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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 3, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: STEPHEN M. STUDDERT
FROM: C. GREGG PETERSMEYER
SUBJECT: POINTS OF LIGHT INITIATIVE - PLAN OF ACTION

I. ACTION-FORCING EVENT

As you, Governor Sununu and I discussed at our meeting yesterday, it is clear that the "points of light" theme has captured the imagination of the American people. (See the articles and editorials attached hereto as Exhibit "A".) We must build on this momentum and match soaring expectations with a substantive and bold plan of action for the remainder of your Presidency.

II. ANALYSIS

The ultimate objective of your initiative is that every single individual and institution in America play a direct and consequential role in community problem solving. Unprecedented Presidential leadership on this issue is essential if the country is to respond to the degree and on the scale that we envisage. For community service on an historic scale is the answer to the agonizing problems that have for so long defied government solutions (e.g. drugs, illiteracy, teen-pregnancy, drop-outs and homelessness.)

Your commitment to use your time in two principal ways would immeasurably increase the likelihood of the initiative's becoming the greatest peacetime service movement in American history. First, in a relentless and systematic fashion, the issue of community service must be placed at the center of the nation's domestic agenda and remain there. The message must be communicated again and again in forums and through distribution channels reaching the maximum potential audience that community service has become an American policy for the 21st century.

3. We recommend that you attend at least one event focusing on the issue of community service each month, preferably a site visit outside of Washington, D. C. while out of town on other business.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

4. We recommend that you appear regularly on televised public service announcements to promote community service.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

5. We recommend that you approve the White House press office's announcing a "Point of Light" each day, namely an individual, institution or program exemplifying the spirit of community service.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

6. We recommend that you regularly and conspicuously recognize outstanding community service leaders and programs. (See memorandum attached hereto as Exhibit "B".)

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

7. We recommend that you approve our proposed list of members for the Kean Advisory Committee on the Points of Light Initiative Foundation and our proposed timetable for the submission to you of its report. (See memorandum attached hereto as Exhibit "C".)

_____ Approve _____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended _____ No Action

8. We recommend that the Office of National Service participate to a significant degree in the development of those policies whose success is largely dependent upon local community action. (e.g. Education Policy Advisory Committee, the Education Summit in September and any comparable drug abuse forum.)

_____ Approve _____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended _____ No Action

B. Marshaling Resources by Sector

1. We recommend that you approve the sending under your signature of letters to key leaders of each of the major sectors - business, the professions, labor, education, religion, not-for-profits, government and civic associations - asking them to engage themselves and their institutions in community service, suggesting how they might best do so and enclosing a strategic plan which each of them will be urged to implement. (See materials attached hereto as Exhibit "D".)

_____ Approve _____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended _____ No Action

2. We recommend that an aggregate of 3 hours in each month's schedule be reserved for Presidential leadership on the issue of community service. That time would be spent in meetings with key sector leaders to secure their commitment to devoting their institutional resources to community service, awards presentations and recognition, drop-bys, interviews, phone calls and photo-ops, etc.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

3. We recommend that, as the Chief of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, you sign an Executive Order or Presidential Memorandum asking the Federal Executive Branch to engage in community service and that you encourage the bipartisan Congressional leadership and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (as head of the federal judiciary) to follow this example in their own respective institutions. As you said in your Inaugural Address, "... I'll ask every member of my government to become involved." (See memorandum attached hereto as Exhibit "E" and a representative Department strategic plan from Admiral Watkins attached hereto as Exhibit "F".)

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

4. We recommend that a White House symposium(s) or forum(s) be convened (e.g., the recent Presidential symposium on Eastern European issues) bringing together leaders from each of the major sectors to suggest how partnerships can be formed among different institutions that address issues that cut across subject areas.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

_____ Approve as Amended

_____ No Action

C. Office of National Service Role

1. Placing Community Service at the Center of America's Domestic Agenda

- The Office of National Service will provide talking points and speech materials to leaders in the public and private sector.
- The Office of National Service will identify sites for visits to promote community service for leaders in the public and private sector.
- The Office of National Service will propose names of those worthy of recognition for outstanding community service.
- The Office of National Service will propose reforms to complement and strengthen this movement.
- The Office of National Service will provide a forum to address policy issues affecting the disintegration of communities.

2. Marshaling Resources by Sector

- The Office of National Service will identify key sector leaders, determine their unique institutional resources and ask in the name of the President that they devote those resources to this movement.
- The Office of National Service will develop and refine criteria by which to evaluate exemplary community service initiatives.

D. Sector Goals

Media

- Newspapers and magazines should devote at least one full page each issue to the subject of community service.
- Television stations, cable systems and motion picture studios should devote a conspicuous portion of their programming and productions to community service, weaving community service into story lines, news programs and movie plots.

Business/Professions

- Each entity should use its particular expertise to promote and encourage community service. For example:
 - Real estate developers should form consortiums with other developers, architects, commercial banks and union labor to build decent, affordable housing for the homeless;
 - Credit card issuers, banks, telephone and utility companies should include in billing and statement envelopes printed information about how and where people and the institutions of which they are a part can serve others;
 - Restaurants, grocery and convenience stores and farms should make surplus food available to the hungry.

Sports and Entertainment

- Famous athletes and entertainers should use their celebrity to promote and encourage community service.

Education

- Schools, colleges and universities should use their unique access to young people to bring community service initiatives into the schools and to persuade students to engage in community service outside the classroom.

Places of Worship

- Religious institutions should engage their congregations in community service and inspire members to make community service a central part of their life.

Government

- Each branch and level of government should demonstrate that government is as committed to community service as it expects the rest of the country to be.

Not-for-Profit Organizations

- Not-for-profit service organizations should absorb large numbers of new volunteers and share their unique expertise in devising and implementing community service programs with those new to the business of community service.

Young Americans

- Through the YES to America initiative, young Americans should devote their special idealism, energy and enthusiasm to solving critical social problems through community service.

Exhibit A

CONSPICUOUS RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Perhaps the most effective way of encouraging more American individuals and institutions to engage in community service is presenting conspicuously and regularly awards and other forms of recognition to outstanding exemplars. Set forth below are some proposals as to how such exemplars should best be recognized:

1. Beginning September 25, 1989, at each morning's White House press briefing (six days a week) an outstanding individual or institution should be announced as the President's "Point of Light" of the day. The thousandth "Point of Light" would be announced on the last day of your first term. The Office of National Service will be responsible for selecting and screening the recipients. While The President's Volunteer Action Awards and the Medal of Freedom and other White House awards are connected to the institution of the Presidency, this award would be particularly associated with you and your Administration, though, of course, we would hope that it would take on an institutional life of its own over time.

Every quarter we propose that you personally recognize the most outstanding "Point of Light" from the preceding period in an high-profile manner. Perhaps recipients could be invited to spend a night at The White House or an afternoon at Camp David or Walker's Point, travel on Air Force One or Marine One, sit with the First Lady at a State of the Union Address or participate with you in a public event, such as throwing out the first ball of the baseball season. Alternatively, the recipient could dine or lunch with you and the First Lady, attend a performance in your box at the Kennedy Center or view a movie in the White House screening room.

2. Each Cabinet department and agency should be asked each month to identify within its workforce its most outstanding volunteer and present her or him with the department or agency "point of light" award. And, as with the Presidency, each department and agency head would be encouraged periodically to recognize the most extraordinary "points of light" in extraordinary ways, i.e., lunch with the Secretary as per Admiral Watkins at the Energy Department.

3. Each institution in society, from large corporations like General Motors to the Main Street Bowling Club in Seguin, Texas, should identify within its ranks its most outstanding volunteer and recognize him or her periodically with its own "points of light" award. As above, the most extraordinary exemplars should periodically be recognized in extraordinary and unprecedented ways.

Exhibit B

August 11, 1989

Dear

Although America is at peace today and more Americans are enjoying a greater degree of prosperity than ever before in our history, there is still work to do. Too many of our citizens endure a waking nightmare of want and isolation. What these millions of Americans need most is not another government program, but a one-to-one relationship with someone who cares.

At a recent meeting in New York of leaders from business, labor, education, religion, civic groups and service organizations, I spoke of what I mean by "a thousand points of light" -- that vast galaxy of people and institutions working together to solve problems in their own backyards. I asked every American and every American institution, large and small, to become engaged in this effort.

I call upon you to lead with me a new movement to bring national service to every corner of the nation. You have at your command your own galaxy of resources. I ask you to lead everyone in your organization to commit to a one-to-one relationship with someone in need. What matters to me is not so much how you serve others, but that service becomes central to the life and work of your organization. From now on in America, any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

POINTS OF LIGHT INITIATIVE:
COMMUNITY SERVICE AS NATIONAL POLICY

"From now on in America, any definition of a successful life must include serving others."

President George Bush
June 22, 1989

CHALLENGE

Though America is at peace and more Americans are enjoying a greater degree of prosperity than ever before in our history, **we still have work to do.** Illiterates, drop-outs, drug abusers, unwed pregnant teens, delinquent or suicidal young people, AIDS victims, homeless, hungry, unemployed and lonely, millions of Americans are enduring a waking nightmare of want and isolation. Each one of them is free falling through society, as their communities, small as families and large as neighborhoods, disintegrate all around them. We must take action, not only because it is morally right, but because America's continued economic, political and military strength and global competitiveness demand it. While government's role is critical, government alone can never meet this challenge. For what millions of Americans need most is not another government program, but a set of meaningful relationships that results in the conviction that their future is not limited by their present circumstances.

MISSION

The nation's mission must be to solve our most critical social problems. To accomplish this mission, each individual and institution must begin to play a direct and consequential role in community problem solving. Resources within communities must be pooled to attack comprehensively the multiple problems of individuals in need. To be a "point of light" is to serve others with whatever means and skills one has available. The President believes in the innate desire of every single American and American institution to serve others and in their matchless ability to devise creative solutions to daunting problems. This community-based effort will be aided by the formation of a foundation to institutionalize community service as national

policy. The foundation will be known as **The Points of Light Initiative** and the President will serve as Honorary Chairman. As we enter the new century, the growth and magnification of "points of light" across the nation must be America's mission.

STRATEGY (OVERVIEW)

I. CLAIM SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS AS YOUR OWN

To call every American and every American institution to engage in solving our most critical social problems in whatever way they can and with whatever means and skills are available to them.

II. IDENTIFY, ENLARGE AND REPLICATE WHAT IS WORKING

To identify successful and promising community service programs and initiatives, bring news of their existence to other communities and replicate them across the nation.

III. DISCOVER AND ENCOURAGE NEW LEADERS

To discover and encourage individuals and institutions who are "points of light" and to attract to the meaningful and adventurous field of community service those with leadership potential.

STRATEGY

I. CLAIM SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS AS YOUR OWN

"Our challenge, then, is to [engage] each citizen, school and business, church and synagogue, service organization and civic group. For this is what I mean when I talk of a 'thousand points of light' -- that vast galaxy of people and institutions working together to solve problems in their own back yard."

President George Bush
June 22, 1989

Objective: A Nation Transformed by Service

A. That every single institution in America develop its own "point of light" community service initiative(s) and that every single member of an institution participate in at least one initiative somewhere. By "institution" we mean

every corporation, firm, school, place of worship, union, club, group or association, as large as General Motors and as small as a bowling team. Larger institutions are urged to create service opportunities in each chapter, group, division, department or other unit, in order to facilitate participation by everyone.

Community service initiatives should ideally be:

- o Targeted at those problems that seem most difficult;
- o Focused on systemic reform;
- o Structured as a partnership among several institutions with complementary resources so as to respond simultaneously to the multiple problems affecting an individual in need.

Examples of "points of light" initiatives or programs that may be designed to meet these criteria include:

- o A program like the partnership between Days Inn of America, Inc. and a community service center in Atlanta that provides child care for young mothers, mentoring, training, jobs, housing and meals to the needy.
- o A program like that of Brother Bruce Earl in Detroit who has mobilized his parishioners to march on community crack houses every Sunday and, through a mortgage partnership between the local bank and the church, buys vacant crack houses and makes these properties available to parishioners.

B. To enlist the distinctive expertise of institutions and the unique professional skills of individuals in the fight against the nation's social problems. This initiative will seek out the "gift" that each individual and institution has and will encourage the giving of that "gift." For example:

- o Every television and radio station, newspaper, magazine, cable system and other media institution is encouraged to awaken the public to the gravity of community problems and their individual ability and that of their institutions to solve problems, by relentlessly promoting community service as a national ethic, spotlighting successful service initiatives, profiling outstanding community leaders and institutions and informing the public of how to get involved in community service;

- o **Every credit card issuer, bank, telephone and utility company** is encouraged to include in billing and statement envelopes printed information about how and where individuals and institutions can serve others;
- o **Every place of worship** is encouraged to make community service central to the life of their congregations.
- o **Every real estate developer** is encouraged to form a consortium with other developers, architects and commercial banks to build decent, affordable housing;
- o **Every restaurant, grocery and convenience store and farm** is encouraged to make surplus food available to the hungry each day.

C. **To create an institutional ethic throughout the nation that values community service highly and instills in each individual and institution the conviction that any definition of a successful life must include serving others.** To accomplish this attitudinal change and institutional restructuring:

- o **Every institution** is asked to identify and prominently honor as heroes individual members most deserving of recognition for their work in the field of community service;
- o **Every employer** is encouraged to include community service among the factors considered in making hiring, compensation and promotion decisions;
- o **Every state and local education board** is urged to uphold the value of community service in primary and secondary schools;
- o **Every college and university** is urged not only to uphold the value of community service, but also to weigh an applicant's community service record in admissions decisions;
- o **Every not-for-profit service organization** is asked to build the capacity to absorb increasing numbers of volunteers in meaningful roles, to share their expertise and insights with those new to the business of community service and to work with each other in a coordinated and cooperative manner to address more effectively the multiplicity of problems affecting communities.

- o Every young American, age 5 - 25, is challenged to lead this effort and make community service part of their daily pattern of living. Through an initiative entitled "Youth Engaged in Service (YES) to America," young people are called to engage in community service and to persuade adults and institutions to contribute to youth leadership by devising community service programs and initiatives that address the particular needs of young people and by involving young people in community service programs that help others.

Like the overall "Points of Light" initiative, YES to America is not a federal government program, but a nationwide service movement led by young Americans and others who are interested in young Americans. As the President said in an address on June 21, 1989,

"Regardless of the life that you are living, there is something special about each and every one of you ... your gifts are all different. But you each have a gift that America needs and I'm asking you to give that gift now."

II. IDENTIFY, ENLARGE AND REPLICATE WHAT IS WORKING

"There is no problem in America that is not being solved somewhere."

President George Bush
June 22, 1989

A. Matching Solutions with Problems

The President believes that virtually every problem in America is being solved somewhere. However, successful initiatives are too often isolated and unknown to others. Successful initiatives must be replicated again and again across the nation by individuals and institutions until the best ideas are made known to every community and claimed by local citizens willing and able to translate ideas into action. On a scale never before tried and with an approach never before attempted, tested or promising new ideas for solving community problems and those who have put such ideas into action will go to new communities in search of potential new leaders with initiative, the will to succeed and access to resources.

"Points of Light" Action Groups, as small as a band of committed citizens, and as large as a partnership among neighborhood leaders, corporate chief executives, local management, business associations, community activists, not-for-profit groups, educational institutions, media organizations, civic associations, minority groups,

religious denominations and local political leaders, will identify community problems, marshal community resources and apply tested or promising solutions.

Through a foundation initiative to be called the "ServNet Project," institutions like corporations, professional firms, unions, schools, religious groups, civic groups and not-for-profit service organizations will be asked to donate the services of some of their most talented and promising people for a period of time.

These extraordinary individuals will form and lead peer-to-peer pressure groups, e.g., union members going to fellow union members, CEO's to fellow CEO's, neighborhood leaders to neighborhood leaders, lawyers to fellow lawyers, teachers to fellow teachers, Boy Scout leaders to fellow Boy Scout leaders, bringing examples of successful initiatives within their particular area of expertise to others in the same field and providing training, technical assistance and other support to enable institutions without such initiatives to devise them.

B. Matching Servers with Needs

One of the foundation's objectives is to help to improve existing methods of matching those who wish to serve with purposeful service opportunities.

Over time, through an initiative called the "ServLink Project" the foundation will stimulate the development through private sector resources of "technology links" between those who wish to serve and those who need service (e.g., telephone hotlines, interactive computers, etc.).

Volunteer centers should be easily accessible to all Americans in their neighborhoods. Ultimately, such contact points should be in places of worship, union halls, libraries, fire stations, post offices, business buildings, service group headquarters and neighborhood homes.

III. DISCOVER AND ENCOURAGE NEW LEADERS

"You can find what you are looking for in helping others. When it comes right down to it... what all of us want out of life are two things: meaning and adventure... If you walk this path with me, I can promise you a life full of meaning and adventure."

President George Bush
June 21, 1989

A. Identify Strong and Creative Leaders

Those who excel in other walks of life or those who have great but untapped potential will be drawn to service by the recognition that **no other endeavor in America today brings to one's life more meaning and adventure. America's community service movement must have the strongest, most creative leadership nationally and locally.**

The foundation will call upon every institution in America to **identify the most promising leaders** who are not now engaged in community service and **encourage them to devote their talent and energy**, at least on a part-time basis, to the challenging and rewarding field of **community service.**

Special attention will be given to **identifying new leaders among young people and older Americans** and developing their community service leadership potential. The energy and idealism of youth and the experience of age can combine to contribute much to the community service movement.

B. Recognition and Awards

The discovery and encouragement of new leaders is the **responsibility of every institution.** Through the foundation, the President will **recognize and present awards and other forms of commendation** to talented community leaders and successful initiatives that are solving the nation's most critical social problems.

Every single institution in America will be encouraged to follow the President's example by regularly and prominently recognizing and honoring its own "Points of Light."

IV. CONCLUSION

America's most critical social problems were long in coming and cannot be solved overnight. But though our problems are great, our resources are far greater and far greater than we have ever been led to believe. While there is a critical role for money and programs, the poet Emerson was right when he said, "The greatest gift is a portion of thyself".

Never before have the gifts of every individual and institution in America, the galaxy of resources controlled by businesses, firms, unions, places of worship, clubs, groups and associations, been joined with those of government and the not-for-profit sector to attack our problems systemically. Brightened by millions of points of light across the nation, this initiative can become the most inclusive movement of our time, dramatically reversing negative trends on many fronts and ensuring the fulfillment of America's promise.

Exhibit C

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM ON COMMUNITY SERVICE
AMONG EXECUTIVE BRANCH EMPLOYEES

As you will recall, in our June 9 decision memorandum to you we recommended that "... you sign an executive order calling upon the heads of all federal departments and agencies themselves to engage in community service to the extent practicable, devise programs and identify opportunities to engage all of their employees in community service and recognize and award employees and others outside the department or agency who do so." You elected the "No Action" option, with the interlineations, "Let's Discuss" and "Cabinet members are already engaged in community service". The purpose of this memorandum is to set forth in greater detail our reasons for believing that, if not an Executive Order, then at least a Presidential Memorandum of the type described above is appropriate and necessary and to address your concerns about such a document.

Since your announcement of the "Points of Light Initiative" last June in New York, I and other members of my staff have conducted a number of briefings to explain your proposal at greater length. Almost invariably, at least one questioner suggests that it is disingenuous of us to call upon the rest of the nation to engage in community service without specifically enlisting the participation of the Executive Branch and the rest of the Federal Government.

It is clear that you anticipated this potential criticism when you said in your Inaugural Address: "We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I'll ask every member of my government to become involved."

A. High-Ranking Federal Executive Branch Officials

Lest it seem that the proposed Presidential Memorandum asks too much of high-ranking Executive Branch officials, we have received voluminous materials from the Secretary of Energy documenting in detail the community service program that he has initiated. This initiative has improved morale at that department and created an

esprit de corps among its employees. Admiral Watkins has dramatically demonstrated that making community service of central importance to the life and work of Federal departments is feasible and productive. And, having met with Secretary Sullivan (at his instance) and top deputies to Secretary Lujan and learned of the interest of Secretary Brady, Secretary Mosbacher, Administrator Reilly and Director Gelb among others, it appears that other department heads are anxious to follow Admiral Watkins' example.

B. Lower-Ranking Federal Executive Branch Officials and Employees

To be sure, Cabinet officers and their top deputies are sacrificing a great deal to serve in government. As public servants, they are already performing a great service to the nation. But, Cabinet officers and other top officials, of course, constitute but an infinitesimal percentage of total Executive Branch employees. Literally tens of thousands of people across the country, from receptionists here in Washington to postal carriers in Reno, work for or under the aegis of the Federal Executive Branch. And while doubtless some of these men and women are already contributing their time, talent and money to community service, there is little reason to believe that federal government workers constitute a greater percentage of volunteers than others.

Your mission for the "Points of Light Initiative" is to create a nationwide community service movement of historic dimensions. "At the end of the day", the only way to overcome our most dire social problems is to change attitudes and behavior in America fundamentally. In the America we seek, every individual and institution will play a direct role in community problem solving.

In our view, not to signal that community service is a top priority within the Executive Branch itself with respect to which the Presidency is at least titularly in control would be to suggest that the rest of the nation should not take community service seriously either. To change the attitude and behavior of the rest of America, we must begin, we believe, in "our own backyard".

The Presidential Memorandum could, of course, be drafted in a non-onerous, hortatory manner. For example, the Memorandum could:

- call upon the heads of Executive departments to designate an aide who would be responsible for devising a service program or programs in which all employees could be involved; and

- identify each month the employee or employees most deserving of recognition for outstanding work in the field of community service and present a department or agency "Point of Light" award of recognition.

We suggest coupling a Presidential Memorandum with a call to the bipartisan Congressional leadership, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and state and local chief executives to take similar action. Such a memorandum, while not unduly burdensome or disruptive, would send a strong message to the country that the Bush Administration practices what it preaches. Second, such a memorandum could have the additional advantage of improving the image of the Federal Government with the American people. Finally, the model of the Combined Federal Campaign suggests that esprit de corps is built among federal employees when they work together in pursuit of a worthy goal.