The original documents are located in Box 31, “5/5/76 - Remarks at Ethnicity and Neighborhood Revitalization Conference” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS AT ETHNICITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION CONFERENCE

THE ROSE GARDEN, WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - ETHNIC LEADERS

MAYOR CIANCI
MAYOR PERK
MONSIGNOR BARONI
MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN CALLED TO GIVE US NEW INSIGHTS INTO SOME VERY OLD QUESTIONS: HOW TO MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN THE TIES OF COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WITHIN OUR SOCIETY.

AMERICA HAS ALWAYS DRAWN MUCH OF ITS STRENGTH FROM THE BONDS OF FAMILY, COMMUNITY, CHURCH, AND VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS.
Yet, as the face of America has been changed over the years, there is a growing realization that some of our oldest traditions and institutions are now in jeopardy. A sense of community has been eroded in some of our largest cities.

A sense of neighborhood, a sense of belonging -- of cultural identification -- are threatened.
I can appreciate your concern for the future of institutions which you worked so hard to establish -- the ethnic church, the school, the credit union, the fraternal lodge.

Increasingly centralized government in Washington, which has grown more and more powerful and impersonal, is a big part of the problem.
IT IS TIME WE BEGAN DE-EMPHASIZING THE BUREAUCRACIES IN WASHINGTON AND RE-EMPHASIZING COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUR AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE.

ONE WAY TO DO THIS IS BY EXTENDING THE GENERAL REVENUE SHARING PROGRAM, WHICH OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS HAS TURNED THE FLOW OF POWER AWAY FROM WASHINGTON AND TOWARD YOUR OWN CITIES AND STATES.
ANOTHER WAY IS THROUGH THE VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT
OF THE "ANTI REDLINING" BILL WHICH DISCOURAGES CREDIT
DISCRIMINATION BASED ON NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION IN MORTGAGE
AND HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS. I SIGNED THE LAW PROHIBITING
THAT DISCRIMINATION, AND I INTEND TO SEE IT STOPPED.

BY REPLACING THE URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAM AND MANY
SIMILAR PROGRAMS, WITH A SINGLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT,
WE HAVE GIVEN LOCAL RESIDENTS A MUCH GREATER VOICE IN
REBUILDING THEIR COMMUNITIES. RED TAPE HAS BEEN CUT
ENORMOUSLY.
AT MY DIRECTION, FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN REDUCED FROM 2,600 PAGES TO JUST 25 PAGES. APPLICATION FORMS HAVE BEEN REDUCED FROM 1,400 PAGES TO ONLY 50 PAGES.

THE WHOLE PROCESS BETWEEN APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FOR THESE PROJECTS HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM AN AVERAGE OF TWO YEARS TO LESS THAN TWO MONTHS.
WE WANT TO DO MORE, AND TO DO THAT, WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS AND ENLIST YOUR SUPPORT AND COOPERATION.

I HAVE ASKED BILL BAROODY TO GIVE ME A FULL REPORT ON YOUR ACTIVITIES HERE TODAY, AND I HOPE EACH OF YOU WILL LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE.
AS WE ENTER OUR THIRD CENTURY, WE CAN HAVE A REBIRTH OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IN AMERICA AND PROTECT THE DIVERSE HERITAGE WHICH GIVES SO MUCH STRENGTH AND RICHNESS TO OUR SOCIETY.

WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS.

TODAY'S CONFERENCE IS A GOOD PLACE TO START.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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