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Remarks Announcing the President's Summit On Citizen Service

January 24, 1997

The President. I thank the Vice President and the First Lady for their remarks. Obviously, I am delighted to have President Bush, General Powell, and Secretary Cisneros back. Henry's only been off the payroll a day or two. [*Laughter*] I didn't really know if he'd come. [*Laughter*]

I thank so many people here who have advocated national service and citizen service of various kinds for a long time. Especially I'd like to acknowledge, in addition to Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin, Eli Segal and Ray Chambers; Al From with the Democratic Leadership Council; Charles Moskos, the national scholar of citizen service, who was for all this years before the rest of us knew it was an issue. Thank you, sir, for all your lifetime of work devoted to the proposition that the American people can forge their own destiny and solve their own problems. We thank you.

This is an extraordinary collection of Americans who have gathered here, not only on the stage but out here in the room, to advance the cause of citizen service. Much of the work of America cannot be done by government. Much other work cannot be done by government alone. The solution must be the American people through voluntary service to others. The challenges we face today, especially those that face our children, require something of all of us, parents, religious and community groups, business, labor organizations, schools, teachers, our great national civic and service organizations, every citizen.

One of my proudest moments as President was signing the bill creating the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps. During the last 3 years, about 50,000 Americans have earned aid for college by serving in their communities, doing real work to address critical problems, cleaning up rivers, working with the police to make the streets safe, helping children learn to read, and doing many, many more things in every State in the country.

These AmeriCorps members and even larger numbers of Senior Service Corps and student volunteers have really helped to revive the spirit of service in America. I noticed just a few days before the Inauguration the publication of a national poll—I can mention that now and you think I have not self-interest, you see—[*laughter*]—the publication of a national poll that said that young people are serving in their communities in far higher percentages than just a few years ago.

I think this is a culmination of years and years of effort. When President Bush held this office, he understood that so much of what is good in America has to be done and is being done by people who are outside Washington and outside the Federal Government. And we share his hope that by holding up examples of ordinary Americans engaged in extraordinary service, by holding up those 1,000 Points of Light, they will grow by the power of their example into millions of points of light. And we thank you for that.

Citizen service belongs to no party, no ideology. It is an American idea which every American should embrace. Today I am pleased to announce that we are taking an important step to give more Americans the opportunity to fulfill that promise. On April 27th, in Philadelphia, with the support and leadership of the Corporation for National Service, the Points of Light Foundation, General Colin Powell and Secretary Henry Cisneros, President Bush and I will convene the first President's Summit on Citizen Service. Our goal is to mobilize America's citizen power in a united effort to solve our common problems, especially those that threaten our young people.

Leaders from a broad spectrum will come with commitments in hand, concrete pledges of support and volunteers to solve their local problems. In preparation for the summit some of our most prominent corporations and service organizations have already stepped forward. Big Brothers-Big Sisters has pledged to double their mentoring relations, matching 200,000 deserving young people with caring adults through the 2000. And they have pledged to compound their efforts by having these adult volunteers actually do other citizen service projects with the young people they mentor. They not only will be serving the young but calling on the young to serve. Lens Crafters will provide one mil-

lion needy Americans, especially children, with free vision care by the year 2003. Columbia HCA, a leading health care company, has committed to immunize one million children through their health care facilities by the year 2000. And that is just the beginning.

I am delighted that General Colin Powell, who has served our country is so very many ways, has agreed to serve once again, this time as general chair of the summit. General, we're grateful that you're joining us. And I remember well when you had your retirement ceremony, you said that you were going to devote more of your life to helping young people to have better lives and better futures. There is nothing, nothing you could do that would have a bigger impact on that goal than this. And we are very grateful to you, sir.

All of you know that I believe Henry Cisneros is the finest HUD Secretary who ever served our country. He had a special way of getting people to take responsibility for their own lives and of generating real interpersonal human contacts in places where they had been too long absent. He just has a great new leadership job at Univision, and I am very grateful that he was willing to take substantial time out of an already very busy schedule in a new and fulfilling, in some ways more rewarding life—[*laughter*]—to do what I know he loves best, which is to help people realize their own promise. Thank you, Henry, for doing this.

Finally, let me say I am deeply honored to be embarking on this joint venture with President Bush. As far as I know, there's not much of a precedent for this sort of thing, at least in recent history, but there should be. It must be true that the things which unite us as citizens are bigger than any one person, one party, one election, or one ideology. They can only be solved if we come together in partnership to lift each other up, a person at a time, a family at a time, a neighborhood at a time, a school at a time.

The organizers of this effort have wisely chosen Philadelphia as the site of the summit, for the reasons that the Vice President said. I'm reminded at the close of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin made an observation about a design of the sun that was hanging low on the horizon in the chair that General Washington sat in to preside over the Convention. And after the Constitutional Convention was over, he said there had been a lot of speculation about whether it was a rising or a setting sun; having seen the Constitution he could say that it was definitely a rising sun.

I believe we can look at this assemblage today, look forward to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and say this is a rising sun.

I thank all of you. I thank especially those who are here on this platform. And I'd like to ask all of you to join me as we hear from our speakers. First, President Bush; to be followed by General Powell and Henry Cisneros.

Mr. President, welcome back.

[*At this point, former President George Bush, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell, USA, Ret., and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros made brief remarks.*]

The President. Well, let me again thank President Bush and General Powell and Secretary Cisneros and all the rest of you for being here; especially the Members of Congress, members of the administration, the mayors, and others who are here.

We are going to adjourn now and have a reception. But as we leave I'd like to just ask that we keep in mind the last point that Secretary Cisneros made. I imagine that Ray Chambers was a happy and successful man before he decided to give his whole life over to other people's welfare. But I can't imagine that he emanated the glow that he does today that we all see and that you see in the lives of other people who give.

And I guess—you know, our wealth and power are very important in America, and they must be maintained. But the pursuit of happiness involves more. And it really is true that in giving, we receive. So if we give a lot, we'll get a lot, and our country will enter this new century in wonderful, wonderful shape.

Thank you all, and God bless you. We're adjourned.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Harris Wofford, Chief Executive Officer, and Eli Segal, board member, Corporation for National and Community Service; Bob

Goodwin, president, Points of Light Foundation; Raymond G. Chambers, president, Amerlior Foundation; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; and Charles C. Moskos, professor of sociology, Northwestern University.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 19

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended a Presidential gala at USAir Arena in Landover, MD. The event was taped for broadcast later in the evening.

January 20

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton attended an Inaugural prayer service at the Metropolitan AME Church.

Following the Inaugural luncheon at the Capitol, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton went by motorcade along the parade route to the White House, where they viewed the Inaugural parade from the reviewing stand. In the evening, they attended several Inaugural balls.

January 21

The President announced his intention to appoint Harry P. Pachon as a member of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

January 22

In the morning, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, where, in the afternoon, he attended a meeting with Mayor Richard M. Daley and members of the Chicago school board in the Chicago Cultural Center. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ellen S. Seidman to be Director of the Treasury Department's Office of Thrift Supervision.

January 23

In the morning, the President visited the office of the Presidential Inaugural Committee to congratulate the staff for its work on the Inaugural festivities.

The President declared a major disaster in Oregon and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms, land- and mudslides, and flooding December 25 through January 6.

January 24

The President announced his intention to appoint Kathryn Walt Hall to the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Irving Greenberg and Romana Strochlitz Primus to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 22

Susan Bass Levin,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 1999, vice Richard C. Hackett.