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Employment Standards Management Consultants Personnel Placement

MEMORANDUM

19 February, 1982

TO: Elizabeth Dole
Assistant to the President
For Public Liaison
The White House

FROM: Arthur A. Fletcher, President
Arthur A. Fletcher & Associates
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SUBJECT: Policy Development and Implementing Strategies for Improving
Relations Between the President, the Reagan Administration and
the Black Community

It is true, the President's Goodwill Reserves, in the Black Community is exhausted. However, they can be restored with the proper effort. Why? Because American Blacks are a very understanding and forgiving people. Witness the support and comradary that exist today between southern White and Black politicians, as well as southern Whites and Blacks in general.

Many of today's white elected public officials openly opposed civil rights legislation and Black economic progress prior to and during the very height of the civil rights movement. However, once the laws were passed, more than a few simply admitted that segregation was a mistake, and that it hurt the south economically and otherwise. They then actively sought Black votes, got them, and remain in office to this very day.

Ask Black voters in the south, how they can stay in the democrat party, and/or vote for a politician who actively opposed and prevented their efforts to gain full citizenship for themselves, and they will rationalize their behavior by suggesting, for example; that, "George Wallace wasn't that bad, he actually liked Black people. He simply made racism a campaign issue to raise money and get elected. Why? Because that was what he had to do to win in Alabama." These Black voters will quickly add that, "Once Wallace became Governor, he was the Governor of all the people, and we did well during his administration.

Thus, all is not lost. President Reagan's Goodwill Reserves, can be restored. What is needed is an action program consistent with his political philosophy, that will nevertheless make it unmistakably clear that he is not a racist, nor is he insensitive, and that he does indeed intend to be the president of all the people. In that regard, I do believe the policy considerations and program concepts contained in the memorandum I reviewed in your office on Saturday, February 6, 1982, will not only set the forces of change in motion but go far toward achieving the desired objectives.

However, let me quickly add that it won't be easy. Why? Because the president's democrat opposition as well as some of his supporters in his own party will not roll over and play dead. Therefore, it will be necessary to plan well and commit the essential resources. In addition, the president will have to sound the call to battle and lead the way as well as show the same determination to stay the course as he has with his economic recovery policies and programs.

The rest of this memorandum will be a direct response to the issues raised and the proposals contained in the document I reviewed in your office.

The Critical Issues

Your identification of the policy positions that are causing most of the president's problems in the Black community is correct.

- . Voting Rights
- . Affirmative Action
- . Tax Exemption for School that Practice Discrimination, and
- . The Haitian Refugee Problem.

You might have also added the New Federalism. On its fact it does not appear to be a civil rights issue. However, because of the president's insisting on the inclusion of a "Intent Test," in the voting rights legislation now being debated before the Senate, it has fast become one. Emotions will grow in intensity unless it is resolved quickly. An explanation is in order.

In the State of the Union Address the president recommended that the states assume full responsibility for the management of some 40 human service, etc., programs. At the same time he is supporting the inclusion of an "Intent Test," as part of the Voting Right Act. Those knowledgeable on the subject (the nation's race problems) understand that the two positions are incompatible.

Why? Because, strong unencumbered voting rights is the center piece, the corner stone, the essential process that has led to increased citizenship for millions of individual Black Americans. It is sad, very very sad to say so, but the recent improvement in the economic and social conditions for individual Black Americans is a direct result of a change in and enforcement of the law and not a change in anyone's heart.

America is a nation of laws, and not men. Therefore, Black Americans were legislated into slavery. They did not have the right to vote nor hold elective office, therefore they were not in the state law making bodies. Consequently, they had nothing to say nor could they do anything about their fate. For the most part, the same was true after emancipation. Again, they were legislated into second class citizenship. Those elected to enact the laws were White politicians voted into office by a White electorate. Because they were powerless to change things via the vote, it took non-violent marches, burnings, blood shed and murder to change things for the better. The latter occurred within the life time of every adult Black in the country.

Therefore, Black Americans, both individually and collectively, simply are not going to stand by and allow program management responsibilities that impact the quality of their lives and their citizenship, not to mention their children's future, to return to those state and local governments that have had a long history of limiting and when possible destroying Black citizenship via legislative and judicial approval, without an all out fight.