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To: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc: Christopher C. Jennings/OPD/EOP, Sarah A. Bianchi/OMB/EOP

Subject: Racial Disparities in Health Care

You asked me to e-mail information on projects I mentioned in passing:

1. HHS has begun "Horizons: From Strategy to Infrastructure" a collaboration among HCFA, Peer Review Organizations and Historically Black Colleges and Universities to improve the status of African-Americans and other underserved populations in eight southeastern states. A pilot project launched in June will work to improve influenza immunization rates for African-American Medicare beneficiaries.

2. The Medicare Mammography Campaign that was launched by the First Lady has been operating for two years to increase the number of women on Medicare who take advantage of the mammography benefit offered by Medicare. This year the campaign focuses on rates among minority women, which have been particularly low. I am meeting next Monday at 1:30 with Ta Zitans, who is heading this project for HCFA. Anyone want to join me?

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CLINTON ADMINISTRATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS HISPANIC AMERICANS

ECONOMY

12.3 Million New Jobs. For the first time ever, over 11 million jobs were created during a single Presidential term.

Declining unemployment. The unemployment rate for Hispanic Americans in May 1997 was 7.4%, down from 11.3% when President Clinton first took office.

Minimum wage increase. The President raised the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour --directly benefitting more than 1.6 million Hispanic American workers.

More small business assistance. Over 220,000 new Hispanic American-owned businesses were created in the first three years of the Clinton Administration. The Small Business Administration has approved more than 13,500 loans, totaling \$2.2 billion, for Hispanic American business owners, and has helped over 230,000 Hispanic Americans to receive management training and counseling from a national network of business education and assistance programs.

FIGHTING FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Diverse Administration. Appointed the most diverse Cabinet and Administration in history. Members of the Clinton Cabinet include three Hispanic Americans: Federico Pena, Secretary of Energy; Bill Richardson, Ambassador to the United Nations; and Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Senior level Administration appointments. Appointed more Hispanic Americans to senior level positions than any President in American history, including George Munoz, Assistant Secretary for Management, Treasury. Significantly, many of these appointments are outside what had been considered the "traditional" Hispanic areas of interest.

Reviewed affirmative action programs. Ordered a comprehensive review of the government's affirmative action programs which concluded that affirmative action remains an effective and important tool to expand education and economic opportunity to all Americans.

Opposed California Prop 209. Filed *amicus* briefs opposing California Proposition 209, which would prohibit state affirmative action programs.

Election fairness. Prevented election day discrimination against minority voters and voter intimidation and harassment by monitoring polling place activities in a record number of states and counties. Continued enforcement efforts to ensure that citizens who rely on Spanish have the same opportunities to participate in voting-related activities as English-speaking voters.

Expanded voting rights. The Administration argued in federal court to expand the Voting Rights Act and defended racially fair redistricting plans. The National Voter Registration Act or "Motor Voter" law has registered at least nine million new voters and made voting easier for more than 20 million Americans.

Opposed California Prop 187. Opposed California's Proposition 187, which would have made illegal immigrants ineligible for public school education at all levels and ineligible for public health care services, because of its detrimental impact on children and its threat to public health.

Home mortgage lending on the rise. Since 1993 home mortgage lending to Hispanic Americans increased nearly 48 percent.

Investigated discrimination. Authorized investigations into discrimination practices by lenders and property insurers to help end discrimination in the provision of home mortgages.

EDUCATION

Hispanic advisory commission. Established an advisory commission to oversee the improvement in education for Hispanics and to ensure that Hispanic-serving institutions will have more input regarding educational goals and issues of concern to Hispanic Americans. The Commission's report identified contributing factors impacting attainment of educational excellence, corrective policy actions, and plans for program development and funding. (Executive Order on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans)

Student Diversity Partnership Program. Partnered with Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the Center for the Advancement of Hispanics in Science and Engineering Education to implement the Student Diversity Partnership Program. This program will ensure an adequate supply of diverse and qualified scientists and engineers for the 21st century.

AmeriCorps college support. Enabled 70,000 volunteers to earn money for college by serving their communities and their country in the AmeriCorps program, with Hispanic Americans comprising 15% of all participants. (National Service Act)

Bilingual education. Increased funding for the Office of Bilingual Education & Minority Languages Affairs and opposed plans to abolish bilingual education.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Tax relief for working families. Provided tax relief for 15 million working families by increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit to allow more families to qualify for tax rebates. In 1995, the EITC lifted nearly 900,000 Hispanic Americans, including almost 450,000 Hispanic children, out of poverty.

Focused health efforts. Established the Office of the Minority Health Research and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. Helped communities develop culturally-competent systems of care for children with serious emotional disturbances through the Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Children and Families program. Negotiated agreements with hospitals and nursing homes to eliminate barriers to equal access for minorities based on language.

Increasing home ownership. Launched a program to increase the home ownership rate of Hispanic Americans in the U.S. through advertising, education and counseling programs and working with lending institutions to better serve the Hispanic community.

FIGHTING CRIME

White House Conference on Hate Crimes. President Clinton announced the first White House Conference on Hate Crimes, which will examine laws and remedies that can make a difference in preventing hate crimes, highlight solutions that are working in communities across the country, and continue the frank and open dialogue needed to build One America.

Action against hate crimes. Filed 38 hate crime cases in FY96, involving 65 defendants.

SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Environmental justice and redevelopment. Issued an Executive Order on Environmental Justice, ensuring that low income citizens and minorities do not suffer a disproportionate burden of industrial pollution. Identified pilot projects to be undertaken across the country to redevelop contaminated sites in low-income communities and turn them into useable space, creating jobs and enhancing community development.

IMMIGRATION

Naturalization. Made naturalization a top priority of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in order to continue fostering legal immigration while combating illegal immigration. Naturalized over one million individuals in 1996. The Administration continues to work to streamline and improve the naturalization process so that eligible individuals who have played by the rules can become full partners in America.

Responsible immigration reform. Worked to enact responsible immigration reform legislation by properly focusing on immigration enforcement and opposing severe reductions in legal immigration which were not consistent with pro-family, pro-worker and pro-naturalization principles.

Defended immigrant rights. The Administration defeated legislative efforts which would have significantly eroded health care for immigrants. The bipartisan agreement strengthened the sponsorship requirement while preserving the basic ability of families to reunify.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Democracy for Cuba. Increased efforts to promote a peaceful, democratic transition in Cuba by toughening sanctions after the brutal shoot down of U.S. civilian aircraft over international waters and signing the Helms-Burton Act to penalize those who traffic in confiscated properties in Cuba. Awarded a landmark \$500,000 grant to Freedom House to assist human rights activists in Cuba.

Support our closest neighbors. Took decisive action in assembling a financial support package for Mexico. The President's leadership prevented a prolonged financial crisis in Mexico and its spread to other Latin American countries.

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CLINTON ADMINISTRATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AFRICAN AMERICANS

ECONOMY

12.3 Million New Jobs. For the first time ever, over 11 million jobs were created during a single Presidential term.

Declining unemployment. The unemployment rate for adult African Americans was 8.4% in May --down from 12.7% when President Clinton first took office.

Minimum wage increase. The President raised the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour --directly benefitting 1.3 million African American workers.

Small business assistance. The Small Business Administration has approved more than \$1.1 billion in loans to African American business owners, and has helped over 470,000 African Americans receive management training and counseling from a national network of business education and assistance programs.

Home mortgage lending on the rise. Since 1993 home mortgage lending to African Americans increased by 70%.

FIGHTING FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Diverse Administration. Appointed the most diverse Cabinet and Administration in history. Members of the Clinton Cabinet include four African Americans: Rodney Slater, Secretary of Department of Transportation; Jesse Brown, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Alexis Herman, Secretary of Labor; and Franklin Raines, Director of Office of Management and Budget. Appointed more African Americans to serve in the White House (45) than any other Administration.

Judicial Appointments. President Clinton has nominated 42 African Americans to the federal bench --more than any other President --and over 18% of total federal bench nominations. Overall, 65% of President Clinton's judicial appointees have been rated "well qualified" by the American Bar Association which is the highest percentage achieved by any Administration since the ABA began rating judicial candidates during the Eisenhower Administration.

Tuskegee apology. President Clinton apologized to the remaining victims of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment and their families, and directed Health and Human Services Secretary, Donna Shalala, to issue a report about how best to involve communities, especially minority communities, in research and health care. HHS will award a planning grant to Tuskegee University to help it establish a center for bioethics in research and health care.

Reviewed Affirmative Action programs. Ordered a comprehensive review of the government's affirmative action programs which concluded that affirmative action is still an effective and important tool to expand educational and economic opportunity to all Americans.

Opposed California Prop 209. Filed *amicus* briefs opposing California Proposition 209, which would prohibit state affirmative action programs.

Election fairness. Defended racially fair redistricting plans against claims that they were unconstitutional; prevented election day discrimination against minority voters and voter intimidation and harassment by monitoring polling place activities in a record number of states and counties.

Eliminated discriminatory "redlining" practices. Negotiated agreements with health care agencies to eliminate discriminatory "redlining" practices denying home health care services based on residential location.

Defended fairness. Filed more cases in the last four years to enforce fair housing laws than any other Administration (more than 500 cases). Desegregated a Vidor, Texas public housing complex; ordered a Mississippi bank to implement remedial lending plans for minority customers once denied loans by the bank.

EDUCATION

African-American advisory board. Established the President's Board of Advisors for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to strengthen the capacity of historically black colleges and universities to provide quality education. Advised on ways to increase the private sector's role in these institutions.

Increased funding and grants for HBCUs. Increased funding for Historically Black Colleges by nearly \$250 million since FY92, an almost 25% increase. Increased Fulbright grant awards to HBCUs in FY96 by almost 50% over the amount reported in FY95.

Enrollment. A record percentage of African Americans were enrolled in post-secondary education in 1994 --35.6% of African American graduates.

AmeriCorps college support. Enabled 70,000 volunteers to earn money for college by serving their communities and their country in the AmeriCorps program, with African Americans comprising one-third of all participants. (National Service Act)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Increased Earned Income Tax Credit. Provided tax relief for 15 million working families by increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit to allow more families to qualify for tax rebates. In 1995, the EITC lifted over 810,000 African Americans, including almost 450,000 African American children, out of poverty.

Focused health efforts. Established the Office of the Minority Health Research and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. Helped communities develop culturally-competent systems for care for children with serious emotional disturbances through the Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Children and Families program.

FIGHTING CRIME

White House Conference on Hate Crimes. President Clinton announced the first White House Conference on Hate Crimes, which will examine laws and remedies that can make a difference in preventing hate crimes, highlight solutions that are working in communities across the country, and continue the frank and open dialogue needed to build One America.

Action against church burnings. Focused the nation's attention and resources to help stop the rash of church burnings across the country, prosecuted those responsible, and sped the rebuilding process.

Action against hate crimes. Filed 38 hate crime cases in FY96, involving 65 defendants.

SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Environmental justice and redevelopment. Issued an Executive Order on Environmental Justice to ensure that low income citizens and minorities do not suffer a disproportionate burden of industrial pollution. Identified pilot projects to be undertaken across the country to redevelop contaminated sites in low-income communities, turn them into useable space, create jobs and enhance community development.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Democracy for Haiti. Restored democracy to Haiti and enabled the first transfer of power from one democratically elected president to another in Haitian history.

Democracy for South Africa. Assisted South Africa's transition to democracy by providing support for elections and development.

Focus on Africa. Hosted the first White House Conference on Africa in July 1994.

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CLINTON ADMINISTRATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS ASIAN AND PACIFIC AMERICANS

ECONOMY

12.3 Million New Jobs. For the first time ever, over 11 million jobs were created during a single Presidential term.

More small business assistance. The Small Business Administration has approved more than 15,000 loans, totaling \$4.7 billion, for Asian and Pacific American business owners, and has helped over 126,000 Asian and Pacific Americans to receive management training and counseling from a national network of business education and assistance programs.

Opening doors to trade. Secured commitments from Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders to eliminate barriers to open trade in the Asian Pacific region in 2020.

Increasing trade and jobs. Helped increase exports to Asia by more than 44% since taking office. Our exports to Asia account for over 2 million jobs in the United States.

EDUCATION

Foreign language. Restructured Foreign Language Assistance Programs to assist local schools in establishing programs in Chinese, Japanese and Korean. Strongly opposed legislation to make English the official language of the United States which would have jeopardized services and programs for non-English speakers and jeopardized assistance to the tens of thousands of new immigrants and others seeking to learn adult English.

Addressing minority needs. Hosted two Asian Pacific American Education Forums to address the needs of Asian Pacific American students and their teachers.

Opposed Gallegly Amendment. The Administration opposed the Gallegly Amendment which would have ended the guarantee of public education for all children. It would have shifted immigration enforcement from the borders and work sites to classrooms and made children susceptible to gangs and violence.

PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Diverse Administration. Appointed the most diverse Cabinet and Administration in history. The Clinton Administration has more than twice as many Asian and Pacific American appointees as the previous Administration.

Judicial appointments. Nominated more Asian and Pacific Americans to the federal bench than any other Administration.

Opposed California Prop 209. Filed *amicus* briefs opposing California Proposition 209 which would prohibit state affirmative action programs.

Election fairness. Prevented election day discrimination against minority voters and voter intimidation and harassment by monitoring polling place activities in a record number of states and counties. Continued enforcement efforts to ensure that citizens who rely on Asian languages have the same opportunities to participate in voting-related activities as English-speaking voters.

Focused health efforts. Established the Office of the Minority Health Research and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. Helped communities develop culturally-competent systems of care for children with serious emotional disturbances through the Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Children and Families program. Negotiated agreements with hospitals and nursing homes to eliminate barriers to equal access for minorities based on language.

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IMMIGRATION

Naturalization. Made naturalization a top priority of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in order to continue fostering legal immigration while combating illegal immigration. Naturalized over one million individuals in 1996. The Administration continues to work to streamline and improve the naturalization process so that eligible individuals who have played by the rules can become full partners in America.

Responsible immigration reform. Worked to enact responsible immigration reform legislation by properly focusing on immigration enforcement and opposing severe reductions in legal immigration which were not consistent with pro-family, pro-worker and pro-naturalization principles.

Defended immigrant rights. The Administration defeated legislative efforts which would have significantly eroded health care for immigrants. The bipartisan agreement strengthened the sponsorship requirement while preserving the basic ability of families to reunify.

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RACE INITIATIVE Qs & As

THE INITIATIVE

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

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

For instance, there are four school systems in the country right now, including one across the river (in Virginia) where the school children represent over 150 nations and speak over 100 different languages all in a single district. We should embrace such diversity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cabinet: 15% African American [Alexis Herman (Labor), Rodney Slater (Transportation), Jesse Brown (Veterans Affairs) and Frank Raines (OMB)]; 12% Hispanic [Bill Richardson (UN), Aida Alvarez (SBA), Federico Pena (Energy)].

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT

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

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

- The President's experiences with discrimination are rooted in the South's legacy of slavery.

- As a candidate, the President has consistently said one of his main goals in running for the office was to keep the American Dream alive for everyone who wanted to work for it and to keep us “one America,” a nation coming together instead of coming apart.
- As President, he has been a constant voice in pressing racial healing and unity. For instance: speeches in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1993 and Austin, Texas, in 1995; inaugural and State of the Union addresses this year; and remarks at the Jackie Robinson anniversary commemoration.

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

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

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

EXPECTATIONS

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

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

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

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

A: Different times call for different solutions. The choice is not between massive programs and nothing. Much can be done within the confines of tighter federal spending that we face today and going forward. Funds can be reallocated, as they were, in the balanced

budget agreement, to provide health coverage to five million uninsured children. And we can seek creative ways to generate new funds, not just from federal and state spending.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LOGISTICS

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

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

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

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

ADVISORY BOARD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: How much is this initiative going to cost?

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

Q: What is the \$2.9 million for?

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

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

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