

Building One America

In 1992, Americans were struggling to maintain the sense of community and respect for diversity that makes our nation strong. The economic gap between haves and have-nots was increasing. Between 1980 through 1992, the bottom 60 percent of Americans saw little if any increase in income, unemployment for African Americans and Hispanics reached record highs, and the poverty rate for African Americans remained at or above 30 percent. Over the last eight years, President Clinton and Vice President Gore have worked to bridge racial divisions and economic disparities.. They have appointed the most diverse and inclusive administration in history, launched initiatives to close economic and social gaps, and established the One America office in the White House to build a strategy of closing opportunity gaps and to promote understanding and reconciliation.

Appointed the Most Diverse Administration in History

THEN: Few women and minorities in the top levels of government.

The impressive strides made by women and minorities had not been fully reflected in the top levels of government. When President Clinton came to office, there were just two women and two minorities in the cabinet. Between 1976 and 1992, there were just 57 African Americans appointed to federal judgeships, and in 1992, just 10 percent of the federal bench were minorities and only 11 percent were women. Comparatively, in 1990, women made up 51.3 percent of the population while minorities made up 25.1 percent of the U.S. population.

NOW: Appointed the most diverse cabinet in history.

President Clinton appointed the most diverse Cabinet in history. Over the past eight years, he has appointed seven African American Cabinet Secretaries, and women make up 44 percent of Clinton Administration appointees, including the first woman to serve as Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, and the first to serve as Attorney General, Janet Reno. The President also appointed the first Asian American to serve in a Cabinet, Commerce Secretary Norman Mineta. The President has appointed more African Americans to federal judgeships than were appointed during the last sixteen years combined and 14 percent of all Clinton Administration appointees are African American, twice as many as in any previous Administration. President Clinton appointed three times as many female judges as the two previous administrations and the most Hispanic judicial nominees of any President. Record numbers of people with disabilities are also serving in the White House and throughout the Clinton Administration.

Closing Economic and Social Gaps

THEN: Economic gaps in American society expanding

The economic gap between haves and have-nots was increasing. Between 1980 through 1992, the bottom 60 percent of Americans saw little if any increase in income, unemployment for African Americans and Hispanics reached record highs, and the poverty rate for African Americans remained at or above 30 percent.

NOW: Expanded opportunity and a strong economy improves conditions for all Americans

Under President Clinton, unemployment and poverty rates have declined for all groups, while family incomes have increased. The Clinton Administration has worked to increase opportunity by expanding access to higher education and job training, expanding loans to minority small businesses, and launching efforts to close the digital divide and expand new markets in underserved communities. Examples of progress under the Clinton-Gore Administration include:

- Under the Clinton-Gore Administration, the unemployment rate for African Americans fell from 14.2 percent in 1992 to 7.3 percent today and the African-American poverty rate has dropped from 33.1 percent to 26.1 percent in 1998 — the lowest level recorded, and the largest five-year drop in African-American poverty since 1967-1972. At the same time, the typical African-American household's income is up \$3,317.
- Unemployment for Hispanics fell from 11.8 percent in October of 1992 to 5.0 percent today. The Hispanic poverty rate has dropped from 29.6 percent to 25.6 percent — the lowest since 1979. And over the past three years, the income of the typical Hispanic household has risen \$3,880 — or 15.9 percent — the largest three-year increase in Hispanic income on record.
- The Clinton-Gore Administration launched an initiative to end racial and ethnic health disparities, setting a national goal of eliminating the longstanding disparities by the year 2010 in six key health areas: infant mortality, diabetes, cancer screening and management, heart disease, AIDS and immunizations.
- The Clinton-Gore Administration has fought hate crimes and racial profiling by fighting for the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act, which increased penalties for hate crimes as part of the 1994 Crime Bill. As a result of Presidential leadership, the number of law enforcement agencies across the country reporting hate crimes to the Justice Department has risen from 2,771 in 1991 to 12,122 in 1999 — giving authorities a more accurate picture of the problem. President Clinton is also working to end racial profiling, by directing Cabinet agencies to collect data on the race, ethnicity, and gender of individuals subject to certain stops by federal law enforcement to help determine where and when racial profiling occurs.

- The Clinton-Gore Administration has fought to protect the rights of all Americans, increasing funding for civil rights enforcement from \$47.6 million in 1992 to \$92 million in 2001. The President also ordered a comprehensive review of federal affirmative action programs, which concluded that affirmative action is still an effective and important tool to expand educational and economic opportunity to all Americans. And President Clinton focused the nation's attention and resources to help stop the rash of church burnings across the country, creating the National Church Arson Task Force in 1995 to investigate these crimes, prosecute those responsible, and speed the rebuilding process.
- President Clinton has taken action to ensure fairness and equal participation in our society for legal immigrants. In 1997 and 1998 the President succeeded in restoring disability, health and nutritional benefits for certain legal immigrants. The Administration's English as a Second Language/Civics Education Initiative provides limited English speaking adults with instruction in both English literacy and critical life skills necessary for effective citizenship and civic participation and the Administration has significantly reduced the backlog of citizenship applications. President Clinton and Vice President Gore have improved relations between the federal government and Native American tribes. In July 1999, the President visited the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota to encourage investment in Indian Country, making him the first sitting President to visit a reservation since Franklin D. Roosevelt. The President also issued executive orders promoting tribal sovereignty, protecting sacred Indian sites, improving the academic performance of American Indian and Alaska Native students and supporting the nation's tribal colleges.
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- The Clinton-Gore Administration has worked to ensure equal pay for women and close the wage gap. They addressed the wage gap by winning \$20 million in his FY 2001 budget initiative for the National Science Foundation (NSF) to provide grants to post-secondary institutions and partner organizations to promote the full participation of women in science and technology fields. The Equal Opportunity Employment Commission initiated an Equal Pay Task Force to provide assistance to field enforcement staff in their development of cases involving equal pay and employment discrimination in compensation
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- President Clinton and Vice President Gore have worked hard to assure equality of opportunity and full participation by persons with disabilities. The

Clinton-Gore Administration has vigorously defended the Americans with Disabilities Act, worked with States to implement the Olmstead decision to prohibit unjustified isolation of institutionalized persons with disabilities, and fought for accessibility in public transportation, housing, and technology. As part of the Administration's work to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the President created the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities and signed the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act.

Addressing the Wage Gap by Supporting Enforcement

"I am grateful that the EEOC is there to assist people like me who have gone through so much in the workplace. It is never easy to confront difficult or painful situations, but I hope that I can serve as an example to women across the country who work hard to build their professional career but still do not receive salaries equal to their male counterparts. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership on this issue."

— **Karen Simmons-Beathea, of Washington, DC, May 11, 2000.** Karen Simmons-Beathea was hired as the first Executive Director of Baltimore Cable Access Corporation in 1993. Though she was continually promised salary increases, she was kept at her starting salary throughout her three years of employment at BCAC. In 1996, Ms. Simmons-Beathea presented the board of directors with a study, which she alleged demonstrated that she was significantly underpaid compared to male executive directors in other markets, which operate community-based cable television. A month after this presentation, the company terminated her and replaced her with a less qualified male at a salary higher than what she had been receiving. Ms. Simmons-Beathea filed a complaint with the EEOC, was assigned an EEOC attorney, and settled her case this year.

Launched the One America Initiative

THEN: America's leaders lacked a coordinated effort to resolve problems.

America was struggling to maintain the sense of community that makes our nation strong. Even though the country was becoming more diverse, serious economic and social gaps were prevalent, particularly among minority groups. And too often political rhetoric expanded these divisions rather than working to close them. Despite these problems, there was no coordinated strategy to promote reconciliation and address the economic and social divide in this country.

NOW: Working to build One America

President Clinton launched the One America initiative, and created a new office in the White House to ensure that we have a coordinated strategy to close the opportunity gaps that exist for minorities and the underserved in this country.

Examples of Clinton-Gore Administration efforts to build one America include the following:

- The One America initiative office helped resolve discrimination claims against the Department of Agriculture. Due to procedural hurdles created by previous administrations, several thousand African American farmers were left without a filing remedy for alleged discrimination, which had occurred years ago. Under the President's leadership, legislation was passed which overcame the statute of limitation problems blocking settlement of discrimination claims. Currently pending claims are being expedited for review to assure that justice is served. As of November 2000, farmers have received over 323 million dollars in settlement fees from the federal government.
- Through the One America initiative, President Clinton has provided leadership to corporate America, and the legal and faith communities to action. The President's call to action to the legal community to enlist their support in the fight for equal justice resulted in the formation of "Lawyers for One America," a unique collaboration with a mission to change the landscape for racial justice through increased pro bono service and diversity within the legal community. Corporate leaders convened at the White House to pledge to promote diversity, close the opportunity gap that exists in America and lead our nation towards the goal of building One America. And President Clinton met with a broad group of American religious leaders to highlight new commitments and programs they have pledged to undertake within the faith community to ensure that the nation's religious organizations are doing their part to expand diversity, end racism and promote racial reconciliation in America.
- In 1995, President Clinton created NCATF to coordinate the efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement in the battle against arsons, bombings and attempted bombings of places of religious worship. NCATF has opened 945 investigations that have led to 431 arrests and 305 convictions so far. The NCATF arrest rate is twice that of the general arrest rate for arsons nationwide. Thanks to the successful coordination efforts of the Clinton Administration, the number of arsons and attacks on places of worship continues to decrease.

Increased Opportunity for All Americans

- Lowest African American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record, with the unemployment rate for African Americans falling from 14.2 percent in 1992 to 7.3 percent today. Unemployment for Hispanics has fallen from 11.8 percent in October of 1992 to 5.0 percent today.

- All groups of Americans, from richest to poorest, have seen their incomes rise for three years in a row. The average income for the lowest 20 percent increased by 5.4 percent compared to an increase of 3.9 percent for the highest 20 percent.
- Median household income increased for African Americans by almost 15 percent between 1993 and 1999. The median household income for Hispanics is \$30,735, the highest ever recorded, while the median household income for Asian Americans is higher than the national average.
- Poverty rates are at record lows, with the African American poverty rate down to the lowest level on record, the Hispanic American poverty rate down to the lowest level since 1979, and the Asian American poverty rate as low as it's ever been. Poverty among African American children has also dropped to the lowest level on record.
- Highest homeownership rate on record, reaching 67.2 percent in the second quarter of 2000 — the highest ever recorded. Minority homeownership rates were also the highest ever recorded.
- Filed more cases to enforce fair housing laws than any other Administration.
- Higher education achievement, with reading and math scores of 9-year-olds in the highest-poverty schools rising by nearly one grade level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress between 1992 and 1996.
- Highest number of African American high school graduates enrolling in college ever, increasing from 48 percent in 1992 to 59 percent in 1997. Over the last 10 years, SAT test scores for college-bound African American students have increased by a total of 13 points.