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Message on National African-American History Month
February 1, 1993

This February we rediscover, celebrate, and honor the history and achievements of African-Americans during National African-American History Month.

In 1993, I am proud to recognize that more African-Americans serve in the President's Cabinet than ever before in the history of our country. We are nearing the day when we will have built a new home for America, a home where all Americans will have a place at the table.

Understanding our past makes us aware of how far we have come and how far we have to go. Last month, for the first time in many years, our National Archives displayed for the public the Emancipation Proclamation. That document, signed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, launched the beginning of a life of freedom for millions of African-American people.

For several months last year, individuals and groups of citizens had been writing to the National Archives to inquire whether the historic document would be exhibited over the new year holiday in honor of its anniversary. After considering the matter, the National Archives decided to arrange an exhibit.

The fragile document was shown in our Nation's Capital for five days adjacent to the original Charters of Freedom—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights. The exhibit reminded America of how liberty had once been denied to a particular segment of our population. The diverse backgrounds of the people in those lines each day, however, showed how the history of African-Americans touches all of us.

The public response was overwhelming. People came from all walks of life, with their children or their friends, from every corner of our country, to see for themselves the pieces of paper that meant for millions the difference between slavery and freedom. Each night at closing time, the National Archives had to extend the visiting hours to accommodate people who had waited in line for nearly three hours. Indeed, the efforts of the few citizens that gave birth to the exhibit brought to life for thousands the story of freedom in America.

I invite all Americans to rediscover that story and others as our Nation observes National African-American History Month.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Nomination for President and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States
February 1, 1993

The President today announced his intention to nominate Kenneth D. Brody as President and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

"I'm very pleased to make this announcement today," said the President. "Having someone with Ken Brody's experience and knowledge at the helm of the Export-Import Bank will help to ensure the orderly flow of trade and the promotion of American exports, a vital part of our Nation's economy."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.