ripple effect. When the Town Meeting is broadcast on CSPAN on Wednesday, there will be more than fifty "watch parties" around the country where people are going to watch our conversation and then continue with a dialogue of their own.

We can change stereotypes with facts. That's why the Advisory Board has been charged with collecting information, and getting that information into public discussion. Because people need to understand what the facts are --and sometimes the facts about race are different from the public perception. We can't get to a better understanding if we don't know what the facts are.

Stereotypes are hard to change without experiences, too. In my radio address I spoke about volunteering as a way to build those experiences to help us connect with folks who are different from ourselves, strengthening our sense of community.

The media, like all industries and sectors, I believe has a special responsibility in this. That goes along with their great power and with that special role they play in our free democracy, enshrined in the Bill of Rights. In news and entertainment involving racial and ethnic justice, over the years the media have at times often been part of the solution.

But now, we are asking leaders in every sector -- from business to higher education to the religious community -- to consider what they might do to help build one America. I think its fair to ask the same of the media.

Many news organizations, national and local, have already started in one way or another, with specials and features. That's good, and I hope they build on it. Look at what the Akron Beacon Journal did in their series on Race that won the Pulitzer in 1994. That was the inspiration for the dialogue group that is active in Akron today.

I'm not suggesting that every newspaper should try to follow exactly that example - - although it is a good one. The important thing is that leadership can make a difference. Every one of us can make a difference. And I hope the media, with their great power to reach and inform, will also think of what they can do to bring us closer to One America. I look forward to working with the media on the efforts that they think are appropriate.

Education

Other than school standards, what can be done to improve diversity in our nation's elementary schools?

We should place a high value on racial and ethnic diversity at all levels of our education system. Over the long term, having strong, diverse schools, with high expectations for every student, will help all our students succeed in an increasingly diverse economy.

The best way to increase diversity in our schools is to improve what they offer. We need to help communities throughout America develop safe, disciplined schools that help all students master the basics and reach high standards -- schools where students learn to read and to do math, where they can get extra help if they need it, where they can learn to take advantage of the Internet, and where they are taught from early on that a college education is within reach if they are willing to work for it. Good schools with high expectations will attract all kinds of parents and students, and the result will be a richer learning environment for all.

For this to happen we must attract highly qualified teachers to schools serving poor and disadvantaged kids, and I started the race initiative by proposing a plan to do just that. We also have make technology accessible and affordable to insure that no matter where they go to school, in the inner city or in poor rural areas, students have access to the same world of information on the Internet. And we must begin to address the infrastructure needs facing schools around the country -- students can't learn in buildings that are literally crumbling around them.

Another important step we can take to increase diversity in our nation's schools is to enhance public school choice. Students and their parents should be able to choose from a wide variety of options within the public school system, not just the school next door. That is one reason why I have been such a strong supporter of public charter schools, which are open to students of all backgrounds and stay open as long as they do a good job. Opening charter schools and taking other steps to expand public school choice can counter the effects of residential segregation in our school systems and make elementary, junior and high schools more diverse.

Another thing we can do is to enforce housing laws. Because where people live affects where their children go to school and therefore, the quality of education they receive.

Does this include busing?

I believe that separate but equal can never truly be equal. America must never retreat from our goal of a fully integrated society. We may disagree about how to get there, but we should continue to stand together in our determination to end segregation. As the

great Thurgood Marshall said, "Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together.

There are many tools other than busing to help integrate such as magnet school programs, voluntary transfers and redrawing boundary lines. When we are faced with the constitutional violation of intentional segregation, I believe that we should seek these other remedies. However, I would not completely rule busing out as an option in a particular case. We will faithfully enforce the law and seek remedies that constructively bring people together.

Civil Rights Enforcement

What changes or new policies do you hope to see implemented in the near future?

Effective enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws is one of the key elements to ensuring that racial or ethnic discrimination will not be used to deny the American dream to any individual or class of Americans. We have laws on the books against discrimination, and they need to be enforced vigorously. This is of particular importance in the areas of housing and employment, where we continue to see evidence that racial and ethnic discrimination plays a role in denying opportunities. I am committed to strong civil rights enforcement as an important tool in our quest to become One America.

We have already taken a number of actions in the course of this initiative to strengthen enforcement of our civil rights laws. A few months ago, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that it will double the number of civil rights enforcement actions it brings by the year 2000, and that it will focus resources on such practices as predatory lending and exclusionary zoning.

Just last month, we took another step toward making sure that our nation's laws fully protect all of its citizens. At the White House Conference on Hate Crimes, held on November 10, we announced significant law enforcement and prevention initiatives to get tough on hate crimes, including an amendment that will expand the scope of the law to include sexual orientation, gender and disability, and make it easier to bring prosecutions. We are also launching an important new initiative that will help victims of housing-related hate crimes bring action against their attackers and receive monetary awards for the harm they may have suffered.

In the near future, we will announce further plans to improve civil rights enforcement at all government agencies - - and especially at the EEOC. These initiatives will be designed to increase compliance with the laws on the books and to develop new methods of dispute resolution that will allow for claims to be resolved more quickly, without compromising fairness.

Finally, I am confident that having an Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, who is as qualified and dedicated to equal rights as Bill Lann Lee, will make a big difference in civil rights enforcement in the nation.

Discrimination by Police and Courts

Do you plan to address discrimination by the police and court system as part of the race initiative?

We must enforce our civil rights laws against people in the criminal justice system who may be guilty of discrimination. Our overall strategy for civil rights enforcement must hold public servants -- as well as private entities -- accountable if they break our laws and discriminate. I want our criminal justice system to be fair and have the support of all law-abiding Americans.

But there's another problem. We must also make sure that the criminal justice system is meeting the public safety needs of all Americans. Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be victims of crimes. Under-protecting minority communities is its own form of unfairness, and I will continue to do everything I can to prevent it.

Our community policing initiative is not only helping to drive down the crime rates, it is also strengthening the bond between community residents and their police. Done right, community policing is not just improved community relations: it is police and citizens working together, building trust and realizing that they need each other to succeed in making their neighborhoods safer. Everywhere I go I hear about the difference our community police officers are making, and it gives me great hope. As part of our race initiative, we should try to build on community policing and look for new ways to make the criminal justice system more responsive at the local level.

Conservatives

In his letter to the you, Speaker Newt Gingrich expressed concern that the dialogue on race is becoming a monologue. Will the Advisory Board be open to hearing from a wide array of opinions or is it true that the Board will only invite people to participate in the process that agree with you and the position of the Board?

From its inception, I have been committed to a real dialogue, one with many voices and many perspectives. To be constructive, to address the issue of race, this cannot be a monologue. In June in San Diego, I asked all Americans to begin this conversation and to talk with and listen to each other. As you know, in many communities across the nation, such conversations have been underway for some time and many more have been stimulated by my call-to-action.

I am looking forward to hearing from Mrs. Thernstrom at the town meeting and a group of conservatives later in December.

Will the Advisory Board hear from University of California regent Ward Connerly?

From its inception, I have been committed to a real dialogue, one with many voices and many perspectives. To be constructive, to address the issue of race, this cannot be a monologue. Mr. Connerly has been a vocal part of this dialogue and I suspect he will continue to be so.

It has been announced that Abigail Thernstrom will be speaking at the Akron Town Meeting. What do we hope that she'll bring to the dialogue?

After hearing the students experiences, we hope that Ms. Thernstrom will provide her insight and expertise to the discussion.

Is the Board just acquiescing to the pressures from the conservatives by inviting her to speak at the Akron Town Meeting?

No. As we mentioned earlier, from the *very* beginning, I have clearly stated that we want to hear different viewpoints on the issue of race. The decision to invite an individual to the Akron Town Meeting, whose views differ from mine was made before this criticism was raised. In order for this effort to succeed, we need Americans of all races and perspectives to work together.

Additional Questions and Answers for the Enda Interview

Why do you think it is important to have a President's Initiative on Race? Race seems to be a part of so many public debates today anyway, do you really think a Presidential program can make a significant contribution?

I believe as President I should lead on issues important to our nation. During my entire public career -- actually my entire life -- I have been dedicated to strengthening our nation by overcoming the obstacles that divide us. I firmly believe that our nation's growing diversity is one of our greatest, but most undervalued, national assets, especially as we go into the 21st Century. We must capitalize on the strengths and benefits that come with diversity rather than letting our differences divide us and hold us back. As I have said before, we don't have a single person to waste in this country.

As the face of America continues to change, the goal of my Initiative on Race is to strengthen our foundations as Americans, while celebrating our differences. I think we can do this only by fostering an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect for one another, and the Presidency is one of the best ways to deliver this message.

How can you possibly hope to address racial disparities in education, economic opportunity and the like without a substantial infusion of federal funds?

For five years, my Administration has focused on promoting educational and economic opportunity for all Americans.

From empowerment zones to CRA to my education agenda, my commitment will continue. As we develop other concrete solutions to problems like disparities in education, economic opportunity, and housing, we are well aware that we are working within very tight budgetary constraints. That means that we have to be creative and make sure that existing resources are being used in the most effective ways possible. This means that existing programs -- from education to civil rights enforcement -- have to work better and have clearly articulated and achievable objectives. This is one of our greatest challenges.

My Administration has already made significant strides in these areas. For example, I have proposed an initiative to recruit and prepare quality teachers to serve in high-poverty communities, which have a disproportionate number of minority students. We propose doing this by offering scholarships to those students preparing to become teachers who will commit to teach in those communities for at least three years. This proposal responds to the nation's need for a diverse and excellent teaching force. It also includes funds to strengthen teacher preparation programs so that those who go into teaching are better prepared to teach their students.

Also, at my direction, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo recently announced that HUD will double its efforts to fight housing discrimination through increased enforcement actions and additional resources allocated to the promotion of fair housing programs at the community level.

I think it is important to remember that the Initiative is also about changing the hearts and minds of the American people, something that government programs cannot do.

On the issues of an apology for slavery and reparations, will you or your Advisory Board address these issues?

Slavery has left deep scars on our nation; scars that are very real even today. Together we will continue to address these issues, but at this time, I do not believe that an apology or a discussion of reparations is the best way to move the country forward on this issue.

The focus of our work in the Initiative is to find ways in which we can offer real opportunities to Americans who work hard, but who continue to face barriers of discrimination based on race. We want to highlight successful examples of Americans coming together across racial lines to overcome the divisive legacies of our past.

Do you really believe that you can solve the problem of race relations in this country?

I believe our initiative will make a difference. This is a complex issue, and it can't be solved in a year. I do believe, with all of us committed and working together, that we can bridge racial divides.

Isn't this really a problem of economics and class and not a racial issue?

The issues of race and economics are clearly closely intertwined in our country. Discrimination has affected economic well being. For many Americans however, a higher income or better job does not ensure they are free of racial discrimination, harassment or other barriers to full participation in the American dream. We know from long experience that - wealthy or poor - discrimination continues to affect minorities.

What is your view of the settlement in the Piscataway case?

I am gratified that both sides were able to reach a mutually agreeable settlement to the Piscataway case. As the Administration has stated before, the unique facts of this case made it an inappropriate vehicle for adjudicating the important issue of non-remedial affirmative action.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 29, 1997

INTERVIEW WITH JODI ENDA OF KNIGHT-RIDDER

197-0000-1111

DATE: December 1, 1997
LOCATION: The Oval Office
TIME:
FROM: Sylvia Mathews
Mike McCurry
Judith Winston

I. PURPOSE

This in-depth interview with Jodi Enda of Knight-Ridder News Service will serve as a preview to your race town hall meeting later this week and will give you an opportunity to discuss your continued commitment to racial unification and constructive dialogue between the races.

II. BACKGROUND

Your interview with Jodi Enda will be incorporated into a larger story that will run in the *Akron Beacon-Journal* on Wednesday, December 3. The story will put your participation in the town hall meeting in the appropriate context and will build on the paper's already significant commitment to the coverage and exploration of racial issues as demonstrated in 1994 with their Pulitzer prize winning series, "A Question of Color."

This interview makes sense not only because it will help to define the scope of this week's town hall meeting for newspaper readers in Akron, but also because the resulting story is planned to run in all of Knight-Ridder's twenty-eight affiliated newspapers, including *The Philadelphia News*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Tallahassee Democrat*, *The Detroit Free Press*, *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*. It is important to note that Knight-Ridder's cumulative circulation is more than that of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* combined. On the whole, Knight-Ridder papers serve diverse audiences in some of our nation's most volatile centers and as such have demonstrated a profound desire to bring news of your plans to their readers.

Last spring, Enda was one of the first White House reporters to write of your hope to mend our nation's racial and ethnic rift. Since that time, she has continued to detail your progress, writing thoughtful stories on the race initiative and advisory board itself, your continuing work on the issue as well as the problems that to some have seemed to plague the advisory board's efforts

thus far. However, Enda does not wish to write a story detailing the supposed failures of the race initiative, rather she hopes that this interview will give you an opportunity to express your ongoing determination to bridge the gap between the races, inspire honest and meaningful dialogue, and celebrate our inherent differences while at the same time embracing the notion of "One America."

A list of Ms. Enda's likely questions as well as suggested answers is attached.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The President
Jodi Enda

IV. PRESS PLAN

This interview is exclusive to Knight-Ridder newspapers and will develop into a larger story that will be published in the *Akron-Beacon Journal* in addition to the Knight-Ridder's more than two dozen other major regional newspapers.

V. ATTACHMENTS

- Questions and Answers on the Race Initiative
- Jodi Enda's most recent articles on the Race Initiative
- Articles from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* on the progress of the Race Initiative

QUESTIONS PROVIDED BY JODI ENDA

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We have to approach affirmative action carefully, and always look for alternatives to making sure every American has an equal opportunity. But the alternatives cannot just sound good. The alternatives must be effective at moving us towards One America, closing the racial divisions and gaps.

At the same time, we should be taking the kinds of actions and building the kind of society that will make affirmative action less and less necessary. That is one of my goals for this initiative.

I believe that focusing on strengthening K-12 education and higher education is vital to addressing the problems of race, as well as keeping our nation strong economically, but that alone is not enough in the short term.

I am convinced that when the American people examine the issues - - of what our history has been, of where we are now, and what we need to do to become One America with equal opportunity for all - - they will agree that there is still a necessary role for narrowly-tailored affirmative action in our society. For example, recently the people of Houston rallied together to defeat an anti-affirmative action ballot initiative. There was clear language on the Houston ballot, and a broad range of interests, including business, came together to support Houston's successful efforts at building One America.

Stereotypes

How can the race initiative help curb destructive racial stereotypes? How can it help to change attitudes? How can the race initiative help deal with stereotypes promoted by the media itself?

The best way to confront stereotypes and change attitudes is for people to have honest exchanges and real life experiences with people who are not just like themselves. That's why dialogue is such an important part of the Initiative . That's why I'm going to Akron for our first Town Meeting, so people will see an example of the kind of conversation we're talking about.

And these meetings can have a ripple effect. When the Town Meeting is broadcast on CSPAN on Wednesday, there will be more than fifty "watch parties" around the country where people are going to watch our conversation and then continue with a dialogue of their own.

We can change stereotypes with facts. That's why the Advisory Board has been charged with collecting information, and getting that information into public discussion. Because people need to understand what the facts are --and sometimes the facts about race are different from the public perception. We can't get to a better understanding if we don't know what the facts are.

Stereotypes are hard to change without experiences, too. In my radio address I spoke about volunteering as a way to build those experiences to help us connect with folks who are different from ourselves, strengthening our sense of community.

The media, like all industries and sectors, I believe has a special responsibility in this. That goes along with their great power and with that special role they play in our free democracy, enshrined in the Bill of Rights. In news and entertainment involving racial and ethnic justice, over the years the media have at times often been part of the solution.

But now, we are asking leaders in every sector -- from business to higher education to the religious community -- to consider what they might do to help build one America. I think its fair to ask the same of the media.

Many news organizations, national and local, have already started in one way or another, with specials and features. That's good, and I hope they build on it. Look at what the Akron Beacon Journal did in their series on Race that won the Pulitzer in 1994. That was the inspiration for the dialogue group that is active in Akron today.

I'm not suggesting that every newspaper should try to follow exactly that example - - although it is a good one. The important thing is that leadership can make a difference. Every one of us can make a difference. And I hope the media, with their great power to reach and inform, will also think of what they can do to bring us closer to One America. I look forward to working with the media on the efforts that they think are appropriate.

Education

Other than school standards, what can be done to improve diversity in our nation's elementary schools?

We should place a high value on racial and ethnic diversity at all levels of our education system. Over the long term, having strong, diverse schools, with high expectations for every student, will help all our students succeed in an increasingly diverse economy.

The best way to increase diversity in our schools is to improve what they offer. We need to help communities throughout America develop safe, disciplined schools that help all students master the basics and reach high standards -- schools where students learn to read and to do math, where they can get extra help if they need it, where they can learn to take advantage of the Internet, and where they are taught from early on that a college education is within reach if they are willing to work for it. Good schools with high expectations will attract all kinds of parents and students, and the result will be a richer learning environment for all.

For this to happen we must attract highly qualified teachers to schools serving poor and disadvantaged kids, and I started the race initiative by proposing a plan to do just that. We also have make technology accessible and affordable to insure that no matter where they go to school, in the inner city or in poor rural areas, students have access to the same world of information on the Internet. And we must begin to address the infrastructure needs facing schools around the country -- students can't learn in buildings that are literally crumbling around them.

Another important step we can take to increase diversity in our nation's schools is to enhance public school choice. Students and their parents should be able to choose from a wide variety of options within the public school system, not just the school next door. That is one reason why I have been such a strong supporter of public charter schools, which are open to students of all backgrounds and stay open as long as they do a good job. Opening charter schools and taking other steps to expand public school choice can counter the effects of residential segregation in our school systems and make elementary, junior and high schools more diverse.

Another thing we can do is to enforce housing laws. Because where people live affects where their children go to school and therefore, the quality of education they receive.

Does this include busing?

I believe that separate but equal can never truly be equal. America must never retreat from our goal of a fully integrated society. We may disagree about how to get there, but we should continue to stand together in our determination to end segregation. As the

great Thurgood Marshall said, "Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together."

There are many tools other than busing to help integrate such as magnet school programs, voluntary transfers and redrawing boundary lines. When we are faced with the constitutional violation of intentional segregation, I believe that we should seek these other remedies. However, I would not completely rule busing out as an option in a particular case. We will faithfully enforce the law and seek remedies that constructively bring people together.

Civil Rights Enforcement

What changes or new policies do you hope to see implemented in the near future?

Effective enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws is one of the key elements to ensuring that racial or ethnic discrimination will not be used to deny the American dream to any individual or class of Americans. We have laws on the books against discrimination, and they need to be enforced vigorously. This is of particular importance in the areas of housing and employment, where we continue to see evidence that racial and ethnic discrimination plays a role in denying opportunities. I am committed to strong civil rights enforcement as an important tool in our quest to become One America.

We have already taken a number of actions in the course of this initiative to strengthen enforcement of our civil rights laws. A few months ago, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that it will double the number of civil rights enforcement actions it brings by the year 2000, and that it will focus resources on such practices as predatory lending and exclusionary zoning.

Just last month, we took another step toward making sure that our nation's laws fully protect all of its citizens. At the White House Conference on Hate Crimes, held on November 10, we announced significant law enforcement and prevention initiatives to get tough on hate crimes, including an amendment that will expand the scope of the law to include sexual orientation, gender and disability, and make it easier to bring prosecutions. We are also launching an important new initiative that will help victims of housing-related hate crimes bring action against their attackers and receive monetary awards for the harm they may have suffered.

In the near future, we will announce further plans to improve civil rights enforcement at all government agencies - - and especially at the EEOC. These initiatives will be designed to increase compliance with the laws on the books and to develop new methods of dispute resolution that will allow for claims to be resolved more quickly, without compromising fairness.

Finally, I am confident that having an Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, who is as qualified and dedicated to equal rights as Bill Lann Lee, will make a big difference in civil rights enforcement in the nation.

Discrimination by Police and Courts

Do you plan to address discrimination by the police and court system as part of the race initiative?

We must enforce our civil rights laws against people in the criminal justice system who may be guilty of discrimination. Our overall strategy for civil rights enforcement must hold public servants -- as well as private entities -- accountable if they break our laws and discriminate. I want our criminal justice system to be fair and have the support of all law-abiding Americans.

But there's another problem. We must also make sure that the criminal justice system is meeting the public safety needs of all Americans. Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be victims of crimes. Under-protecting minority communities is its own form of unfairness, and I will continue to do everything I can to prevent it.

Our community policing initiative is not only helping to drive down the crime rates, it is also strengthening the bond between community residents and their police. Done right, community policing is not just improved community relations: it is police and citizens working together, building trust and realizing that they need each other to succeed in making their neighborhoods safer. Everywhere I go I hear about the difference our community police officers are making, and it gives me great hope. As part of our race initiative, we should try to build on community policing and look for new ways to make the criminal justice system more responsive at the local level.

Conservatives

In his letter to the you, Speaker Newt Gingrich expressed concern that the dialogue on race is becoming a monologue. Will the Advisory Board be open to hearing from a wide array of opinions or is it true that the Board will only invite people to participate in the process that agree with you and the position of the Board?

From its inception, I have been committed to a real dialogue, one with many voices and many perspectives. To be constructive, to address the issue of race, this cannot be a monologue. In June in San Diego, I asked all Americans to begin this conversation and to talk with and listen to each other. As you know, in many communities across the nation, such conversations have been underway for some time and many more have been stimulated by my call-to-action.

I am looking forward to hearing from Mrs. Thernstrom at the town meeting and a group of conservatives later in December.

Will the Advisory Board hear from University of California regent Ward Connerly?

From its inception, I have been committed to a real dialogue, one with many voices and many perspectives. To be constructive, to address the issue of race, this cannot be a monologue. Mr. Connerly has been a vocal part of this dialogue and I suspect he will continue to be so.

It has been announced that Abigail Thernstrom will be speaking at the Akron Town Meeting. What do we hope that she'll bring to the dialogue?

After hearing the students experiences, we hope that Ms. Thernstrom will provide her insight and expertise to the discussion.

Is the Board just acquiescing to the pressures from the conservatives by inviting her to speak at the Akron Town Meeting?

No. As we mentioned earlier, from the *very* beginning, I have clearly stated that we want to hear different viewpoints on the issue of race. The decision to invite an individual to the Akron Town Meeting, whose views differ from mine was made before this criticism was raised. In order for this effort to succeed, we need Americans of all races and perspectives to work together.

Additional Questions and Answers for the Enda Interview

Why do you think it is important to have a President's Initiative on Race? Race seems to be a part of so many public debates today anyway, do you really think a Presidential program can make a significant contribution?

I believe as President I should lead on issues important to our nation. During my entire public career -- actually my entire life -- I have been dedicated to strengthening our nation by overcoming the obstacles that divide us. I firmly believe that our nation's growing diversity is one of our greatest, but most undervalued, national assets, especially as we go into the 21st Century. We must capitalize on the strengths and benefits that come with diversity rather than letting our differences divide us and hold us back. As I have said before, we don't have a single person to waste in this country.

As the face of America continues to change, the goal of my Initiative on Race is to strengthen our foundations as Americans, while celebrating our differences. I think we can do this only by fostering an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect for one another, and the Presidency is one of the best ways to deliver this message.

How can you possibly hope to address racial disparities in education, economic opportunity and the like without a substantial infusion of federal funds?

For five years, my Administration has focused on promoting educational and economic opportunity for all Americans.

From empowerment zones to CRA to my education agenda, my commitment will continue. As we develop other concrete solutions to problems like disparities in education, economic opportunity, and housing, we are well aware that we are working within very tight budgetary constraints. That means that we have to be creative and make sure that existing resources are being used in the most effective ways possible. This means that existing programs -- from education to civil rights enforcement -- have to work better and have clearly articulated and achievable objectives. This is one of our greatest challenges.

My Administration has already made significant strides in these areas. For example, I have proposed an initiative to recruit and prepare quality teachers to serve in high-poverty communities, which have a disproportionate number of minority students. We propose doing this by offering scholarships to those students preparing to become teachers who will commit to teach in those communities for at least three years. This proposal responds to the nation's need for a diverse and excellent teaching force. It also includes funds to strengthen teacher preparation programs so that those who go into teaching are better prepared to teach their students.

Also, at my direction, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo recently announced that HUD will double its efforts to fight housing discrimination through increased enforcement actions and additional resources allocated to the promotion of fair housing programs at the community level.

I think it is important to remember that the Initiative is also about changing the hearts and minds of the American people, something that government programs cannot do.

On the issues of an apology for slavery and reparations, will you or your Advisory Board address these issues?

Slavery has left deep scars on our nation; scars that are very real even today. Together we will continue to address these issues, but at this time, I do not believe that an apology or a discussion of reparations is the best way to move the country forward on this issue.

The focus of our work in the Initiative is to find ways in which we can offer real opportunities to Americans who work hard, but who continue to face barriers of discrimination based on race. We want to highlight successful examples of Americans coming together across racial lines to overcome the divisive legacies of our past.

Do you really believe that you can solve the problem of race relations in this country?

I believe our initiative will make a difference. This is a complex issue, and it can't be solved in a year. I do believe, with all of us committed and working together, that we can bridge racial divides.

Isn't this really a problem of economics and class and not a racial issue?

The issues of race and economics are clearly closely intertwined in our country. Discrimination has affected economic well being. For many Americans however, a higher income or better job does not ensure they are free of racial discrimination, harassment or other barriers to full participation in the American dream. We know from long experience that - wealthy or poor - discrimination continues to affect minorities.

What is your view of the settlement in the Piscataway case?

I am gratified that both sides were able to reach a mutually agreeable settlement to the Piscataway case. As the Administration has stated before, the unique facts of this case made it an inappropriate vehicle for adjudicating the important issue of non-remedial affirmative action.