

The original documents are located in Box 32, “5/11/76 - Remarks at a Reception for Members of Republican Heritage Group Council” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

REPUBLICAN HERITAGE GROUP LEADERS

THE STATE FLOOR

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1976

LET ME WELCOME YOU TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

WHEN I LAST MET WITH YOUR GROUP,

IT WAS AS VICE PRESIDENT IN JUNE OF 1974.

TODAY I AM HAPPY TO SEE YOU AGAIN, AND I LOOK FORWARD

TO DISCUSSING WITH YOU SOME OF YOUR CONCERNS.

TODAY'S MEETING IS PART OF TWO CONTINUING EFFORTS
ON THE PART OF THIS ADMINISTRATION.

THE FIRST OF THOSE IS OUR ONGOING EFFORT
TO HAVE AN OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE ADMINISTRATION,
SEEKING A BROAD RANGE OF IDEAS AND ISSUES
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

AND THE SECOND EFFORT IS TO MAINTAIN

A RUNNING DIALOGUE WITH AMERICANS FROM A VARIETY

OF CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS. THIS WAS ONE

OF MY EARLIEST CONCERNS AS PRESIDENT.

THE FIRST WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE INVOLVING ETHNIC LEADERS WAS HELD SOON AFTER I CAME INTO OFFICE, AT MY REQUEST, BECAUSE I WANTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR VIEWS AND CONCERNS.

AT THAT MEETING, LEADERS FROM MANY HERITAGE GROUPS ASKED FOR A SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR ETHNIC AFFAIRS, TO PROVIDE AN OPEN LINE OF COMMUNICATION TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

I LISTENED TO THAT REQUEST AND I ACTED ON IT.

I NOW HAVE SUCH A SPECIAL ASSISTANT, WHO IS HERE

WITH US TODAY -- MYRON KUROPAS (Kuh-RAH-pus).

SOME MONTHS LATER I REQUESTED A SECOND MEETING
OF ETHNIC LEADERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE TO CONSIDER
ANOTHER IMPORTANT PROGRAM -- BILINGUAL EDUCATION.
AND AS A RESULT OF THAT MEETING, THE BILINGUAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM IS BEEING CONTINUED AND SUPPORTED
BY MY ADMINISTRATION.

IN MARCH I CALLED FOR A THIRD MEETING TO IDENTIFY
GENERAL ETHNIC CONCERNS, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD.
AT THAT WHITE HOUSE MEETING, LEADERS VOICED CONCERNS
ABOUT PROSPECTIVE CUTS IN THE ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDIES PROGRAM,
WHICH WERE BEING CONSIDERED DUE TO THE ECONOMIC TROUBLES
AT THAT TIME AND THE CONSTRAINTS ON THE FEDERAL BUDGET.

ONCE AGAIN, I LISTENED TO THE CONCERNS
OF ETHNIC AMERICANS. AND DESPITE THE MANY BUDGET CUTS
WE MADE TO BRING FEDERAL SPENDING UNDER CONTROL,
I DID NOT REDUCE THE SPENDING LEVEL FOR THE ETHNIC HERITAGE
STUDIES PROGRAM.

ANOTHER IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THAT THIRD CONFERENCE
WAS A MEETING ON ETHNICITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION,
WHICH WAS HELD JUST LAST WEDNESDAY, MAY FIFTH.

I TOOK PART IN THAT MEETING AND SAID I WANT TO SEE
THE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAME OUT OF IT.

I PLAN TO REVIEW THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS SOON.

I BELIEVE THAT AMERICA'S MANY DIFFERENT CULTURAL
BACKGROUNDS MAKE UP A RICH MOSAIC -- A NATIONAL TREASURE●
THE PROUD TRADITIONS, THE SENSE OF IDENTITY THEY CONTRIBUTE
TO THE AMERICAN CHARACTER, SHOULD BE PRESERVED
AND ENCOURAGED●

THROUGH YOUR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION,
YOU ARE HELPING TO ENSURE THAT IT WILL BE PRESERVED,
AND THAT YOUR HERITAGE WILL BE KEPT ALIVE.

AND THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS DONE ITS PART
BY LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO YOUR CONCERNS,
AND WE WILL KEEP ON DOING SO.

WE PLAN TO HAVE THREE MORE MEETINGS

WITH ETHNIC LEADERS BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF JUNE●

AT THOSE MEETINGS WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO ENSURE

THE RIGHT OF AMERICANS TO ENJOY THEIR MULTI-CULTURAL HERITAGE●

YOUR PARTICIPATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE VITAL

TO THIS ADMINISTRATION. WE WANT TO KEEP IN TOUCH

WITH YOU AND YOUR IDEAS, ON THIS AND MANY OTHER TOPICS.

I BELIEVE THAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE THE VALUES

THAT DISTINGUISH US -- AND THE VALUES THAT UNITE US.

THESE ARE THE VALUES THAT FLOW FROM AMERICA'S ROOTS --

ITS FAMILIES, NEIGHBORHOODS, RELIGIOUS AND LOCAL GROUPS.

I HAVE DEDICATED MYSELF NOT ONLY TO PRESERVING
THOSE VALUES, BUT TO ENCOURAGING THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL
AMERICANS IN THE DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT THEIR LIVES.

SO, IN THAT SPIRIT, LET ME NOW TRY TO ANSWER
SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS.

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