

NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 055 - Folder-005

Race - Race Initiative: Town Halls

Race initiative - town hall

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
TOWN HALL ON RACE
AKRON, OHIO
DECEMBER 3, 1997**

Last June, I challenged all Americans to join me in a year-long effort to address what I believe is the greatest challenge facing us in the 21st century: Building one America out of our growing racial and ethnic diversity.

For the last five years, I have worked hard to fulfill a vision for America -- one that provides opportunity for every person responsible enough to work for it, keeps America the world's strongest force for peace, freedom and prosperity, and brings our people together across all the lines that divide us. We are making great progress toward these goals. Our economy is the healthiest in a generation. Our social problems are finally bending to our efforts. But if this country is ever to reach its greatest potential, we must move forward as one American community -- respecting our diversity, but even more, celebrating those things that unite us.

In my lifetime, America has witnessed a great deal of racial progress. But, our task is far from over. We sit at different tables at lunchtime. We move out of our neighborhoods once our neighbors' complexions change. Even when we go to the same schools or work in the same offices, we are too often separated by a gulf of silence.

That's why I've come to Akron and asked you to join me here today. We must fill in the silence with honest talk and careful listening. When it comes to race, everyone seems to have an opinion -- one formed by the mind, in the heart, and from experience. Too often, these opinions are formed without the benefit of true conversations with people of other races. If we don't speak frankly about who we are and how we see each other, if we ban certain topics from our conversations out of fear of giving offense, if we fail to listen to each other with open minds, then we only deepen our divisions. We must use dialogue to debunk the false stereotypes, to move past the old resentments, to discover what we still need to do to build One America.

But concrete, specific action to bridge the gaps between us must accompany this vital dialogue. I believe the best way to make racial progress over the long haul is to make sure everybody who is willing to work for it has the opportunity to make the most of their own lives. In the coming months, my administration will propose an opportunity agenda to help expand opportunities for all Americans in education, health care, housing, crime, and civil rights enforcement. The budget I send to Congress next year will propose new Education Opportunity Zones to reward school districts in poor urban and rural areas for undertaking the kind of sweeping reforms that cities like Chicago have adopted --

closing down failing schools, providing public school choice, removing bad teachers, eliminating social promotions, and making sure children get the extra help they need to succeed. Strong public schools are the heart of opening the American Dream to all Americans. If we're going to succeed in the 21st century, we must recognize that every child can learn, so long as we hold them to high expectations and hold their schools accountable for results.

So let's begin the dialogue with our young people. Let's find out how those who will lead the majority of their lives in the next century are dealing with the challenge of race today. Let's walk around in each other's shoes for a little bit and strive to understand where we're all coming from. Most of all, let's find out how we can come together as one America today and in the years to come.

**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

**DRAFT: November 28, 1997
One America: President Clinton's Initiative on Race
The Akron Town Meeting**

Date: December 3, 1997
Location: University of Akron,
Performing Arts Center Auditorium
Time: 11:30 a.m.
From: Sylvia Mathews, Minyon Moore
Ann Lewis, Judith Winston

I. PURPOSE

On June 14, 1997, during your commencement address at the University of California in San Diego, you announced the creation of a one-year initiative to examine the current state of race relations in America. As a part of this year long effort of study, action and dialogue, you will host four town meetings across the country. On December 3, 1997, in Akron, OH, you will hold your first town meeting with a focus on young America. The goals of this first town meeting will be to explore community perspectives around the following questions:

- What are the racially-related challenges facing today's youth in various aspects of their lives; and
- What are the best ways for young America, adults, and institutions supporting youth to foster One America in the 21st Century?

II. BACKGROUND

The first town meeting will give you the opportunity to hear from young people about issues regarding race and how it will impact their future as we move into the 21st century. The initial participants will be three young people who will be asked to share their views regarding an incident that they are all familiar with, but have different view points. The other option is for YOU to ask a question to the students (i.e. On a day to day basis, do racial issues affect you and your friends? How?) The students will be

given two minutes each to respond to your comments or question. Three nationally recognized authors have also been selected to respond to and expand on the students comments. As the dialogue progresses, three local community leaders will be asked to speak at various points throughout the program. The conversation will expand and include the on-stage audience of 75 local students, members of the faith community, business and elected leaders and families. In addition, a local moderator has been chosen to assist you in moving the program and probing the participants. The town meeting will wrap-up with a discussion around positive steps that can be taken to improve race relations in America. You will then offer your closing remarks.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The immediate audience – those seated on stage will be approximately 75 people. They will be the only people in the auditorium interacting with you and responding to questions. Of the 75 on stage, we are recommending that half of the participants are young people (ages 17 to 25). All participants chairs will be numbered enabling the moderator to call upon a few pre-selected individuals. Furthermore, the moderator will call upon several participants in general.

We also recommend that the racial composition of the immediate audience reflect the racial composition of the local area. However, in order to broaden the range of experiences and perspectives that can be contributed to the discussion, it will probably be necessary to have a slightly higher percentage of people of color than would be found in the local population. The racial breakdown of Akron is approximately 80 percent White, 15 percent African American, and 5 percent other.

The remaining on stage participants will represent community leaders, students, educators, religious leaders, business and elected leaders, students and parents of students (in order to have entire families present) and representatives from local promising practices. We are making a concerted effort to look for people whose views reflect a broad cross-section of the American people and people whose views may be differ from our own. As a part of our general outreach and outreach for stage participants, we have consulted with The Ray Bliss Institute, a conservative think tank in Akron, OH, and the Board of Regents at the University.

Approximately 1800 people will form the larger audience seated in the auditorium. We have also made provisions for an overflow crowd in the JAR arena located on campus to watch the town meeting by big screen monitors. Approximately 5,000 people are expected to attend. At the conclusion of the town meeting, you will do a brief drop-by to greet the overflow audience in the JAR arena.

MODERATOR

The moderator will serve as a timekeeper and the navigator of the program. He will be positioned to one corner of the stage behind a podium. His role will be to help manage the event without detracting from you or the on stage participants.

IV. PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

PRE-PROGRAM (11:20 A.M)

- 75 participants will be seated on stage before the program begins.
- Off-stage announcement of moderator accompanied by Senator Glenn.
- Off-stage announcement of 3 students accompanied by Congressman Sawyer.
- Off-stage announcement of 3 authors accompanied by Mayor Plusquellic.
- Off-stage announcement of 3 community leaders accompanied by County Executive Tim Davis.
- Moderator will proceed to podium and explain the format of the program to the auditorium and overflow guest.

PROGRAM (11:30 A.M.)

- Off-stage announcement of YOU and Dr. Marion Ruebel, President of the University of Akron.
- Dr. Ruebel welcomes the audience and introduces YOU to the podium.
- YOU will make brief remarks regarding YOUR vision of One America from the podium.
- Upon completion of YOUR remarks, you will turn your attention to the on-stage audience.
- YOU will proceed to engage the three selected students in a dialogue around a specific incident that they are familiar with but share different views, or a specific question that will provoke conversation and dialogue. Please Note: The final determination will be made on Monday.
- The three students will have two minutes each to respond to your comments or question.
- After the students have completed their comments, YOU will offer your thoughts regarding their views and recap the themes.
- Upon completion of your comments, the moderator will move the dialogue to the attention of the authors.

IV. PROGRAM, contd.

- **YOU will then solicit comments from each of the three authors specifically on the themes that have emerged from your dialogue with the students. The authors will have two minutes each to respond.**
- **YOU will offer your comments and return to your seat on the stage.**
- **The moderator will then begin to expand the discussion to participants on the stage. Three pre-numbered individuals (student, family member, religious leader or community leader) will respond to the students in particular, or the entire dialogue in general. YOU will make comments as you feel appropriate.**
- **As the dialogue continues to expand, two panelist from the wider audience will be called upon to make general comments regarding the themes that have emerged from the overall dialogue.**
- **YOU will make comments before we conclude this discussion and turn our attention to positive steps that can be taken to improve race relations in America.**
- **The moderator will then guide us in a discussion about positive steps that can be taken to improve race relations. On-stage participants will be called upon to provide positive steps to improve race relations in America based on the themes that emerged from our initial conversation with the students.**
- **At the conclusion of this session, YOU will bring closing remarks.**

V. PRESS PLAN

The town meeting will start at 11:30 a.m est on Wednesday, Dec. 3. It will be televised live by C-Span and by all three Akron network affiliates. In addition, communications will recommend one-on-one interviews for you that will take place on site after the meeting.

VI. TALKING POINTS AND QUESTIONS

To be provided by speech writing.

VII. PRE-TOWN MEETING ACTIVITIES

Prior to the town meeting, several race initiative events will take place to build momentum for this meeting. (see attached list of activities)

VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND GENERAL OUTREACH PARTICIPATION

Cabinet Affairs has been working aggressively to set up "One America: Local Town Meetings" all across the country which will bring people together to watch the meeting in Akron and hold conversations on the issues raised.

Through our Federal Agency Regional Administrators, there are 54 local town meetings scheduled in 16 states (see attached list). The Regional Administrators have reach out to congressmen, senators, and mayors to include them in their meetings. They have all released media advisories to generate press attention. Most of the local meetings will be held at high schools and universities. By Wednesday, we expect to have approximately 65 local town meetings scheduled across the country.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Office of Legislative Affairs have reached out to mayors and legislators to generate interest in hosting their own local town meeting. Where there is overlap with the Regional Administrators' local town meetings, we will invite them to co-host with the Administration.

In addition to our Regional Administrators, the Office Of Public Liaison has launched a national outreach plan urging our constituents to host multi-racial local town meetings. Several constituents have already responded and agreed to host a watch site.

IX. PROMISING PRACTICES DISPLAY ON SITE

We have selected ten "promising practices" from across the country to highlight at the Akron town meeting. A display area will be set-up on site for representatives from various organizations and businesses to hand out information and to discuss their promising practices. (see attached list).

ATTACHMENTS

- **Pre-Town meeting activities**
- **Background on Authors**
- **Letter and call to action sent out to over 25,000 young leaders**
- **Watch site locations**
- **Description of Promising Practices**
- **Articles regarding young people in general and the race initiative in particular**

PRE-TOWN MEETING RACE INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES

- On Friday, November 28, 1997, a letter from YOU was mailed to 25,000 young leaders asking them to join you in your efforts to examine the current state of race relations in America. This letter provides a call to action to young America and was targeted to high school senior class presidents, University and College class presidents, and leaders of national and local community organizations.
- On Saturday, November 29, 1997, in your radio address, you encouraged people to spend Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday volunteering their time helping community groups. You also announced that \$250,000 in grants would be given to community groups that organize volunteers.
- On Monday, December 1, 1997, Vice President Gore will host a briefing with youth and youth-oriented media (i.e. MTV, Rolling Stone, Vibe, Essence) where he will discuss the importance of having young America involved in this initiative. In addition, we will feature a local high school football captain who has organized other high school captains to become involved in the One America initiative.
- Also on December 1, Secretary Rodney Slater and Advisory Board member Robert Thomas will meet with fifty business leaders in Miami, FL to discuss workplace diversity and minority business development.
- On Tuesday, December 2, 1997, we will unveil a public service announcement (PSA) that was developed by the Ad Council in consultation with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the White House staff. The PSA will be targeted at young people (ages 17 to 22). The PSA features young people who talk about the values they have in common while asking viewers what they would do to help build One America. The PSA will also have a web-site listing.
- On December 9, 1997, Mrs. Clinton will go to Boston to do an event with "Team Harmony," one of the promising practices that we have identified. Team Harmony was established in December of 1994 when four professional sports team came together to take a stand against hatred and bigotry. This multimedia event is a unique combination of entertainment, education, interactive dialogue, and inspiration based on a philosophy of a "team" effort to overcome bigotry in our communities and driven by a belief in giving young people a chance to make a difference.
- On December 19, 1997, you will host a meeting with conservatives to discuss their views and to seek their input on how we can work together to achieve One America.

David K. Shipler

David K. Shipler wrote and recently published *A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America*, an impressive exploration of the “psychological landscape where blacks and whites meet.” Shipler is also the author of *Russia: Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams* and *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize. Shipler was a reporter for the *New York Times* for more than 20 years in New York, Washington, and abroad, and he has been a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a professor of journalism and public affairs at Princeton.

In writing *A Country of Strangers*, David Shipler spent more than five years roaming the country talking to ordinary people about how they encounter each other across racial lines, largely bypassing academics, extremists, and celebrities on the way. Shipler has created “an absorbing theater piece of characters,” as his narrative winds from the Air Force Academy to Lexington High in Massachusetts to Spelman College to an antebellum mansion in North Carolina. He talks to black and white families, multiracial children, teachers, law enforcement officers, policy analysts, and athletes. By recounting their stories, Shipler looks at how blacks and whites see each other, how they interpret each other’s behavior, and how certain damaging images and assumptions seep into the actions of even the most unbiased. One reviewer wrote, “Gracefully, Shipler connects the dots of history, environment, and emotion to produce a stunning portrait of a nation chewing its insides out.”

Shipler’s “tireless and nuanced” reporting shows how the small slights can take on enormous proportions. He describes his encounters with white parents who see nothing wrong in a Cub Scout leader calling a child “blackie” and blacks too uncaring to attend the funeral of Guatemalan neighbors killed by a black gunman. He describes the subtle stereotyping and discrimination involved when a white Air Force flight instructor takes over the controls more frequently with his black trainees, resulting in fewer black pilots.

By documenting the silences that prevail, the listening that doesn’t happen, and the conversations that don’t take place, Shipler demonstrates how connecting across racial lines is among the most difficult things on earth. As difficult as it is, Shipler uncovers several black and white people who struggle in their daily lives to do just that. He encourages all Americans to engage in a genuine attempt to understand, lest we “remain strangers to ourselves as well as to each other.” Shipler ends with a prayer that whites will become better listeners and that blacks will help them.

We expect that, among the authors, David Shipler will be most responsive to Abigail Thernstrom’s claim that racial disparities are exaggerated, and we expect that he will be able to build on the anecdotes and stories of the students and others present in our audience.

Beverly Tatum

Beverly Tatum, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology and education at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where she teaches psychology of racism courses. She also has a private practice in psychology with a special interest in the emerging field of racial-identity development. She has published numerous articles in journals and recently wrote a book entitled, Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations About Race. Given the youth focus of the town meeting and Tatum's own focus on youth, Tatum's input at the town hall will likely provide a scientific compliment to the students' personal stories.

Tatum's book is based on her research and the research of others and includes many anecdotes from her courses and workshops on racism. In the book, Tatum describes the stages of discovering our identity. She concludes that self-segregation results from minority students' struggle to establish an identity in a world that treats them differently simply because of their appearance. Tatum includes her own experience growing up in a white community and later at Wesleyan University, where she "happily sat at the Black table in the dining hall every day."

A recent reviewer found her work an "insightful exploration of the varieties of Americans' experience with race and racism in everyday life [that] would be an excellent starting point for the upcoming national conversations on race that President Clinton and his appointed commission will be conducting this fall. . . . Tatum illuminates 'why talking about racism is so hard' and what we can do to make it easier, leaving her readers more confident about facing the difficult terrain on the road to a genuinely color-blind society."

The following excerpts provide a sense of Tatum in her own words:

- Even though we live in a nation where issues of race are continually in the news, few of us have learned how to talk across racial lines.
- Our silence, aggravated by persistent social segregation, means that college is often the first opportunity many Americans have to live and work in a multiracial setting, and to engage in multiracial dialogue.
- I've seen how hard it can be and how frightened many people are to begin a conversation about race. But I've learned that dialogue about racism can be a powerful catalyst for change.
- For meaningful dialogue, fear must give way to risk and trust. Different life experiences will lead to differing, often conflicting, perceptions of reality. But when people make the commitment to remain engaged, shared understanding and a collective vision for the possibility of social change can be achieved.
- As we adults consider engaging each other in racial dialogue, let's not forget that our conversation should begin at home.

Abigail Thernstrom

Abigail Thernstrom is a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute in New York and she serves on the Board of some conservative organizations, including the Center for Equal Opportunity and the Institute for Justice. This year she and her husband, Harvard history professor Stephan Thernstrom, published America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible, a 704-page book filled with tables, charts, and graphs that attempt to demonstrate significant black progress since the days of enforced segregation. The book, which has received a lot of media attention since its publication this past August, is a polemic against affirmative action and other uses of racial categories to remedy exclusionary or past discriminatory practices.

America in Black and White appears to be modeled on Gunnar Myrdal's 1944 benchmark survey, An American Dilemma, in which Myrdal asserts that America was in danger of becoming "two societies: one black, one white, separate and unequal." The cornerstone premise for the Thernstroms, however, is that things are much better than "excessive black pessimism" would lead you to believe. They point to statistics indicating the growth of the black middle class, the increase in college-bound blacks, the narrowing gap in black and white income, and the increase in the percentage of blacks who live in the suburbs.

Significantly, the Thernstroms argue that most of the progress occurred *before* the civil rights movement and affirmative action, and therefore that affirmative action should be abolished. They argue that the law should have gone no further than the civil rights acts of 1964 and 1965 and the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. They concede, grudgingly, that affirmative action has "possibly" led to accelerated numbers of blacks in law, medicine, engineering, academia, and government. However, they emphasize that black progress has been neglected to feed "the mix of black anger and white shame and guilt that sustains the race-based social policies implemented since the late 1960s."

The book has been criticized for not attempting to explain the apparent disconnect between the rosy picture the Thernstroms portray and the consistent surveys indicating that blacks feel that racism remains a huge problem. The Thernstroms concede this point, stating that they were "sufficiently tired" of the voice of black discontent, which focuses on the "figment of the pigment," and so chose not to get to the bottom of it. Because the book was published a couple of months ago, there have been no comprehensive articles challenging the statistics and their usefulness in assessing the current state of racial disparities in America. However, it is clear that many statistics -- such as the fact that the black poverty level is nearly three times that of whites, or that 40% of whites say that they would immediately move if their neighborhood became one-third black -- go unexplained or unacknowledged in the Thernstroms' account.

Prior to this book, in 1987, Abigail Thernstrom wrote Whose Votes Count? Affirmative Action and Minority Voting Rights. In this book, she attacks the 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act and the creation of minority voting districts. She is also a proponent of "choice" in neighborhoods and schools, and has said that school busing used children as pawns in a game of "liberal social engineering." She has also published law review articles on this subject.

Despite her published views, Ms. Thornstrom has indicated that she is not a conservative and used to consider herself a liberal. In any case, she will certainly be the most conservative of the authors. We expect that she will make several references to the indicators of black progress included in her book, and will use these indicators to argue that there is no longer a need for affirmative action or other color-conscious policies.

- yam
- service

Advisory Board } NW. LG - in D.C.

67431
REDRAFT

The President's Initiative on Race - Overview
Town Hall December 3rd, Somewhere in the Heartland

The items on this cover sheet are applicable to both ideas for the town hall. This is the framework for each, and the idea specific formats can fit in as decisions are made.

Goal: To design a town hall that addresses the issue of race relations, the importance and the concerns of the American people, and develop actions that will help break down stereotypes and improve relations between all Americans of all ages.

Moderator for Town Hall:

We recommend that a moderator be chosen from within the community, such as:

- A local leader, elected official, or opinion leader.
- A local well known Professor or teacher who teaches on these issues or related subjects.
- A well known historian or respected national activist who works/studies in this area.

Audience: Under all possible ideas the audience will be very diverse, with representation from many races. At least 50% of the audience will be from people who participate in the service project or experiment. In addition we will include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • community leaders | • local opinion leaders |
| • mixed group of local folks | • participants of a local promising practice |
| • mix of local political/ dignitaries | • Local educators and other VIP's |
| • PIR Advisory Council and talkers | • Americorps representatives |
| • College Presidents, School Superintendants | • Teachers of all grades and institutions |
| • authors who have written on their life experience growing up as an American and of a minority race | |

Format of the Town Hall Program: 2 possible options follow this cover sheet.

Video Inserts: This is an optional tool that we could use to "set up" each of the segments of the town hall. Begin each segment with a short 1-2 minute video with clips of real Americans talking on this topic, their experience/story, and perspective on the issue of race relations and stereotypes.

For Television at end of town hall: At the end of the town hall we could flash a one frame message with 5 basic ideas for how each individual can help improve race relations in America (to reinforce the President's Call to Action.)

Parting gifts: We could give the in house audience something to walk away with. We need item that reinforces their experience and would remind them of their commitment to carry this message back to their community. A few simple thoughts:

- A gold lapel pin of an outreached hand inscribed with the *President's Initiative on Race*.
- A t-shirt that says "One America: Working together" w/ the *President's Initiative on Race*
- Notepads with a same or similar message, so when they write notes the message is always there
- Pencils or pens that have the *President's Initiative on Race* on them and the theme
- A memento that is a symbol of the location/or of the project with the *PIR* on it

The purpose of the item is to be something that helps to carry the message even if lost and and someone else finds it. (Of course, we would need a corporate sponsor to donate these.)

Draft - Idea #1 -- Youth

Goal: A town hall to address why this topic is important, beginning with children of ages 13 - 21. We could identify activities from promising practices that children and youth in the community have participated in and discuss their experiences and how we can learn from them. Or we can work with local school districts to ~~create~~ ^{host} an activity for the children to participate in and discuss their experience and what we can learn.

Possible names of the Town Hall: One America: One Future (or) One America: Learning Together

What is the Activity: We propose identifying several classrooms of kids who have participated in group activities that were designed to make them more aware of prejudice and race relations. These 3-4 schoolrooms could conduct the activity or be groups that have done these activities before and have been working on this issue. Types of activities could be:

- 1) asking the kids to sit with new people -of a different race - in class → *Need an ongoing program*
- 2) pair up for an in the classroom assignment with someone they do not normally talk to
- 3) play a group game at recess and pair up with someone of a different race
- 4) have 2 different schools conduct activities together one with a diversity population and one with a majority white population.
- 5) asking someone of a different race to join them for a social event
- 6) ask a person of a different race to have lunch or coffee or go for a walk or to see a movie

Format: The town hall is 1 ½ hours long. Again, to ensure message management and focus we recommend that the message of the town hall be shaped in 3 - 30 minute segments:

1. **Their Experience:** How did you feel before the activity? How did you think about people from different backgrounds before the activity? What was the activity like for you? Was it difficult, why?, was it fun - why? Are their people like Jimmy (a hispanic young man) in your neighborhood? Why do you think this was important? What do you think some of the issues are?

2. **Lessons Learned:** Did you feel that you and the new friends would stick together? Once you met them, did you feel more comfortable? Was it more natural to work with them and rely on them? Why was this important? Why do you think it was difficult? What did you learn from this experience? What are some of the stereotypes that existed before the activity and have any of those changed? What are some of the possible solutions?

3. **What's Next:** 2 things:

1) President issues a call to action for individuals: *and communities* introduce yourself and talk with someone of a different race and get to know them.

2) President issues a call to action to local superintendents of schools, school boards, and Department of Education: create at least 1 local dialogue for each class and produce a 1-2 page report of the results that could be sent to the PIR where they can be evaluated and used to help other communities.

Video Inserts: Show a few powerful clips from the activity of kids of all ages playing, lunching, socializing, working, and learning together.

Draft -- Idea #2 -- Youth and Service

Goal: To create a Town Hall for the President to conduct a dialogue with Americans on the issue of race. To provide a focus for the dialogue i.e. Youth ^{will} participate in a service event and be asked to participate in the town hall to examine stereotypes, difficulties and lessons learned while working with people of different races that they did not know.

Possible names of the Town Hall:

- * One America: One Future
- * One America: Growing Together
- * One America: Learning Together

What is the Service Project: a local community project would take place the weekend before the town hall. Local Americorps groups could work with a group of kids between the ages of 13-21 with other community service organizations to help organize this. Projects could be a playground build for kids, a park clean up, a community center build project, etc. The date falls on the weekend after Thanksgiving -- which is a nice theme of giving thanks to their local community by participating in a service project that gives back to the community.

Format of the Town Hall Program:

Our assumption is that the Town Hall program will be approximately 1 ½ hours. For message management and to ensure constructive outcomes, the town hall could be developed in 3 segments, in the case of a 1 ½ hour discussion, 3-sets of 30 minute increments focusing on:

1. **The American Identity:** What were you thinking this was going to be like before you came? What stereotypes existed in your thinking and how you think about others? How did you describe it to other people (family and friends)? What do you think some of the critical issues are?
2. **Lessons Learned:** What was difficult about this? What was it like to work along side others of different races? Were you fearful about what to expect, how did it challenge what you thought before you got there? How would you talk about this now with your friends and family? What did you learn? What are some of the possible solutions?
3. **Call to Action:** Carrying this message back to our local communities. The President could issue a call to action: asking each individual at the town hall and every person who watches to extend their hand to another person of a race different from their own. The President could suggest five simple (though not easy) things people can do. He could challenge local communities through their schools to continue the dialogue with local town halls and round table formats encouraging more interaction and communication.

**ONE AMERICA:
PRESIDENT CLINTON'S INITIATIVE ON RACE
THE AKRON TOWN MEETING**

"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." -- President Clinton, University of California, San Diego, 6/14/97.

In launching his Initiative on Race, President Clinton called for Americans to come together and to undertake a national dialogue about race and issues associated with race. On Wednesday, December 3, President Clinton's Akron Town Meeting will be the first of these dialogues on a national scale.

An important focus of the town meeting will be young people, our next generation of leaders and those who will inherit a nation in which no one racial or ethnic group will constitute a minority.

We have structured a conversation which we hope all Americans, and young people particularly, will find:

- inclusive, so people will see something of their own experience in the variety of people present and viewpoints shared;
- engaging, so people will tune in and stay tuned; and
- interesting so people will want to initiate similar conversations with their friends, family and colleagues.

Initial participants will be three young people, three nationally recognized authors and three local community leaders, who will be asked to share their thoughts and experiences. The conversation will then expand to include the on-stage audience of 75 local educators, community leaders, business executives, members of the faith community, elected officials and families.

The town meeting will start at 11:30 a.m. EST on Wednesday, December 3. It will be televised live, by C-SPAN, from the E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall on the campus of the University of Akron, Akron, OH. (Citizens of Akron are invited to view the meeting from the JAR Arena, which is also on the University of Akron campus. Information on how to get tickets for JAR Arena will be available next week.)

###