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CIVIL RIGHTS BRIEFING  
SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS REGION  
JUNE 18, 1998

Before:

THE MASSACHUSETTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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Eastern Regional Office  
U.S. Commission of Civil Rights

\* \* \* \*

held at:

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth  
Group Two Building, Room 228  
285 Old Westport Road  
North Dartmouth, Massachusetts  
Thursday, June 18, 1998  
10:50 a.m.

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Carol H. Kusinitz  
Registered Professional Reporter

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393

I N D E X

<u>SPEAKER:</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
Raymond M. Barrows Executive Director for the Recruitment and Retention of Culturally Diverse Students, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth	4
Fletcher A. Blanchard Chairperson, Massachusetts Advisory Committee	4
Benjamin Taggie Provost and Vice-Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth	5
Edward M. Lambert Mayor, City of Fall River	7
Alfredo Alves City Councilor, City of Fall River	18
Catherine Assad Flint Village West Neighborhood Association	22
Francis J. McDonald Chief of Police, City of Fall River	29
Sambath Rim Cambodian Community Center	48
Reverend George Short Radio Station WSAR/WHTB	55
Marla Valois Coalition Against Poverty	67
Sharon Wilber	72
Chrispulo Rivera Citizen to Citizen Spanish Voice	76
Lee Charlton President, NAACP New Bedford Chapter	79

	<u>SPEAKER:</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1		
2	Emilio Cruz	
3	Mayor's Office for Hispanic Affairs, City of New Bedford	100
4	Pamela Cruz	
5	New Bedford Community Connections Coalition	115
6	Chester Garron	
7	Director of Equal Employment Opportunity, City of New Bedford	130
8	Daniel Gilbarg	
9	Professor of Sociology, Bristol Community College	136
10	Frederick M. Kalisz	
11	Mayor, City of New Bedford	158
12	Maria Rosario	
13	Hispanic Advocacy Center (statement read by Marla Valois)	175
14	John Andrade	
15	Executive Director, Old Flint Village Community Development Corporation	179
16	Eddy Johnson	189

\* \* \* \*

16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

## P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 MR. BARROWS: Good morning. My name is  
3 Raymond Barrows, and I wanted to first of all take  
4 this opportunity to thank you all for coming out  
5 this morning, and also take this opportunity to  
6 introduce Mr. Fletcher Blanchard, who is going to  
7 give an overview of the program. And then shortly  
8 thereafter he will introduce Dr. Taggie, our  
9 Provost, to give some welcoming comments. Again,  
10 welcome.

11 DR. BLANCHARD: I'm very pleased that  
12 everyone came out today. This is a briefing that we  
13 are holding, and it is being held by the  
14 Commonwealth's Advisory Committee to the U.S.  
15 Commission on Civil Rights.

16 The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights was  
17 created around 1957, and it's charged with advising  
18 and providing information to Congress and the  
19 American people and the President in respect to  
20 progress and roadblocks in achieving civil rights  
21 and full participation, especially in terms of  
22 voting, in the United States.

23 Each state and the District of Columbia has  
24 an Advisory Committee, which is an information-

1 gathering and information-dissemination arm of the  
2 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

3           There will be eventually eight members of  
4 the 15 people who are members of the Committee in  
5 the Commonwealth here today, and we're all from the  
6 Commonwealth and live around the state.

7           Today we have contacted, and others have  
8 contacted us, a number of civic and community  
9 leaders who have been active and involved in civil  
10 rights concerns in the New Bedford and Fall River  
11 region. And we're very pleased to have Dr. Benjamin  
12 Taggie, who is Provost and Vice-Chancellor of the  
13 University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, to welcome  
14 us, and we're very thankful that they have provided  
15 us with the support and facilities that they have.  
16 Dr. Taggie.

17           DR. TAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Blanchard, and  
18 I welcome you all here this morning. First let me  
19 welcome you on behalf of Chancellor Cressy, who  
20 unfortunately, because of University business, was  
21 called out of town today, but I'm very pleased to  
22 have this chance to stand in for him.

23           In 1963 I graduated from Wayne State  
24 University in Detroit with a master's degree, and at

1 that time Martin Luther King was the commencement  
2 speaker, and he spoke on the subject of civil  
3 rights. As I look back over 35 years, I see we have  
4 accomplished a lot, but it's clear there is still  
5 much to be done. I hope that your efforts here  
6 today are taking a step in that direction. Good  
7 luck for a very prosperous day, and have a wonderful  
8 day here at U. Mass. Dartmouth. Thank you.

9 DR. BLANCHARD: We will open our  
10 proceedings then today, and let me just briefly  
11 describe how we intend to act. We have contacted a  
12 number of people and invited them to speak, and  
13 others have contacted us. And we've created a list  
14 of the speakers we know who are interested in  
15 speaking today, and we'll start with that in the  
16 morning and the afternoon sessions.

17 If anyone else would like to make comments  
18 in a formal sense, we would like to provide that  
19 opportunity, and would you please speak with me or  
20 Dr. Chun, who is the Director of the Northeast  
21 Region of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and  
22 we will add your name to the list.

23 We hope our speakers today will speak for  
24 about ten minutes. We recognize sometimes people

1 might go over that. And we hope to preserve time on  
2 each occasion for questions and comments.

3 So, first, I would like to introduce the  
4 Honorable Edward M. Lambert, who is the Mayor of  
5 Fall River.

6 MAYOR LAMBERT: Thank you very much. It's  
7 great to be here in a sense that I think this  
8 discussion is a very important one for our  
9 community, and indeed our region, to engage in,  
10 although I have to admit I felt a good deal of the  
11 jitters when I walked back in this room after not  
12 having been here for 20 years as a chemistry student  
13 here in this very room, because I can tell you I was  
14 not a very good chemistry student. In fact, just  
15 the sight of that periodic chart gives me the  
16 chills.

17 But actually, it is probably a good analogy  
18 that we can use to begin this discussion today,  
19 because certainly chemistry in itself is a beautiful  
20 art form, and is made up of very natural ingredients  
21 that at times can produce some unpredictable  
22 volatility, but at other times, if applied with a  
23 great deal of understanding, can ensure that there  
24 is an equal place for each one of those natural

1 components.

2           And indeed as we engage in discussion of  
3 civil rights, ensuring that all persons in our  
4 community, regardless of race, color, creed or  
5 national origin or linguistic background, have the  
6 right to be full and equal participants in our  
7 society, both in terms of voting in the electoral  
8 process, in terms of job opportunities, in terms of  
9 housing and all of the things that we expect and  
10 anticipate they should be full participants in --  
11 indeed, that an entire community has that ability  
12 with the kind of understanding and compassion to  
13 come together in a beautiful sense of chemistry to  
14 make great progress -- I think that it is in that  
15 effort that I want to welcome the Advisory  
16 Commission here today to have that discussion here  
17 in Fall River and New Bedford and the towns  
18 surrounding us in this great region of Southeastern  
19 Massachusetts.

20           Those of us who hold elected office, I  
21 think, have a special responsibility as we're sworn  
22 to uphold the Constitution that contains the  
23 protections of civil rights of all persons within  
24 these United States. And indeed, I think it's in



1 that sense that we feel that special responsibility,  
2 but understand that no one group or governmental  
3 entity can perform that function alone, that indeed  
4 the protection and preservation of people's civil  
5 rights are a responsibility that we all share as  
6 Americans.

7 I can speak to Fall River and the Fall  
8 River experience in particular. I'm glad to see so  
9 many other folks, community leaders from the City  
10 here to speak about it from their perspective as  
11 well. We are as diverse a community as I believe  
12 you will find, and Fall River, probably as much as  
13 any other community, represents the American  
14 experience in terms of people who have immigrated  
15 from different regions of the world and from all  
16 various countries of the world to locate in a  
17 community that I can guarantee you they didn't come  
18 to for the climate, although we didn't have a  
19 particularly bad winter this year, but primarily  
20 came looking for opportunity in this country, who  
21 came looking for jobs, for housing, for quality of  
22 life, that they should expect and anticipate.

23 And indeed, Fall River is a community with  
24 a great history, not only of immigration and diverse

1 immigration at that, but also a great history of  
2 being a textile capital of the world. It is one  
3 that has, through manufacturing and the like,  
4 created textiles and apparels and in particular  
5 three colorful fabrics that have been exported to so  
6 many other places.

7           And we often like to use the analogy of  
8 that fabric as understanding that while there are so  
9 many -- such a great variety of threads that go  
10 into the making of quality fabric, that a piece of  
11 fabric is only as strong as the individual threads  
12 and their ability to come together and weave  
13 themselves into a strong unit. Indeed, it would be  
14 our hope that this is a vision for our community  
15 that we would expect and seek to pursue.

16           In that regard, we often use that analogy  
17 to try to make the case, to the public in general or  
18 those who might be nonbelievers in this creed, that  
19 indeed diversity can be a great strength of a  
20 community. It is something to be celebrated,  
21 something to be embraced, and something to be used  
22 as we progress in our communities and attempt to  
23 move them forward.

24           Fall River, and I can say this gratefully,

1 I believe, is a community that may not have  
2 experienced the level of discord amongst various  
3 groups or at least open hatred and violence that  
4 sometimes is experienced in other settings. But I  
5 also say that at the same time recognizing that, not  
6 unlike so many other communities, there is always  
7 underlying racism and bigotry that does exist and  
8 that needs to be addressed, and it needs to be  
9 addressed in a coordinated way. We need to ensure  
10 that leaders within the community speak out against  
11 those that would seek to deny people their civil  
12 rights and/or indeed seek to discriminate based on a  
13 variety of reasons.

14 If we're going to make progress in those  
15 areas, we must first admit that it exists, and we  
16 are a community that has done that, in particular  
17 with public statements as part of recognizing that  
18 we have progress to make.

19 We in the City, over the last two or three  
20 years, have been fortunate to have folks willing to  
21 come together to work on these issues. We have done  
22 that in a number of ways.

23 One of the ways in which we have done that  
24 is to create an annual racial and cultural diversity

1 campaign in the City of Fall River that we entitled  
2 "One Earth, One People Under the Sun." This  
3 campaign is the genesis of a number of groups coming  
4 together at the administration's invitation, more  
5 than two dozen, indeed, representatives of various  
6 groups who have taken up the task of helping us do a  
7 variety of things that at least for a period during  
8 the course of the year we set aside time during that  
9 four- to six-week period to do what we can to help  
10 raise people's consciousness about the importance of  
11 celebrating diversity, of ensuring that we have an  
12 opportunity for community leaders to speak out in  
13 forums that are given to us for meetings, in terms  
14 of columns and speaking engagements that have us  
15 engaged in that public debate about the need to do  
16 better. And indeed that program, having completed  
17 its third year just recently, has been successful in  
18 that effort.

19 It has included, as a matter of course, not  
20 only an opportunity to speak to the issue of  
21 ensuring the protection of people's civil rights  
22 through forums and the like, it has included  
23 celebrations and cultural events, public service  
24 announcements, the donation of space both in the

1 media and through billboards that have allowed, not  
2 only our community leaders, but I think most  
3 importantly the youth in our community, a voice to  
4 speak about how they, as the next generation of  
5 leaders, plan to pursue the protection of civil  
6 rights and opportunities for all.

7           Through our high school, we have utilized  
8 an award-winning program with the establishment of a  
9 group of young people called the United Cultures  
10 Club for the specific and express purpose of coming  
11 together on issues of celebrating each other's  
12 culture and raising the awareness level of all our  
13 people to the variety of cultures that exist in our  
14 community and the need to preserve those cultures  
15 and integrate them into a complete whole.

16           The City of Fall River itself, over the  
17 last couple of years, has also taken some very  
18 aggressive steps to issue annually to all of its  
19 employees -- and we have about 3,000 employees, both  
20 in public safety and the School Department and other  
21 areas -- a complete and comprehensive civil rights  
22 policy that makes it very clear that there will be  
23 no tolerance of the denial of civil rights of either  
24 fellow employees or persons which public employees

1 come in contact with as part of their public  
2 duties. It is an effort that we take seriously, one  
3 that all employees are aware of, and certainly one  
4 that the weight of public government in Fall River  
5 is put behind in terms of ensuring that there will  
6 be strict enforcement.

7 We have also attempted, over the course of  
8 the last couple of years, to make as much progress  
9 as possible in terms of ensuring that the public  
10 work force is as diverse as the population is in the  
11 City of Fall River. We do that through a number of  
12 ways, in particular through the efforts of  
13 recruitment of personnel in the School Department,  
14 so that as we deal with the next generation, and  
15 attempt to service the 14,000 student that we have  
16 in our public schools, that they will, on a daily  
17 basis, interact with role models that represent the  
18 same correlation of diversity that the community has  
19 in each and every one its neighborhoods.

20 We also seek, through our training funds  
21 available through federal and other sources, to do  
22 what we can in terms of directing training moneys to  
23 the minority community as well. And in the area  
24 specifically of public employee training, we wish to

1 continue to seek new opportunities to involve not  
2 only local entities, but state and federal entities,  
3 in assisting us with the training of police  
4 personnel who interact with people in our community  
5 on a daily basis, to ensure, indeed, that we are  
6 doing the best that we can to offer the protection  
7 of civil rights to the fullest opportunities to all  
8 persons in our community.

9           Within the Mayor's Office we've established  
10 a community liaison program, whereby we attempt to  
11 deal with the linguistic differences that sometimes  
12 hinder communication between persons and their  
13 government and indeed sometimes create a wall that  
14 has people believe that they cannot access and/or  
15 approach their government. We've done that through  
16 the hiring of Khmer-speaking personnel in the  
17 office, and we are seeking to replicate that for the  
18 Hispanic population as well.

19           Certainly Fall River is a community that  
20 has a very significant Portuguese-American  
21 population. Almost 60 percent of our population is  
22 comprised of Portuguese-Americans, and that group is  
23 represented not only in the Mayor's Office but in  
24 other departments as well.

1           Let me close the discussion, or at least my  
2 portion of the discussion, and open up the rest of  
3 the discussion from our community by suggesting that  
4 with all the progress that I think we've made over  
5 the last couple of years, as well as the recognition  
6 that while we have a diversity campaign that we  
7 think is a model for other communities, we've always  
8 been very clear that the celebration of diversity  
9 and the protection of people's civil rights has to  
10 happen more than four to six weeks a year, that it  
11 is something that has to be a daily occurrence and  
12 is the responsibility of each and every citizen  
13 within our community.

14           Recognizing all of that and the good work  
15 that we've done, I also think that we believe very  
16 strongly that the process is one that has to  
17 continue, one that we seek to improve on. And we  
18 have even recently attempted to work with liaisons  
19 from various minority groups to bring that  
20 communication to a new level, to begin even new  
21 processes for ensuring that people feel plugged into  
22 what is happening within the community.

23           And in addition to that discussion, we have  
24 ongoing opportunities through groups that we've



1 established, such as the Neighborhood Council, which  
2 has representatives of various minority and ethnic  
3 groups as well as leaders from different  
4 neighborhood groups who meet on a regular basis with  
5 City department heads to address issues and  
6 concerns, and also groups involving youth, and how  
7 we deal with youth issues to ensure that there are  
8 young people in our community, who will be the next  
9 generation of leaders, who understand this so much  
10 better than we.

11 I think we have a special opportunity  
12 obviously with the young people in our community,  
13 because it is very clear that in many instances they  
14 avoid the prejudices and narrowmindedness that so  
15 many adults may have grown up with. So it is in  
16 that regard that we place our hope, hope not only  
17 for the next generation, but between now and the  
18 time when that next generation takes its leadership  
19 role, that we will continue to make progress.

20 I thank you very much, and I want to thank  
21 the Committee for their willingness to come to our  
22 area to help foster this debate. And I think we  
23 look forward to the rest of the presentations for  
24 the rest of the morning and the rest of the day

1 too. Thank you all very much.

2 (Applause)

3 DR. BLANCHARD: I want to add a couple of  
4 announcements, first, that the proceedings we are  
5 transcribing, and we will make available a verbatim  
6 account of the comments today to anyone who would  
7 like them. And secondly, we're passing around a  
8 sign-up sheet for those who are in attendance, if  
9 you would like to sign, so we can keep you apprised  
10 of the Committee's activities and provide you with a  
11 transcript, if you would like.

12 Our next speaker is a Councilman from Fall  
13 River, Alfredo Alves. Thank you very much for  
14 coming.

15 COUNCILOR ALVES: First of all, I would  
16 like to thank you very much for inviting me here  
17 today and to give me the opportunity to speak on the  
18 topic of civil rights. I happen to believe that at  
19 any time when any group in our country's civil  
20 rights are violated, all of us are in danger,  
21 because we should be concerned about everyone's  
22 civil rights, regardless which group it is.

23 Last night I was reading an article on  
24 civil rights, and one of the things that I found

1 interesting was that Adenauer, who was the Prime  
2 Minister and the Chancellor of Germany after World  
3 War II, was asked by the United States Ambassador,  
4 "How could you allow the Nazi regime to take over?"  
5 And he said, "Well, it was very easy." He said,  
6 "When Hitler was prosecuting the unions, I was not  
7 a member of any union. Therefore, I didn't care.  
8 When he was prosecuting the Catholics, I was not a  
9 Catholic, so I could care less. When he was after  
10 the gypsies, I was not a gypsy, when he was after  
11 the Jews, I was not a Jew, and I didn't protest. So  
12 when he came after me, there was nobody else to  
13 defend me."

14 That's what civil rights is all about. If  
15 we do not care, if we are not concerned about other  
16 people's civil rights, we will be in serious danger,  
17 because when they come after us, there will be  
18 nobody left to protest. Think about it.

19 Right now, in our country, there is a gross  
20 violation of civil rights, right here in our  
21 community, and that is the violation, which I  
22 personally think is a gross violation of civil  
23 rights, it is the deportation of immigrants because  
24 of the fact that they have committed some crime.

1 But the worst part of that deportation is what  
2 happens to their families. Kids who were born here,  
3 children who were born here are being deprived of an  
4 education, of the American way of life, because they  
5 have to accompany their parents. And that to me is  
6 a great violation of civil rights.

7 We are deporting hundreds of people of all  
8 ethnic backgrounds. I happen to be Portuguese-  
9 American, but that is not the case -- in fact, we  
10 are one of the smallest groups in the state. But  
11 nevertheless, there is gross violation of the civil  
12 rights of those families, not only of those men and  
13 women, but particularly of those families. And I  
14 think that is an issue that I hope that the Civil  
15 Rights Commission will address, will listen, will  
16 talk to, will investigate, because it is  
17 unbelievable what's happening.

18 I can give you a little story. I was one  
19 time in the Azores, and I had a little boy shining  
20 my shoes, and I could see him speaking English very  
21 well, and I asked him, "Where did you learn how to  
22 speak English?" He said, "Well, I'm from New  
23 Bedford," and I couldn't believe it. There is this  
24 10-, 11-year-old kid stuck shining shoes in downtown

1 Ponta Delgada in the Azores, because of his father  
2 who was deported, because his father had a problem  
3 with drunk driving.

4 I think that this is a gross violation that  
5 is taking place. It is dividing families, it is  
6 destroying families, and I would hope the Commission  
7 would pay attention to this huge problem, because it  
8 is affecting not only Portuguese-American families,  
9 but is affecting a lot of other ethnic groups in our  
10 state, and I would hope the Commission will pay  
11 attention to that.

12 We, as a nation, pride ourselves from going  
13 all over the world and questioning other countries'  
14 violation of civil rights, and I think it's time  
15 that we begin to ask questions, how we are violating  
16 our own civil rights of our own people right here in  
17 this country. And I think this is a problem that is  
18 growing. It is a problem that in some cases is out  
19 of hand.

20 How it works is very easy. Every time an  
21 inspector from the INS will come into a courthouse,  
22 anywhere in the state, he will look at the files,  
23 find out who is not a citizen, and immediately he is  
24 reported to the INS for deportation. He will serve

1 his sentence here, he or she will serve his sentence  
2 here, and then he or she is sentenced again by being  
3 deported. And these are people who came here, some  
4 of them two or three years old, months old, some of  
5 them don't even know the language or the country  
6 they go back to.

7 I do think this is an issue that, if we are  
8 concerned is a violation of civil rights of our  
9 fellow citizens, we should address this issue,  
10 because it is indeed a very dangerous issue for the  
11 future, because I do think that we are -- the  
12 victim here is not just the person who was deported.  
13 I think the real victim here is the members of the  
14 family, is the children, particularly the children  
15 who are put into this situation. We are in fact  
16 dividing families, destroying families, and I think  
17 that should stop. That is a gross violation of  
18 human rights.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 DR. BLANCHARD: I would like to invite  
22 Catherine Assad to speak next, who is, I believe,  
23 the founder of the Flint Village West Neighborhood  
24 Association.

1 MS. ASSAD: Professor Blanchard, thank you  
2 for allowing the uncommon common voice to be heard  
3 amongst all of the voices this morning.

4 Yes, I do represent the ladies and  
5 gentlemen, families, churches and those who are  
6 members of a grass-roots effort that began in 1990  
7 in the City of Fall River. I'm here today to tell  
8 you that the philosophy behind this particular  
9 microphone standing in front of you is that of when  
10 I see a cup, it is half full and not half empty. So  
11 everything that I say to you this morning should be  
12 colored along those lines.

13 As someone who has been a spokeswoman for  
14 what I like to call the uncommon common person in  
15 the City of Fall River on many occasions, I would  
16 ask you to consider the following: What a piece of  
17 work is man, how noble in reason, how so like an  
18 angel, and yet so capable of much, much lesser  
19 things.

20 Our City has come a long way in the nine  
21 years in which this grass-roots effort has taken  
22 place. We've had mayors that have recognized  
23 various and sundry things that have taken place in  
24 public safety, et cetera, et cetera, but this

1 particular Mayor who spoke to you this morning has  
2 recognized that our City is changing and it is  
3 changing rapidly.

4           The demographics are abounding in such a  
5 way that those of us who come from this one little  
6 particular neighborhood called Flint Village are now  
7 asking, are now questioning, are now with  
8 compassionate hearts trying to reach out, but at the  
9 same time we are befuddled by cultural changes that  
10 are happening in our neighborhood. We embrace them.  
11 We began as a neighborhood that embraced the  
12 immigrant. We began as a neighborhood that embraced  
13 the French-Canadian immigrant in the early 1900s,  
14 the Lebanese immigrant, the Polish immigrant, and  
15 recently, as our Mayor stated, the Portuguese  
16 immigrant.

17           But since the 1970s we have opened our arms  
18 in this particular neighborhood and across the  
19 City -- as the Mayor alluded to, we have a  
20 Neighborhood Council -- to refugees from Cambodia,  
21 those who are fleeing for public safety issues from  
22 New Haven and the likes of New York City. Our  
23 Hispanic neighbors, Black Americans in Fall River,  
24 which were very, very uncommon when I was growing up



1 in the City, are now walking our streets side by  
2 side with many of us.

3 As an educator and a high school teacher, I  
4 can tell you that in our classrooms in the City of  
5 Fall River, we are addressing what we believe is the  
6 microcosmic issue of this particular time in Fall  
7 River's history, and that is the blending, the  
8 mosaicking, the melting-potting, so to speak, of  
9 what is happening in our community now.

10 We have multicultural days, as the Mayor  
11 alluded to. We have organizations from the youth to  
12 those of us who are in the neighborhoods, trying to  
13 address those various cultural concerns that crop up  
14 every once in a while. I believe education is the  
15 key to addressing this, and I think our public  
16 school system, the Commissioners, has done a  
17 terrific job at doing this in the City of Fall  
18 River.

19 The Mayor, as the leader of our City, has  
20 opened up avenues for those of us who live in the  
21 neighborhoods side-by-side with those who are  
22 different. To me, as an educator, respect for  
23 difference is Step One. Acceptance of someone's  
24 difference is an altogether greater giant step.

1           Are the neighbors in the City of Fall River  
2 that I represent compassionate? Yes, I would say  
3 they are. Are the neighbors from the Neighborhood  
4 Council trying to reach a respect that is deep?  
5 Yes, I believe they are doing that.

6           Do I think the process has begun? Yes, I  
7 do think the process has begun. Do I think we have  
8 a ways to go? Most definitely, as any major city  
9 such as ours.

10           We have begun most importantly in the past  
11 three years more than any of the administrations  
12 before this particular administration, the Lambert  
13 Administration. The Lambert Administration has  
14 assisted us in recognizing that we are different in  
15 Fall River. We always have been. Yet we've always  
16 been a home to differences.

17           Now the differences are more -- they were  
18 subtle before. Now they are more exaggerated  
19 because of color, because of language, because of  
20 hygienic differences, that people might have done  
21 this back home, and now they do this here, and we  
22 have to understand that these types of things have  
23 to be addressed. We have done that as a  
24 Neighborhood Council. As a Neighborhood Council we

1 will continue to do that for the common neighbors  
2 who make up the threads of the fabric of the City of  
3 Fall River.

4           Neighborhoods need time to adjust, and we  
5 have to ask our new neighbors to be patient with the  
6 fact that Fall River in its history has always been  
7 a provincial type of setting. Those newcomers, whom  
8 we feel are just as good as any of us, need to be  
9 patient with the fact that we are a learning  
10 community now.

11           We have avenues through which we can  
12 address this. Government agencies have done that  
13 for us in setting up a Neighborhood Council. Public  
14 safety officials such as our Chief -- and I must say  
15 to you, he has never forgotten where he came from;  
16 he, the man who came from a neighborhood of  
17 immigrants, a neighborhood of working class people,  
18 has always addressed any concern that we've had.  
19 Will we have what we had many years ago? No. Do we  
20 have a society such as we had many years ago? No,  
21 we do not.

22           So I'm here to tell you, on behalf of the  
23 voice of those who cannot speak to you, that we are  
24 trying very hard in the City of Fall River, from the

1 grass roots to the top of the sixth floor of  
2 Government Center. We do need more assistance.

3 Our educational system has and will  
4 continue to teach our children to respect the  
5 differences in others. Our churches, which are  
6 varied in Fall River, are preaching that message,  
7 and so they should. Our government leaders are at  
8 the forefront. The One Earth, One People Under the  
9 Sun effort that Mayor Lambert kicked off three  
10 campaigns ago has come into the neighborhoods and  
11 has sought to seek the rights from the wrongs. Our  
12 neighbors have not had any blemishes other than  
13 those that any neighborhood across the country of  
14 the United States of America would have.

15 So I'm proud to tell you today that as a  
16 woman who speaks for the common man, the man who  
17 lives next door to the black family, the black  
18 family that lives next door to the Caucasian family,  
19 the Caucasian family that lives next door to the  
20 Hispanic family, the Hispanic family that lives next  
21 door to the Cambodian family, as a voice for the  
22 neighbors of all of those threads that make up the  
23 fabric of life in the City of Fall River, I can  
24 honestly tell you that the effort has begun.

1           Now we need a sustained effort, and I thank  
2 government officials and public safety officials,  
3 but most of all, I thank my neighbors for  
4 recognizing the fact that we are a city of  
5 neighbors.

6           Thank you so much. \

7           (Applause)

8           DR. BLANCHARD: We do want to save time at  
9 each break for anyone who would like to offer  
10 comments and ask questions, but we're also a little  
11 behind schedule, so I will move this along.

12           Our next speaker is Chief of Police from  
13 the City of Fall River, Francis J. McDonald. I'm  
14 very pleased that you could come.

15           CHIEF McDONALD: I'm not usually noted for  
16 being long-winded, so maybe we can catch up a little  
17 bit in the schedule, but I think -- I feel a little  
18 here as though those who have spoken before me have  
19 kind of given a little history so that you can  
20 understand, No. 1, who I am, and No. 2, the  
21 evolution of the Fall River Police Department,  
22 looking at it from the law enforcement point of  
23 view, that it's gone through over the past, for me,  
24 27 years.

1           As Catherine Assad alluded to, I was born  
2 in the Corky Row section of Fall River, which in  
3 those days was a predominantly Irish neighborhood.  
4 Fall River was a community where you could almost  
5 tell what ethnic group folks came from by where they  
6 lived, because I guess as is human nature, in order  
7 to survive, groups would group together.

8           Corky Row was a predominantly Irish  
9 neighborhood, the area of Columbus Park was  
10 predominantly an Italian neighborhood, the far east  
11 end of Flint was a predominantly French  
12 neighborhood, the west end of Flint was a heavily  
13 Lebanese neighborhood, another section of Fall River  
14 was a predominantly Polish neighborhood. That's how  
15 Fall River really was, and it was a community where  
16 people were born, lived and died here, and their  
17 families were here historically since they came to  
18 this country.

19           As the City developed -- let me back up  
20 half a step. As I grew up, like many young men, I  
21 kind of shunned education and went into the service,  
22 where I matured and came back to Fall River. And I  
23 found a community that as I matured was in the  
24 neighborhood of 100,000 people, and if you spoke to

1 someone long enough, someone who was a complete  
2 stranger, who you never saw before in your life, if  
3 you talked to him long enough, you knew someone in  
4 his family. And it is really unique to Fall River,  
5 I think, because other folks I talked to in cities  
6 of our size just couldn't believe that we had that  
7 atmosphere here.

8 I worked in a number of jobs. I worked in  
9 the mills in the City of Fall River. I worked for  
10 the Fall River Gas Company, public utility, for a  
11 number of years, and then I became a police officer,  
12 which in my family is kind of a genetic thing.

13 So I became a police officer in 1971, and  
14 police departments at that time, looking at it from  
15 a young police officer's point of view, had  
16 withdrawn into themselves with the advent of the  
17 civil rights movement and what they perceived as an  
18 onslaught against them. They had drawn in and  
19 became a separate enclave within the community. And  
20 we were virtually impenetrable. You couldn't get  
21 through the system. They made it so you couldn't  
22 get through the system. It was us versus them.

23 My predecessors were all good men, worked  
24 very hard daily to try and make Fall River a

1 community, but, however, from what they perceived as  
2 all this adversarial feelings towards the police,  
3 they withdrew into this very tight group.

4           The Federal Government at the time started  
5 funding and saying, "We need to have a higher  
6 education of the police officers. We need to get  
7 some education." So that there were some  
8 opportunities that came out for us to become  
9 educated, and many of us took advantage of that and  
10 went to the various colleges and universities in the  
11 neighboring area to try and enlighten ourselves.

12           But from my perspective, as I moved through  
13 the ranks in the department, you could notice that  
14 on the outside of the community, there was less and  
15 less tolerance for this tight enclave to hide and be  
16 unto themselves, not to be responsible to the  
17 community, and to not take seriously what went on  
18 outside of our group. And the policing of the  
19 community was determined by the police, and that was  
20 generally the feeling.

21           From my own perspective, as I went through  
22 the ranks, I kind of started to feel that this was  
23 not a good way to operate and be successful at the  
24 same time. The crime rates were terrible. Our



1 success rate was not good.

2 So finally, in 1989, I was promoted to  
3 chief, and the first day I sat in the chair, there  
4 was a window right behind my desk, and I turned  
5 around and looked out the window, and I said, "Well,  
6 this is the end of the line. I guess you better  
7 start to do something."

8 So I felt it very strongly that we had to  
9 become a part of the community and we had to come  
10 out and break loose from this tight enclave. I  
11 said, "Let's get out outside of here and start  
12 working with the community and become a part of the  
13 community instead of apart from the community." We  
14 had to start working together.

15 The case load was coming down. The case  
16 load came down. Believe me, the law enforcement  
17 officers really took it negatively and badly. If  
18 you tell the truth and look at the case load that  
19 came down, it was as a result of abuses that were  
20 certainly intolerable and unjustified in how they  
21 did come about.

22 So my first experience as Chief of Police  
23 was with Catherine Assad and the Flint Neighborhood  
24 group. The Flint section of Fall River was at the

1 time in deplorable condition as far as public safety  
2 and law enforcement was concerned, and civil rights  
3 and any other issue you want to speak about.

4           So we started to work together to try and  
5 resolve these problems. And the more we worked  
6 together, the more we found out that this "we" thing  
7 is pretty good. If we all pull together, we can  
8 really accomplish something.

9           Then we started to notice the phenomenon  
10 that the officers who worked in that area,  
11 motivation was feeding off the gratitude of the  
12 folks that they were dealing with in the Flint  
13 neighborhood. As their life got better, the folks  
14 naturally showed their gratitude to the officers,  
15 and the officers in turn worked a little harder to  
16 try to make that neighborhood better.

17           This phenomenon started to spread through  
18 Fall River. Those officers that I originally  
19 assigned to what we now call community policing I  
20 think were ready to call a psychiatrist to see if I  
21 had lost my mind, but if you spoke to them today,  
22 they are as die-hard if not more die-hard than I am  
23 about community policing. They have seen it work,  
24 they have done it, they have gone through it, and

1 they know what it is.

2           Fall River started to really become a more  
3 diverse community, as Catherine has said, than it  
4 ever was before, with different groups moving in.  
5 Cambodians came, our black population got larger,  
6 the Hispanic population that was probably almost  
7 nonexistent started to develop.

8           And we started to see in the school system  
9 that there was some problems among the youth,  
10 violence was increasing between the various groups  
11 in the schools, and like most people, we tried to  
12 blame other issues as what was causing the  
13 problems. We weren't ready to admit that Fall River  
14 had growing pains and we needed to address them.

15           The gang phenomenon started to show up  
16 sporadically around, and we all know that gangs  
17 develop as a result of minority groups of  
18 individuals who feel as though the only way they can  
19 have strength is joining into these groups. Those  
20 problems started to arise, and we started saying,  
21 "No, that's not happening in Fall River." We  
22 alluded to a whole lot of other problems that  
23 brought that about.

24           And I kind of -- not kind of. I try to, if

1 I can, take a walk daily, both for my physical  
2 health and my mental health, and the Mayor and I  
3 spoke about it yesterday, because we had a meeting  
4 on the youth violence group that came to mind one  
5 Sunday when I was doing my exercise. I called to  
6 speak to the Mayor.

7           What the Mayor has had to tolerate about me  
8 is that I call him any time of the day or night.  
9 Usually when an idea comes into my head, I call him,  
10 and we talk about it. And I called his home and he  
11 was not there, and I took my cell phone with me, and  
12 I told my wife, "If he calls, call me on the cell  
13 phone so I can speak with him."

14           So I was out walking down the streets of  
15 the City of Fall River when the Mayor returned my  
16 call, and I said, "You know, Your Honor, we're not  
17 making it. It's about time we admit that we have  
18 some problems, and we ought to start admitting it  
19 and start to work on it." He agreed, and he said,  
20 "See me Monday. We'll immediately start to work on  
21 these issues."

22           And we did that. And as a result of that,  
23 a whole lot of programs in Fall River have happened  
24 regarding these issues. And just yesterday morning

1 we met with a meeting of the Mayor's Youth Violence  
2 Committee, where we've started a lot of school  
3 programs, after-school programs, trying to get these  
4 groups together. It's a brand-new program, and the  
5 success rate, the numbers to me are just  
6 staggering.

7           One school, we have as many as -- one  
8 middle school, we have as many as 100 kids  
9 participating in after-school programs, cosmetology  
10 and martial arts and sewing and just a whole lot of  
11 programs that they can participate in to try to get  
12 people to get together to understand each other.

13           The School Department, the Superintendent  
14 of Schools, informed us that his teachers, since  
15 this program has started, have noticed that the  
16 visible gang clothing phenomenon that was always  
17 there, that was making them so nervous and putting  
18 fear in a lot of teachers, was minimized  
19 dramatically and that they could see it going the  
20 other way. So we felt very good about that.

21           But on top of that, the Police Department  
22 has three or four programs that we participate in in  
23 various levels of school, kindergarten, K through 8  
24 and in the high school, so they would become part of

1 the community and work with youth in the City of  
2 Fall River.

3 We feel as though at this point in time we  
4 are starting to make headway. We understand we have  
5 an awful long way to go. Fall River has some  
6 growing pains that we have to work with. We have an  
7 administration that's extremely concerned about  
8 working with that.

9 We have a neighborhood group -- not a  
10 group, groups. We have many neighborhood groups who  
11 work together with us, because, as I tell them -- I  
12 try to attend as many of those meetings as I can,  
13 and there aren't too many that I miss. I go to the  
14 evening meetings once a month, with all the various  
15 neighborhood groups, along with the Mayor's  
16 Neighborhood Council.

17 I guess my philosophy, as a result of all  
18 of this, my philosophy has become, at least from a  
19 policing point of view, that we cannot give your  
20 community back to you, you have to want it back.  
21 And if you want it back, then along with you, we can  
22 get it back for you, if we work together.

23 It has to be a "we" program. It can't be  
24 just the police. That's been extremely successful

1 for us. We really enjoy it. Our crime rate  
2 reflects the improvement that has come as a result  
3 of that. We intend only to try to make it better.

4 Very recently, we encountered some other  
5 groups who feel as though -- not feel as though,  
6 who are experiencing some things they shouldn't be  
7 experiencing, and they have come to us and asked for  
8 help. And we feel that, working with them, we can  
9 help them to get around those issues.

10 MS. WILBER: Excuse me. What programs do  
11 you have for the handicapped, the young people who  
12 are handicapped? What social activities do you have  
13 for them?

14 CHIEF McDONALD: The Police Department?

15 MS. WILBER: The Police Department or the  
16 City of Fall River. These are also people with  
17 civil rights, and this is a very big problem,  
18 because people are not in institutions like they  
19 were 10, 15, 20 years ago.

20 My name is Sharon Wilber, and I have worked  
21 with the handicapped and disabled since 1977, and I  
22 would like to know, because New Bedford doesn't have  
23 anything for the handicapped, does Fall River have  
24 anything for the young people that are handicapped

1 as far as social activities go?

2           MAYOR LAMBERT: If you want me to try to  
3 answer that, the community doesn't sponsor as a  
4 public governmental service social activities for  
5 any classification of citizens. But what we do  
6 ensure is that any of the programs that are offered,  
7 the after-school programs that are offered, the  
8 other events that we're involved in, include people  
9 who are handicapped.

10           We have as one of our community  
11 organizations the Southeast Center for Independent  
12 Living. We work with them on a regular basis to  
13 ensure, for instance, that our recreational  
14 facilities, not only those facilities indoors, but  
15 our parks and other events that we have are  
16 handicapped accessible. We have an ADA  
17 representative on board to do that.

18           So we certainly have integrated every  
19 community, including the handicapped community, to  
20 ensure that their civil rights are protected and  
21 they have the same access to all programs that any  
22 person has.

23           MS. WILBER: So what you are saying is that  
24 you do have in these after-school programs, where



1 you have up to 100 children in the middle grade  
2 school, you do have handicapped people going to  
3 these programs, right?

4           MAYOR LAMBERT: It is open to them, and I'm  
5 sure that there are some. I can't give you the  
6 total, but I'm sure there are some.

7           MR. RIM: I'm from Cambodian community, and  
8 I just would like to let you know that we have one  
9 blind kid in our community -- well, two blind kids  
10 in our community, and they are involved in the  
11 activities, after-school program as well, and they  
12 enjoy it. They come to my center, and they told me  
13 that they really like the way that they have the  
14 services. So I think the City of Fall River has  
15 services on their part.

16           MS. WILBER: So you have two blind children  
17 that like it.

18           MR. RIM: Yes.

19           MS. WILBER: But are there all kinds of  
20 handicapped, is my question, as a general rule?

21           MR. RIM: Actually, I'm talking about the  
22 two blind kids that mentioned it to me.

23           MS. WILBER: Well, I'm glad to hear that.  
24 Thank you.

1           CHIEF McDONALD: Just in closing, as far as  
2 within the department is concerned, along with  
3 opening doors and breaking away from that enclave  
4 that I spoke about earlier, we take officers'  
5 transgressions very seriously. Our door is open to  
6 the community, to anyone to come in who complains  
7 about activities regarding police officers. We  
8 encourage that. It only helps us to become better  
9 when that is done.

10           We thoroughly investigate complaints  
11 against police officers. We don't -- while it's  
12 happening, we don't find fault with them. We have  
13 had some folks that have gone to the media because  
14 they felt that that's the only way they can get  
15 attention, but that's not the way that they have to  
16 do that. My door is open to anyone. You don't have  
17 to be of any affluent section of the community or  
18 any street in the City of Fall River. If you need  
19 to see me, come and see me, make a complaint. All  
20 complaints are investigated.

21           I think we would stand on our record as to  
22 how we have handled what's gone on. We have had  
23 some incidents that were unpleasant and not right  
24 that we addressed, so that those would be handled

1 properly. And we think that Fall River has a high  
2 level of confidence in us, and that's the reason  
3 that we are occupying a brand-new police station  
4 today, I think as a result of our response to the  
5 community and our efforts to help the community.

6 Thank you. I'm sorry for taking so much  
7 time.

8 (Applause)

9 MR. CUSTODIO: Before we go any further,  
10 could you clarify the situation regarding the  
11 citizen participation. Is there going to be any  
12 particular time? How do you address some of the  
13 things that you would like to address?

14 DR. BLANCHARD: Today there are two times  
15 when we hope people would ask questions of the  
16 speakers and say things. One is after each  
17 presentation, and I think that would be a great time  
18 to raise questions and offer comments, in relation  
19 to the speaker.

20 And, two, at the outset, maybe I wasn't  
21 very clear, I indicated that we had a list of people  
22 who we had contacted, whom we had contacted, and who  
23 had contacted us, and we prepared that, but anybody  
24 else who wished to offer comments, we would add them

1 to the list and allow those presentations from the  
2 microphone as time permitted. So in those two ways,  
3 we hope to have an opportunity for people to speak.  
4 So would you like to respond to something?

5 MR. CUSTODIO: All I'm trying to do is  
6 clarify the situation, because you put a telephone  
7 number in the Standard-Times, and it was one of  
8 those robot things, "Just leave your name and number  
9 and we'll call you back," and then all of a sudden  
10 it's off. And it seems to me there is too much  
11 secrecy in regards to the fact -- for instance, it  
12 has been going on for a long time, and then talk  
13 about activists, I don't know how they define  
14 activism.

15 I know one thing, I'm certainly prepared to  
16 deal with some of the subjects that you have up for  
17 discussion, but so far there hasn't seemed to be an  
18 opening, and I want to make sure that I have my  
19 little piece to say regardless.

20 DR. BLANCHARD: My name is Fletcher  
21 Blanchard, and I'm chairman of the State Advisory  
22 Committee for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights,  
23 and I'm largely responsible or at least the one  
24 anyone should blame for the list. Who are you,

1 sir?

2 MR. CUSTODIO: My name is Jack Custodio.  
3 I've lived in New Bedford all my life. I'm 83 years  
4 old. I consider myself an activist, even though I  
5 dislike the term immensely. At my age, I can't even  
6 get out of my own way. But I noticed there was a  
7 paucity, a shortage of people who are actively  
8 involved. I'm speaking from the New Bedford  
9 viewpoint in regards to putting in what I consider  
10 input comparable to what should be put in. So far I  
11 haven't heard anything.

12 DR. BLANCHARD: What we've done, sir, is in  
13 order to allow for maximum exchange among people  
14 from Fall River and New Bedford, elected officials,  
15 civic leaders, and interested community members,  
16 we've sort of divided the day so that the morning is  
17 more devoted to Fall River concerns and regional  
18 concerns, and the afternoon is more focused on the  
19 New Bedford. We have elected officials also coming  
20 from New Bedford.

21 So perhaps, as we move to the afternoon  
22 discussion, there will be more issues that are  
23 relevant to your concerns. I'm not sure, though. I  
24 would be happy to add your name to the list and

1 provide you some time to speak.

2 MR. CUSTODIO: I would be very grateful.

3 DR. BLANCHARD: I would like to next ask  
4 Sambath Rim, who is the director of the  
5 Cambodian Community Center --

6 MR. RIVERA: Before the next speaker comes  
7 up, my name is Crispulo Rivera, and I work for  
8 Citizen to Citizen Spanish Voice in Fall River, and  
9 I have two question. My first question is, what is  
10 it that you hope to accomplish here? And the other  
11 question is, how are you going to follow up on this  
12 after we hear all the testimony?

13 DR. BLANCHARD: Several things. At the  
14 outset, when we began today, I talked about a little  
15 bit, briefly, what the role of the U.S. Commission  
16 on Civil Rights was and what our relationship as an  
17 Advisory Committee to that Commission was. It is  
18 our intention today to hear about the civil rights  
19 concerns of elected officials and civic leaders and  
20 citizens of primarily the Fall River and New Bedford  
21 area, but the surrounding towns as well.

22 We started about a year ago holding public  
23 briefings like this in the various regions of the  
24 state, and we intend to continue for another year

1 with that.

2 Our official function is to advise the U.S.  
3 Commission on Civil Rights of people's concerns. We  
4 are an information-gathering and information-  
5 disseminating body. We have no adjudicatory powers  
6 of any kind in terms of the enforcement of civil  
7 rights laws, but we are an Advisory Committee to the  
8 U.S. Commission.

9 It is our hope that by well intentioned,  
10 active people coming together in a session like  
11 this, that you will carry forward this conversation,  
12 those of you who know best the civil rights issues  
13 and concerns in your region.

14 We hope that the members of the Committee,  
15 who come from all over the Commonwealth -- I'm from  
16 the western part of the state, in Leeds -- will  
17 become much more informed of the issues in that  
18 area. That's a very limited goal, and we don't  
19 promise any more than that.

20 MR. RIVERA: Do you have anybody from the  
21 Spanish community in Fall River?

22 DR. BLANCHARD: First of all, I would --  
23 I'm going to quibble a little bit with you, and I  
24 would say that we have no representatives of any

1 communities here today. We have a person who is  
2 Hispanic who is going to speak on the list from Fall  
3 River, yes. Thank you.

4 MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

5 DR. BLANCHARD: And we would like to add  
6 your name to the list, if you would like to speak.

7 MR. RIVERA: Okay.

8 MR. RIM: Good morning. I'm pleased to be  
9 here. My name is Sam Rim. First, when I come here,  
10 I said I want to mention your name, so you already  
11 asked a question, and you already mentioned your  
12 name, so I'm glad we did that.

13 First of all, I would like to clarify the  
14 difference between refugee and immigrant. I just  
15 don't know what is in your mind when you say  
16 "immigrant," what is in your mind when you say  
17 "refugee," what is in your mind when you say  
18 "black," what is in your mind when you say  
19 "Hispanic," and so on and so on.

20 So I just let you know that refugee, when  
21 you say "refugee," is the people that try to escape  
22 from the death, from the killing, to live in the  
23 country or in the place that can be safe, and  
24 Cambodians fall in that clearly.



1           Cambodians came to Fall River because of  
2 the war that happened in Cambodia and also because  
3 of the 3 1/2 million people that got killed in  
4 Cambodia. And I get very upset with the world, that  
5 not many people know that 3 1/2 million people died  
6 in Cambodia. If two people die in a different part  
7 of the world, I saw it live in the media and the  
8 whole world. That has always been an upset to me.  
9 But it's not Cambodians.

10           15 years, 20 years later, the number of  
11 3 1/2 million people that got killed, now it is  
12 2 million Cambodians got killed, and what they are  
13 trying to do is, they try to manipulate and change  
14 the number. Maybe 20 years from now, only 100,000  
15 people got killed in Cambodia.

16           So I'm very glad that in our community and  
17 the United States, we have the civil rights, the  
18 right to protect citizens, to protect individuals,  
19 and which is very good, but it is not in Cambodia.  
20 And I don't know that the United Nations, they  
21 established the human rights or civil rights or  
22 not.

23           But I just let you know that the action  
24 hasn't really started yet about the people that

1 killed, the people that do an action killing 3 1/2  
2 million people in Cambodia. This is just not  
3 Cambodians. You read in the paper that Cambodians  
4 did this, Cambodians did that, but it is not.

5           The mine is not assembled in Cambodian, the  
6 weapon is not made in Cambodia, the tank is not  
7 built in Cambodia. We have over 10 million mines in  
8 Cambodia, and we have 10 million people in Cambodia.  
9 If one mine explodes and kills one person, it will  
10 wipe out the whole country, and I don't really see  
11 much say in this world yet.

12           So that's why Cambodians left Cambodia,  
13 escape out to come to -- well, I happened to come to  
14 the United States, and Fall River is the city. And  
15 we're very pleased. And also, I just let you know  
16 that before -- I mean, before I stepped on the  
17 borderline, my next step out from Cambodian soil, I  
18 promised myself that it doesn't matter where I go, I  
19 have to get involved in the community and I have to  
20 help the community.

21           Finally, it's almost 20 years that I have  
22 been helping the Cambodian community in Fall River,  
23 and I'm trying to help them as much as I can, and  
24 different kinds of needs, and being a refugee is

1 very poor.

2           When you come over here as an immigrant,  
3 you prepare to come over here, you leave with a  
4 plan. But leaving as a refugee, escaping out of the  
5 country, you try to sneak, and you cannot walk that  
6 far a distance each day, because you worry about  
7 stepping on a mine, on a land mine. And you try to  
8 hide away from the two sides' soldiers that they try  
9 to fight with each other, and you try to find a way  
10 how can you survive on that day for food. That is  
11 very tough.

12           And myself, when I left Cambodia, I had one  
13 shirt and also just like a towel to surround my  
14 under, and that's it. That's what I had. And the  
15 middle of my way, before I got to the border, I  
16 asked for one meal from one family, and they were  
17 very kind enough. Because of Cambodian culture, I  
18 didn't ask their name, because you as a child cannot  
19 ask an adult's name. It doesn't matter how much I  
20 think of them, that they have been helping me, I  
21 don't know their name.

22           So that's why my commitment is to the  
23 community. And come to Fall River, Cambodians used  
24 to live in a hut in the rain in the poor, and come

1 into the United States where we have refrigerator,  
2 we have gas stove, we have electric light. That's  
3 quite different. And that made me taught, and I try  
4 to teach them, I try to get them their apartment, I  
5 try to help them find job.

6 And one thing that is very exciting, when  
7 people doesn't have job and you help them get a job  
8 and they have self-sufficiency. So that is the  
9 exciting thing that I have. And also being a  
10 refugee, you don't know any language, and it is very  
11 optical. When you try to tell people that, yes, "I  
12 have been arrested," you don't know the word how to  
13 tell them.

14 Well, finally, after quite a few years in  
15 the United States, finally I know how to tell them,  
16 and I know how to work, collaborative or cooperative  
17 with the Police Department or different communities,  
18 different organization, in order to get services to  
19 Cambodian people. And so far we have done very good  
20 job.

21 What I say in Cambodian community in Fall  
22 River is how can I work to increase the employment  
23 for Cambodians in Fall River, not just on the  
24 employment for the people that work in just -- in

1 the different factory, different private industry,  
2 but also working in the government or in the  
3 municipal or different nonprofit as well.

4 I always believe that win to win solution  
5 is the better way that we can do. And I'm trying to  
6 work with Mayor Lambert, and I'm trying to work with  
7 Chief Fran McDonald, and from time to time we work  
8 with Cathy Assad from the Flint Neighborhood, our  
9 City Councilor, and also Gene Winston from Exzyme,  
10 Incorporated, and we are still engaging on the  
11 program right now. And I'm working the Reverend  
12 George Short, and Alfredo Alves from Hispanic, and  
13 Marla Valois, on different issues, and try to fit in  
14 what is Cambodian needs.

15 And I'm doing it right now, and talking  
16 about this civil rights, I have nothing to say  
17 negative at this point in time, but let me try to  
18 work further, and I see that the city officials and  
19 different communities really favor or prioritize  
20 that issue as one of the top agenda, and we try to  
21 work together and somehow get all these things  
22 resolved, increase the awareness in the community.  
23 If I can do that, that might make success. At this  
24 point in time, that is what my dream is.

1           And I thank you very much for having me  
2 today, and I'm sorry about mentioning the different  
3 frustrations that I have, my background from  
4 Cambodia. That is because of what I have been  
5 through and through my frustration.

6           Thank you very much.

7           (Applause)

8           DR. BLANCHARD: Any questions? (No  
9 response) I wanted to ask you one. You had told me  
10 about some of the activities that you had in mind  
11 and some of the programs that you were hoping the  
12 City might consider that emphasized some of the  
13 language barriers for Cambodians in Fall River.  
14 Could you speak to that briefly.

15           MR. RIM: Well, in the community is always  
16 scarce resource, and what I'm trying to do is how  
17 can I get resource to support what is the need. And  
18 finally, I saw a grant that is given out from the  
19 federal to help the refugees that have been here  
20 long enough and not really assimilated to the  
21 mainstream community yet. I'm trying to -- and  
22 this grant is they try to get refugees employed in  
23 the different places, in the private nonprofit and  
24 also the public sector.

1           I went to see the Mayor, and I talked with  
2 School Department, and I tried to call you, Chief,  
3 and you were in Boston on that day. And I talked  
4 with Hasbro, and seeing that they can help me to get  
5 Cambodian employed in those areas, and this grant  
6 will give them a salary for one year. After one  
7 year, whoever hired them takes it over.

8           So I think that is going to be a very  
9 successful plan, and I think that it's not me that  
10 recognized the lack of awareness, lack of accessing  
11 of Cambodians to different services, but the people  
12 that I talked to in the City and also the private  
13 nonprofit are aware of that, and it is just lack of  
14 resource. With this resource, I think that can help  
15 us a lot. So that's what we're hoping for. Thank  
16 you.

17           DR. BLANCHARD: Reverend George Short is  
18 going to speak to us next.

19           REVEREND SHORT: I want to apologize for  
20 being late. I was at a ribbon-cutting ceremony that  
21 the Mayor was going to cut the ribbon, but since he  
22 didn't get there, because he was here with you, I  
23 had to cut the ribbon for the Mayor. So we are  
24 filling in, but we're very happy that you have

1 invited me to be here, because as I look around the  
2 room, I think that I'm among those folks who have  
3 been there and did it.

4           So you talk about it; I was there, and I  
5 did it. I participated in the movement. I  
6 participated, and I was 40 years old before I became  
7 black. I was 40. I was 40 years old when we got  
8 the privilege to be able to vote in every state in  
9 the United States. I was 40 years old. So I've  
10 been there, and I have seen it, and I have  
11 participated in it.

12           The difficulty that we are faced with in  
13 Fall River is that Fall River does not have the  
14 kinds of problems that most of the federal  
15 legislation and laws are designed to deal with. We  
16 have less than 1 percent of the population in Fall  
17 River, and when we talk with the Mayor and the  
18 School Superintendent about hiring teachers to be in  
19 our public schools to bring a presence, then we have  
20 to go to Boston and Roxbury and Springfield and  
21 other cities to do some recruiting.

22           So we've been talking among ourselves about  
23 us doing some stuff like recognizing young people  
24 who have ability and who have some skills, and then



1 helping those people to learn how to pass tests, so  
2 that they can take a Civil Service exam and be able  
3 to pass it.

4 I'm also one of those persons who -- I have  
5 difficulty in thinking that unless we have a black  
6 police officer or woman police officer or Hispanic  
7 or Cambodian, that you can't get good service. What  
8 if I call the police and there are no black folks on  
9 duty that night, or the cruiser with the black cop  
10 in it is over across town? What do I do over where  
11 I am at?

12 I want us to come to the point where we are  
13 sensitive to the needs of citizens. I want us to  
14 work hard to come to the point where we don't  
15 identify ourselves as Afro-Americans, Cambodian-  
16 Americans or black women or this, that and the  
17 other. I want us to come to the point where we're  
18 Americans and where we have safety and security for  
19 all of our citizens.

20 To do that, we have to raise the  
21 consciousness of people. And I think the thing that  
22 George Smith says so ably and so correctly is that  
23 we have to raise the consciousness of the people in  
24 our country. You see, we are too insensitive.

1           I was in Apex Monday morning, and I was  
2 bringing some stuff back to the store, and they were  
3 showing the Bulls receiving the award in Chicago.  
4 And one of the salespersons said to the other one,  
5 when they introduced a couple of players, he said,  
6 "Now we're going to get the token whites out of the  
7 way so they can bring on the black stars." He  
8 looked around and he saw me and he dropped his  
9 head. I said, "Don't be upset, son. It's all  
10 right. It's okay. Don't be upset. I know what you  
11 mean," and let it go at that.

12           We are getting to the point where we can  
13 overcome some things, but until we raise the  
14 consciousness of people -- let me give you a good  
15 example. Everybody knows that it was the best thing  
16 and the right thing to have affirmative action in  
17 America. But as some people feel that in order to  
18 have affirmative action, something had to be taken  
19 away from someone and given to somebody else, there  
20 was also the misconception and people felt that we  
21 had to set aside things and give people special  
22 breaks because they weren't qualified, because they  
23 couldn't make it.

24           And here I'm looking at a guy who went into

1 the service as an enlisted man and came out a  
2 major. So we can do it. We can do anything that we  
3 need to do. All we need is a level playing ground.  
4 Now, how do you get a level playing ground? You  
5 have to change the consciousness of people. People  
6 have to believe that this is the right thing to do  
7 and that they ought to do it.

8           When the Police Chief was on my radio show,  
9 a person called in and said, "The problems we have  
10 in Fall River are because of all these people coming  
11 in from Roxbury and Mattapan and all these places,"  
12 and the Chief said, "That is not true. That is not  
13 true." And if you pick up your paper and look at  
14 the list of court dispositions, you will find very  
15 few English surnames.

16           But people have these flash points. When  
17 you say "Roxbury and Mattapan," that means a guy who  
18 is going to be selling dope, it means a woman with  
19 two children and no husband and living in the  
20 projects, it means somebody coming to Fall River to  
21 get on welfare. That is not the case.

22           That is true for some people. My family  
23 moved from Roxbury to Taunton because they didn't  
24 want their kids caught up in the gangs, they didn't

1 want them caught up in the streets of Roxbury, they  
2 didn't want them on the streets doing the things  
3 that people were doing in the inner city. They  
4 wanted them to be out in the suburbs. They didn't  
5 come out here to get on welfare.

6 My son, until he was stricken with cancer,  
7 always had two jobs, and my daughter rode buses and  
8 she drove, she rode trains and everything to get  
9 back and forth to Boston to her job until she was  
10 transferred to Taunton.

11 People didn't come out here for that; they  
12 come out here to take advantage of suburban living  
13 just like you and everybody else does.

14 So we got to get the consciousness of  
15 people raised. And I'm not sure that I have an  
16 answer for that. I'm not sure I have an answer for  
17 that. The second Sunday in February of 1946 I went  
18 into the ministry, and if I can count properly, I  
19 think that's about 52 years of preaching, and I  
20 still don't know how we raise the consciousness of  
21 people.

22 We had a man get shot, the police chased  
23 him from my town, Swansea, all the way down to  
24 Westport, and they shot the fellow. The lawyer came

1 along and said, "I'm going to look and see if there  
2 was any racism in this, and I'm going to try to find  
3 out if this was one of the things."

4 And what did the Police Chief say -- and I  
5 know the Police Chief; his station is across the  
6 street from me; I know him well -- "It looks like  
7 they're pulling an OJ thing here. It looks like  
8 they're going to do Johnnie Cochran. It looks like  
9 they're going to pull a Johnnie Cochran card." And  
10 then the newspaper people, they love that sort of  
11 thing, across the front page of the paper, "Police  
12 Chief Accuses Lawyer of Pulling the Race Card."

13 That is not the way to raise the  
14 consciousness of a community. That is not the way  
15 to get people to overcome prejudice and prejudiced  
16 thinking. We have to stop these racial jokes. We  
17 have to stop calling women broads. We've got to  
18 start looking at women as human beings, and we've  
19 got to teach our boys that. And the way you teach  
20 that is the way you treat your wife and your family  
21 in their home.

22 The reason your boy is in the service now  
23 flying an airplane is because you were home with  
24 him. He knew who his father was. He knew where

1 daddy was, and he also knew if he didn't get those  
2 grades, you would be there standing up looking down  
3 on him. That's what makes kids do right.

4 We've got a lot, a lot, a lot of work to  
5 do, and we are long overdue in getting at it. There  
6 is so much that we've got to do. The Cambodian  
7 community needs help. They need a lot of help. All  
8 of the communities do. But then you've got the poor  
9 white people in America who need a lot of help. We  
10 have 30 million people on welfare. 20 million of  
11 those people are white.

12 We have got to help all of our people, and  
13 until we do that, we're going to have a nation  
14 that's divided and fragmented, and we're going to  
15 have all of these problems that we're talking about.  
16 I don't have the answer to that.

17 And I thank God for young people like Marla  
18 and all these other fine young people coming along,  
19 because they're young enough and strong enough and  
20 able to work on those answers. Old folks like me  
21 can just continually raise the question and say,  
22 "What are you all going to do about it?" That's  
23 what we can do. Thank you so much for your time and  
24 attention.

1 (Applause)

2 MR. RIM: Well, Reverend, I just would like  
3 to clarify that today that I -- speaking at the  
4 podium, the Reverend recommended my name to be one,  
5 and I work very closely with him, and I didn't  
6 mention him on the podium. So I would just like to  
7 clarify that, because we work very closely with the  
8 Reverend Short.

9 MR. CUSTODIO: It's very interesting. You  
10 mentioned this case that happened in Swansea,  
11 because it involves the District Attorney of Bristol  
12 County, Paul Wells, Jr., who conducted a press  
13 conference that even Strom Thurmond would consider  
14 racist in regard to his assumptions, and no one has  
15 done anything about it. I would hope that somewhere  
16 or another that you get involved with it. I've  
17 spoken with the attorney concerned involved with the  
18 young man in question, and it was racist all the  
19 way.

20 But I'm very much interested in the fact  
21 that you say, you know, Roxbury and all those,  
22 quote, inner cities, ghettos, whatever you want to  
23 call them. Did it ever occur to you these were  
24 deliberately done, that people were channelled to

1 these areas? And when you talk about reaction,  
2 there's a reaction right now, a tidal wave on the  
3 Jasper, Texas, incident.

4 But if you will remember, in 1968 the  
5 Kerner report disclosed all of this, gave the  
6 formula, and we're still talking about when are we  
7 going to address the problems. And I'm glad you  
8 focused in on human rights as opposed to civil  
9 rights, and take the element of race out of it  
10 completely. Thank you.

11 REVEREND SHORT: I think that we need to  
12 keep in mind exactly what you're saying. You see, I  
13 lost the debate, and we were working to get the fair  
14 share of the American pie. I was not on that side  
15 that wanted to have affirmative action. I was on  
16 the side that wanted to have a fair playing field.

17 MR. CUSTODIO: Equal opportunity.

18 REVEREND SHORT: Equal opportunity. I lost  
19 out in that debate, especially those strong guys  
20 from Atlanta, Georgia, Joe Lowry and Andy Young and  
21 those guys, they were very strong. They did not  
22 trust white male Americans. They felt that white  
23 male Americans would never, ever do the right thing  
24 and give all people, women and everybody else, a



1 fair shake.

2           My thinking was that we could use the  
3 media, we could use the impetus we had coming out of  
4 the civil rights movement. We could use all of  
5 that, using the strong labor force we had, the  
6 united -- all the churches, the major Protestant  
7 churches, the Catholic church, they all came  
8 together. We had a great, great coalition, and I  
9 thought we could use that to bring about a fair and  
10 just society so all people could have a fair and  
11 equal opportunity.

12           And the reason I believed in that is  
13 because when I went to school, they weren't giving  
14 people money to go to school. I quit school in the  
15 eighth grade, went in the Navy, came back home. I  
16 was married, had two children. I went to high  
17 school, I went to college, I went to seminary, and I  
18 went to graduate school, all of that after I  
19 got confidence as a full-grown man, and I didn't get  
20 a dime of federal funds from anybody.

21           I waited tables all night, and I went to  
22 school all day, and I did everything. I hopped  
23 bells, I did everything I could do to make a buck so  
24 I could go to school, because to have an education

1 to me was so important that there isn't anything I  
2 would not have done.

3 And I didn't draw welfare checks, because  
4 as I told my mother -- Chief, now, don't you hold  
5 this against me -- "Mom, I might be in the Ohio  
6 State Penitentiary, but I'll never, ever be on  
7 welfare." (Applause) And I meant that.

8 So I'm just saying that we have the  
9 resources, and we have the people, and we even  
10 got -- Alfredo Alves is about to get me to vote  
11 Republican for the first time in my life. I never  
12 thought that would happen, until I got to know  
13 Alfredo. But we've got a great opportunity, and  
14 we've got the fine young minds. We've got the  
15 people.

16 We can do this thing, but we've got to have  
17 the resolve. We've got to have the same feeling  
18 about this that we have with putting a man on the  
19 Moon. We've got to come together and make that a  
20 priority, and then set out to do it, because I tell  
21 you what, it will benefit every human being on the  
22 face of the planet if we do it, and we can do it.  
23 We just have to do it, that's all there is to it.

24 Let me ask you all to do something for me.

1 Would you just try to stand up, just everybody just  
2 try to stand up. (Audience stand up) My goodness,  
3 everybody is standing up. That's all. What you  
4 try, you can do.

5 DR. BLANCHARD: I would like to invite  
6 Marla Valois to speak next, who is an organizer for  
7 the Coalition Against Poverty.

8 MS. VALOIS: I would like to say that I am  
9 privileged to be here today, in a group of people  
10 who are as concerned about civil rights issues as I  
11 am myself. And any time I speak to a group, I like  
12 to say a couple of sentences about myself so people  
13 can know exactly the context of what I am saying and  
14 my message.

15 I am a mother of two children, I'm a wife,  
16 I'm a former welfare recipient, and I am an  
17 undergraduate at Rhode Island College in the social  
18 work program, and I'm a community organizer for the  
19 Coalition Against Poverty that basically works on  
20 low-income issues concerning economic survival,  
21 mostly orientated to getting people who are on  
22 welfare activist orientated.

23 I sort of got involved in this, I guess,  
24 just by living and being a minority in this area. I

1 am optimistic about the future of Fall River,  
2 although it's true what the Mayor and so many have  
3 said, but I want to echo, that we do have a long way  
4 to go.

5 I would like to thank everybody that came  
6 here that I work closely with for coming out and  
7 saying stuff so that I don't have to say it. I can  
8 get right to the point that I want to make.

9 My interests are professional interests and  
10 a personal interest. I want to see the City of Fall  
11 River be culturally sensitive to all people, not  
12 just African-Americans, although that's a personal  
13 dream of mine, but to the Khmer population, to  
14 women, all groups that are oppressed, and people  
15 getting off of welfare.

16 I think what is driving a lot of the  
17 troubles in the Fall River area is the lack of  
18 resources and jobs. And when people get pushed so  
19 tight and their resources are limited, they start  
20 doing desperate things like, you know, hate crimes  
21 and things of that nature. And it's because they're  
22 looking at, you know, black folks, Latino folks, as  
23 the source of the problem, when really if everybody  
24 had opportunities and chances to do better and do

1 well, I think we would see a lot less of that.

2 I would also like to say that it isn't  
3 going to just take the administration or commissions  
4 that are going to come in and talk to us about civil  
5 rights, it's a lot of hard work and dedication, and  
6 it's a lot of raising the consciousness, like  
7 Reverend Short had talked about.

8 But also the institutions that we look to,  
9 to help guide us in our day-to-day activities, to  
10 provide us with jobs in the institutions, also have  
11 to be accountable for the civil rights and also keep  
12 that in mind, because they are what people look up  
13 to, meaning that if they see police officers and  
14 teachers of color and administrators of color and  
15 different backgrounds being supported in their  
16 environment and their work situations, that they  
17 would be more apt to act accordingly.

18 I have some visions for the future. My  
19 visions are just so that when my children go to  
20 school or any minority children go to school, that  
21 they can see teachers and counselors that reflect  
22 what they see at home. I would like to see, when I  
23 go into the store with my family, people offering me  
24 assistance, that it is really on the auspices of

1 giving assistance and not seeing if I am trying to  
2 steal, and things of that nature.

3           It's those everyday personal things that  
4 really seem oppressive. And then if you add that to  
5 people not being able to feel like they can, you  
6 know, take empowerment, because I'm in the business  
7 of empowering people, and I'm also in the business  
8 of providing a voice for those who otherwise go  
9 unlistened to or unheard.

10           We do most of our work in the developments  
11 in Fall River, federally funded, state funded. And  
12 what we have seen, what my impressions have been, is  
13 people feel so isolated from the government, and  
14 they feel so isolated from teachers and different  
15 administrations, that they don't feel that open-door  
16 policy that the Police Chief mentioned. Although it  
17 might be his reality, they don't feel that same  
18 way. So it's my job to fill that gap in between  
19 what people feel they can talk to and speak to the  
20 issues concerning people.

21           So I would say that I would like to see  
22 things change, and I am working -- we are all  
23 working together with the Mayor, and we're  
24 optimistic, and I'll be trying to get people

1 involved that otherwise wouldn't be involved in  
2 these processes. There are a lot of good people out  
3 there that don't feel that their voice counts or  
4 that their input is relevant. I hope to change  
5 that.

6 I would like to see a commission set up  
7 that was made up of community people that if they  
8 felt that they were treated unfairly and their civil  
9 rights were violated, that they wouldn't have to  
10 call a Boston office or a federal agency, that they  
11 could come in and say those issues to a legal body  
12 that had some sort of governing. And, you know, to  
13 that end, I mean, I've been working. I am a new kid  
14 on the block, and I've been working around issues  
15 and doing organizing for three years.

16 I am committed to the struggles of civil  
17 rights for all, like Reverend Short said, and there  
18 is a lot of stigmatism concerning people who are on  
19 welfare. I was on welfare myself, and that alone  
20 seems like a civil rights violation, because you are  
21 expected to live on a little bit of money and you're  
22 treated like a second-class citizen.

23 So by the time I got past the race thing  
24 and the woman thing and the welfare thing, it didn't

1 seem like anybody really cared about who I was  
2 inside. But it's through this kind of speaking out  
3 and activism that I could become empowered to speak  
4 to a group like I'm speaking today.

5           The social worker in me wants to go and  
6 help and fix all the problems of society, but I know  
7 it's done one meeting at a time, one person at a  
8 time, you know, just one step at a time. And I'm  
9 pretty optimistic about working with the Mayor and  
10 the Police Chief and the School Superintendent, and  
11 I know it's a long road, but I'm committed to the  
12 struggle.

13           I won't take up any more time, but I'm glad  
14 to be here with a group of people that care about  
15 these issues just like I do. Thank you.

16           (Applause)

17           DR. BLANCHARD: Sharon Wilber will speak.

18           MR. CHUN: Our Chairman is stepping out for  
19 a few minutes, and let me just fill in. Our next  
20 speaker or commentator will be Sharon Wilber.

21           MS. WILBER: Thank you. I'm proud to be  
22 here. The reason I'm even at this meeting is  
23 because I'm living in a very oppressed situation  
24 right now. I'm 53, I live in Bay Village public



1 housing, and I feel oppressed from every direction.  
2 I feel like living in Bay Village has taken away my  
3 pride. They took away my motorcycle, my camper, all  
4 the things that I care about. And I've seen them do  
5 it with my friends. So I guess they pushed me to  
6 the corner where I finally said, "Wait a minute.  
7 I'm going to stand up, and I'm going to start  
8 fighting back."

9           So several of us neighbors have got  
10 together, and I guess they're getting fired up too.  
11 The man who runs the Housing Authority certainly  
12 isn't humanitarian, and he really doesn't care about  
13 the civil rights of the tenants or anybody else,  
14 just the almighty dollar and his friends.

15           But I listened to him speak today  
16 (indicating Reverend Short), and I said, "Wow. We  
17 need to put values back in people." And I would  
18 like to share something with you that's been a very  
19 special spot in my heart for many years.

20           I have a handicapped son. I dare you just  
21 to see him now. He works as a barefoot skier at  
22 Sea World. Ask me if I'm a proud mom. I damn sure  
23 am. It didn't come easy, and it didn't happen just  
24 like that. A doctor, a pediatrician named Dr. Chris

1 Johnson, gave my son the life that he deserved.

2 We have a place called Children's  
3 Association for Maximum Potential, and we call it  
4 CAMP. It is 54 acres in Center Point, Texas, and it  
5 started out as an Air Force program because a lady  
6 wanted her daughter who was retarded to go to camp  
7 like other kids.

8 Well, a bunch us women, five of us, got  
9 together and we said, "You know what, let's do it."  
10 And we did. We raised our own money. I was the  
11 fund-raiser. I was also a fun-raiser. We had ball  
12 games. We did crazy, happy things, and we ran car  
13 washes. We raised money, and we took 28 children,  
14 handicapped from leukemia, some had tracheotomies,  
15 hemophilia, wheelchairs, spina bifida. We all went  
16 to CAMP for three days. What a wonderful time. Do  
17 you know where my kids are today? My son is a  
18 barefoot skier and a first-rate boat mechanic for  
19 Sea World.

20 There is a couple of people that have gone  
21 up to be working -- a deaf boy who is working in a  
22 machine factory where nobody else wants to work  
23 because it's so darn loud. Kids in wheelchairs are  
24 in normal lives.

1           In San Antonio, Texas, where I lived, I  
2 would say 1977, there were a whole lot of special  
3 education classes. They are all gone, just about  
4 gone. All these kids are mainstreamed into normal  
5 classrooms with normal settings. The only kids in  
6 the special classes were once sitting in  
7 institutions with nobody that gave a damn. They're  
8 even going to school too.

9           I think that our program started out with a  
10 little dream for a few kids, and it spread out to  
11 the high schools. We took the high school kids and  
12 taught them how to baby-sit handicapped children.  
13 The leader, and she is still the leader today, since  
14 '77 -- how many years is that; that's 20 years,  
15 right, 21 years -- she is the leader at CAMP. She  
16 tried to commit suicide at 14, because she believed  
17 her parents' divorce was her fault. We got her in  
18 with handicapped kids. She got all of her friends.  
19 We have all these high school kids making a  
20 difference in today's society.

21           Why don't we have it here? When are we  
22 going to get started?

23           That's all I have to say.

24           (Applause)

1 MR. CHUN: Next we have a Mr. Chris Rivera  
2 who will be addressing forgiveness.

3 MR. RIVERA: I won't take too much time. I  
4 know everybody is anxious for lunch. First of all,  
5 my name is Chrispulo Rivera, and I'm with Spanish  
6 Voice Citizen to Citizen in Fall River, and I want  
7 to mention that when I got the job, back in August,  
8 I was told by the director of the organization that  
9 they wanted to open up a Spanish community center to  
10 do community work.

11 Well, you know, talking as a community, you  
12 need to have relationships with those around you.  
13 So I went to the community, and what happened was,  
14 it was like opening a can of worms. There are all  
15 kinds of problems that we've got in the City of Fall  
16 River, and I don't want to get into the detail on  
17 that, but I know that we have started to work with  
18 the Mayor, and I would like for the Mayor to take  
19 concerns and issues that affect the Hispanic  
20 community and work with us, and I know that together  
21 we will start breaking ground. Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 DR. BLANCHARD: Are there comments or  
24 observations that anyone would like to make at this

1 point in the day? (No response) Okay. We will  
2 break, then, for one half hour at one o'clock and  
3 reconvene, and we will continue the discussion and  
4 especially focus now on people that will talk about  
5 New Bedford.

6 (Luncheon recess)  
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## 1 AFTERNOON SESSION

2 MR. BARROWS: We have a full afternoon of  
3 activities, so I'm going to go ahead and get started  
4 before Mr. Fletcher Blanchard comes back. He's  
5 talking with the reporter for the time being.

6 For those of you who are just joining us  
7 this afternoon, I want to bid you a good afternoon.  
8 My name is Ray Barrows, the Executive Director for  
9 Recruitment and Retention of Culturally Diverse  
10 Students here at University of Massachusetts  
11 Dartmouth.

12 This afternoon we're going to transition  
13 from the community of Fall River to the community of  
14 New Bedford. We have several speakers lined up to  
15 come before you and give presentations. And after  
16 we finish the presentations, as was indicated in the  
17 earlier session, if there are any individuals in the  
18 audience that would like to come forward and share  
19 your thoughts, ideas, suggestions, constructive  
20 criticism or otherwise comments about any issues  
21 dealing with civil rights, we encourage you to feel  
22 free to do so.

23 We're waiting for Fletcher to start the  
24 program to get started this afternoon. Mayor Kalisz

1 will be joining us a little bit later on this  
2 afternoon, approximately 2:30. So you will have an  
3 opportunity to hear a presentation from Mayor  
4 Kalisz.

5 So once again, welcome back this afternoon.

6 DR. BLANCHARD: I think we would like to  
7 start this afternoon with Lee Charlton speaking to  
8 us, offering his views, and this afternoon we intend  
9 to focus on the region again, but primarily on New  
10 Bedford.

11 (Applause)

12 MR. CHARLTON: It is just as well that you  
13 applaud before I start. You probably won't  
14 afterwards. I most desperately wanted the two  
15 mayors to be here, Mayor Lambert and Mayor Kalisz,  
16 because I'm going to take exception to some of the  
17 spin that the officials of cities usually take to  
18 make their cities look good.

19 The situation doesn't look good, and it's  
20 going to get worse. It has been stated that the  
21 first order of business in America is business. Any  
22 solution to our current problems that does not  
23 address the economy I think is seriously flawed.

24 As we speak, there is an unprecedented

1 economic boom going on in Boston and some of the  
2 other parts of this state. Just today on the front  
3 page of the Standard-Times was the article "Welfare  
4 Reform Lags in the Two Cities, New Bedford and Fall  
5 River."

6 A couple of months ago I put together a  
7 composite picture, based on the complaints that I  
8 was receiving from Fall River. I was receiving  
9 calls referred to me from Boston, the Boston NAACP,  
10 because young women who had been relocated to Fall  
11 River were being assaulted, racial assaults. They  
12 were calling their parents in Boston. Their parents  
13 were calling the NAACP in Boston. They were  
14 referring the calls to me.

15 And my first question is, Why are so many  
16 people being sent to Fall River? It seems as though  
17 Fall River had something like a 20 percent vacancy  
18 rate in their public housing, not to mention a lot  
19 of private low-cost housing. The social service  
20 agencies in Boston were advising the recipients to  
21 move and relocate.

22 If you are a recipient of welfare, and I  
23 believe they were receiving \$579 a month, and if  
24 \$450 went for rent in Boston at probably the most



1 undesirable location you could find, it was  
2 suggested people in Boston at least can do the math,  
3 and they were moving down because they had few  
4 options.

5 But we know, due to Weld and his reform,  
6 that these people will only be able to receive  
7 welfare 24 out of 60 months. A lot of that time is  
8 ebbing away. And what was happening in Fall River  
9 was not the normal reaction to a new person in the  
10 neighborhood. They were being beat up, hit, what  
11 have you.

12 Now, I called not the Mayor, but the Police  
13 Chief on this, and he told me he was going to put  
14 someone on it, and I don't know what he actually did  
15 or not, because I've come to this point in my life  
16 that I really don't believe in shuttle diplomacy.

17 So I made a comment to the Herald, the  
18 Boston Herald, when a young man was beaten into  
19 unconsciousness, that this was not a rare occurrence  
20 in the City of Fall River, not based on what I had  
21 been hearing for the last six months. And of course  
22 the paper interviewed the Mayor, and he told them  
23 about his diversity month and these kinds of  
24 things. It's different when your children get

1 together and have rice and beans and their parents  
2 go back to the neighborhood and they fist-fight over  
3 jobs. This is what is happening.

4           The polarization has happened because of  
5 the economy. How can social service agencies in  
6 Boston send people to the Fall River/New Bedford  
7 area knowing that they are mortgaging the futures of  
8 these young children? There are at least entry  
9 level jobs. There are more social service agencies  
10 in Boston, of course, than in Fall River or New  
11 Bedford. But what you see is gentrification taking  
12 place. You see a mass removal of people from the  
13 Boston area and shifting to the New Bedford area.

14           As usual, Boston gets the benefit of all  
15 the economic advantages, the Big Dig. They have the  
16 Big Dig. New Bedford and Fall River have inherited  
17 the shaft. And what I would like to say is that I  
18 don't have any kind words for the Mayor of Boston  
19 who is allowing this to happen when he is  
20 contemplating building a new City Hall, a new sports  
21 complex, and at the same time they are making people  
22 refugees in their own country by sending them down  
23 where there's a cultural and an economic shock.

24           They're actually petitioning the

1     Legislature and Immigration to allow the immigration  
2     quota to open up so they can get more higher skilled  
3     immigrants into this country, while they're trying  
4     to find a way to deport other immigrants that are  
5     already here.

6             Now they have declared a moratorium on  
7     people in Boston. They would like to ship them out,  
8     kick them out, push them out, any way they can get  
9     them out. But what needs to be said -- and I wanted  
10    the press to cover this; at least the people in  
11    Boston and the people in Fall River should know the  
12    real truth, what is happening -- they have been  
13    sacrificed on the altar of the dollar.

14            You see, in America, black and white is not  
15    so much the problem as it is green, but in America  
16    black and white decides who gets the green. And any  
17    way you want to do that, it comes out the same, that  
18    in Fall River, no matter how many diversity weeks  
19    they have, and in New Bedford, no matter what that  
20    mayor is doing or proposing to do, jobs are not  
21    going where they're needed, and those voices who  
22    speak the loudest are those voices that are already  
23    entrenched in the system.

24            Now, what we all need to do is be on the

1 same page. I know that Dan Gilbarg and his  
2 coalition, you're right on, Dan, on what's going to  
3 happen, and you're right on with what's going to  
4 happen in December. It's just like the chiefs of  
5 New Bedford and Fall River are pushing a large rock  
6 up a hill. They miss a beat, and they are going to  
7 have an avalanche.

8           Unless we can pull the plug on what they're  
9 doing in Boston -- I've actually found out from the  
10 welfare agency here in New Bedford that there are  
11 chartered buses coming to New Bedford with women  
12 looking for houses. In 21 years driving up Acushnet  
13 Avenue, in the last six months I've seen more people  
14 of color waiting on school buses than ever before.

15           And I suggest that at some point when the  
16 resources that alleviates the pain goes or is  
17 exhausted, we're going to have open conflict, and  
18 it's going to manifest itself in racial  
19 discrimination, but that's not the root cause. The  
20 root cause is the ability of those people in Boston  
21 to ship people here and also that same Legislature  
22 that voted for welfare reform to ignore the problem.

23           Now, what I'm going to do, people who call  
24 me, I'm going to give them a couple of numbers. The

1 first number I'm going to give them is the Mayor of  
2 Fall River. The second number is to the Boston  
3 Herald. So I don't think that people who are in  
4 power to do something about the problem should be  
5 able to duck it. And I'm not going to do this  
6 shuttle diplomacy and putting out fires here and  
7 there to no avail, because I realize this is bigger  
8 than all of us. And if we don't get some help soon,  
9 you're going to see a bloodletting. It has happened  
10 before, and it's about to happen again.

11 I am glad that the Civil Rights Commission  
12 is looking into this, because those explosions that  
13 we witnessed back in the '60s happened for one  
14 reason: People got to the level where they couldn't  
15 take it anymore. And they will reach this level  
16 faster this time because people know that it's not  
17 necessary for them to suffer this injustice.

18 You can't have a lady who came down as the  
19 article in the paper, Rose Jolly, a lady who is a  
20 Bostonian who was told to come to New Bedford. She  
21 does not particularly like the area. The lady has  
22 to come down and take up another language in order  
23 to speak to her neighbors. Well, who would like to  
24 do that? You know, especially when your ancestors

1 have been in the country since 1619, why should you  
2 have to take up another language to live in your own  
3 country?

4           So just this morning, before I was leaving,  
5 before I was getting out of the car coming to this  
6 at exactly 10:20, I heard on the radio, and some of  
7 you might have heard, some lady called up and, based  
8 on this on the front page, blamed all the ills in  
9 New Bedford on the Puerto Ricans. She identified  
10 herself as Portuguese, and she was taken to task by  
11 Stan Little. But she says, "If it makes you feel  
12 any better, I'll throw in the other ethnic groups  
13 too." You are accused of everything but rain.

14           So this is where we are. Before you can  
15 solve a problem, you first have to admit you have a  
16 problem. New Bedford and Fall River are in denial.  
17 I have told the Mayor, and I'm going to keep on  
18 telling the Mayor -- once I was quoted in the  
19 Herald. I got a call from Marty Walsh, Department  
20 of Justice, and he asked me what did I want him to  
21 do. And I told him I wanted him to do his job.

22           I'm here on vacation today. This is how I  
23 spend my vacation, so I'm going to make it pay for  
24 something. I couldn't use my vacation in a better

1 way. But we have law enforcement agencies. If it's  
2 discriminatory, it's against the law. If it's  
3 against the law, there is an agency that has been  
4 paid to enforce the law, and there is a person or  
5 director and employees. That's their job.

6 My job is going to be to point them out, to  
7 put their name in the paper, and you can count on  
8 it. I'm going to do it, and if it alienates them, I  
9 don't care. I don't want to be popular, I want to  
10 be effective. So from this day forward, for those  
11 folks who don't do their job, I'm going to use every  
12 means available to publicize their name and their  
13 inaction, and that's a promise.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause)

16 DR. BLANCHARD: Are there any questions or  
17 comments?

18 MR. EDD: My name is Everster Edd, and I  
19 represent the U.S. Labor Department, and I'm from  
20 the Boston District Office. And our Deputy  
21 Assistant Secretary, Shirley Wilshire, this week she  
22 met with Leonard Alkins, the Boston president.

23 I was wondering, I have a question  
24 concerning employment opportunities in the Fall

1 River and New Bedford area. You mentioned that  
2 persons are applying for positions. I just  
3 wondered, is it a situation where persons are  
4 applying for positions and they're not being  
5 considered for them, or exactly --

6 MR. CHARLTON: First I would like to say,  
7 what position? There are a dearth of jobs here.  
8 New Bedford has lost 10,000 jobs in the last 12  
9 years. Manufacturing goes looking for cheap labor.  
10 If they can't find it here, they find it overseas.  
11 And for the longest time, New Bedford had a pipeline  
12 to Cape Verde and to Portugal. And now these people  
13 are considered surplus, disposable people. They are  
14 here now, but their work is gone. They don't need  
15 them anymore, and now they set about doing away with  
16 them. That's the problem. Anyone else?

17 MR. CHUN: Were you here this morning?

18 MR. CHARLTON: Yes, sir, I was.

19 MR. CHUN: Then I don't have to explain  
20 that I sat through this morning, and I got the  
21 impression that particularly in the City of Fall  
22 River, there aren't any problems; if there are, they  
23 are being worked on, and progress is being made. So  
24 you get a sense of progress and more or less



1 relative tranquility, whereas I hear you sort of  
2 painting a different picture.

3 MR. CHARLTON: I'm telling you the truth.  
4 I have the cases to back it up.

5 MR. CHUN: How do you explain, why this  
6 sense of relative denial or relative tranquility  
7 imparted by community people? I can understand city  
8 officials doing this, but we did have three or four  
9 community persons, and I was just wondering whether  
10 you have an explanation for that.

11 MS. VALOIS: Could I answer that question,  
12 because I'm a community activist in Fall River. I  
13 see a lot of problems, and I wanted to speak to them  
14 today, but I know that in the goals to create  
15 change, I have to work with a lot of people that  
16 were here today, so I didn't feel like I -- I  
17 didn't know where to go with what I was going  
18 through.

19 There are significant problems in Fall  
20 River. We've had a boy that was beaten next to  
21 death. But what was my role? My role, what I  
22 wanted as a person, I was looking for goals and  
23 strategies to effect change, and so that's what I  
24 was speaking to.

1           I think that we can sit around all day and  
2 talk about the problems, but I think my perspective  
3 is one of solution. So my main goal today was to  
4 try to find solutions to deal with problems, and  
5 working with the administration seemed to be one of  
6 them.

7           But I could talk until five about the  
8 problems in Fall River, from my own perspective,  
9 being black in an all-white city, or I can speak to  
10 it from the constituents that I serve every day.  
11 They don't get housing like they should. Once they  
12 do get the housing, they don't get treated fairly  
13 when they're in there. When you're on welfare, you  
14 have a whole separate set of circumstances on top of  
15 the race, and it goes on and on and on.

16           So, I mean, to the point that I could clear  
17 that up, there are many problems around race and  
18 civil rights issues, but as I did mention, they are  
19 being worked on. But, you know, that's where I was  
20 coming from in my talk.

21           MR. CHARLTON: Well, my take on it is, of  
22 course, she has to work with these people. When I  
23 called them up, I got glossed over, and I've been  
24 through that too many times to take it. And whether

1 they like me or not, it doesn't matter, I don't work  
2 for them or with them. What I'm going to do is tell  
3 the truth on them. They don't want to hear it, they  
4 never do.

5 But what has happened, an economic  
6 condition has been pushed to a civil rights  
7 solution. And you never are going to solve the  
8 civil rights part of this thing, because you become  
9 polarized. If there are two jobs, and it was  
10 somebody and my cousin, I bet you my cousin gets the  
11 job, you know, especially if I'm passing it out. So  
12 if I don't look like anybody who is doing the  
13 hiring, chances are I won't get that job.

14 But if there are enough jobs to go around,  
15 and there is no competition for that job, it doesn't  
16 tighten up that way. You know, Sam Rim was here. I  
17 met Sam, and I think Sam is sincere, but Sam is  
18 ingratiating the Mayor and the Police Chief. You  
19 know, the Police Chief, I call him, and he gave the  
20 same, you know, he could be an advertisement for  
21 Sominex. And I don't want to be unkind, but that's  
22 about what I got out of the man, you know, nothing  
23 is happening, everything is okay.

24 People are getting beat up. My child got

1 beat up. I wanted some action from Fall River.  
2 It's his job to do something about the violent act,  
3 but the violent act was precipitated by people  
4 moving into an area where they were not welcome, and  
5 that was based on hate, based on race, based on  
6 ignorance. So it's a whole litany of things, but at  
7 the bottom is dollars.

8 MR. CHUN: Thank you very much.

9 DR. BLANCHARD: Yes.

10 MR. RIVERA: I want to make a comment about  
11 what is being said. I work in Fall River, but I  
12 live in New Bedford, and about four months ago there  
13 was an opportunity for me to apply for a position in  
14 the City, which I applied for the position, and  
15 immediately the application disappeared. Four  
16 months later, I get a letter from the Employment  
17 Department, telling me that the position has been  
18 filled. And that has not only happened to me, it  
19 happens to many people in the community. So this is  
20 what is happening, and this is happening in New  
21 Bedford, okay.

22 DR. BLANCHARD: Does that sound like a  
23 specific Department of Labor issue that he might  
24 raise with you?

1           MR. EDD: The thing I wanted to point out  
2 is that from the discussion I heard just going by  
3 our own office in Boston, that we receive very few  
4 complaints coming from this community. And we know  
5 and the Department of Labor is well aware of the  
6 fact that discrimination still exists in the  
7 employment realm. But the issue is that we can't do  
8 anything about it unless people speak up.

9           So one of the things I did bring with me  
10 today is several copies of our complaint form, so if  
11 you need directions in terms of filling out forms, I  
12 have my card attached to it. I mean, we know that  
13 discrimination exists out there, in the employment,  
14 as far as employment is concerned, but we need to  
15 hear from the community in order to investigate it.

16           MR. RIVERA: I would like to have that one  
17 investigated, that particular incident. I live in  
18 New Bedford. I pay my property taxes in New  
19 Bedford. I would like to work near home instead of  
20 driving to Fall River. That happened to me, and I  
21 am pretty sure it happened to a lot people, you  
22 know.

23           DR. BLANCHARD: So let's follow up on it.  
24 I just want to interrupt for a minute, and

1 let me introduce the members of the Committee who  
2 have come in since we've begun. First on my left is  
3 Yuong Jung. Next to him is Tani Sapirstein. On my  
4 right is the Director of the Northeast Region for  
5 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Ki-Taek Chun,  
6 and next to him is Dale Jenkins. So we are members  
7 of the State Advisory Committee here today.

8 Next -- yes.

9 PROFESSOR GILBARG: Just to continue with  
10 this documentation, I teach at a community college  
11 in Fall River, so I hear all sorts of things. And I  
12 have mainly white students, and based on that, I  
13 don't get the kind of information I would have if I  
14 had a lot of people of color in my classes, and yet  
15 just let me tell you a few things I've heard.

16 One student, this is actually a black  
17 student, talked about working at a major textile  
18 factory in Fall River, Duro Finishing -- I'm going  
19 to name names -- which is one of the better paying  
20 places in Fall River. That isn't saying it's very  
21 good paying, but for Fall River it is better paying.

22 He was excited about working at a better  
23 paying job. He had a bunch of his friends come in  
24 and apply. Nobody got hired. Several people came

1 in and were told they weren't talking applications,  
2 and white applicants came in right afterwards or  
3 right before and did get applications. That was a  
4 few years ago, but I wouldn't be surprised if it's  
5 the same thing now.

6 Another thing I heard in Somerset, a white  
7 family wanted to sell their house, put their house  
8 up on the market, didn't get any offers, found out  
9 through the grapevine that a black family had gone  
10 to a realtor, was interested in the house, and was  
11 told that there was already an offer on it, so they  
12 didn't show it to them.

13 Another example I heard from a student this  
14 semester was, in Westport, a black policeman, a  
15 state cop, bought a house in Westport. His family  
16 was so thoroughly harassed that he was forced to  
17 move. You know, a middle-class person, met all the  
18 criteria for the neighborhood. The person that told  
19 me lived in the neighborhood and said that she  
20 didn't think there was anything at all that the  
21 family had done to deserve this, you know, totally  
22 racist reaction to his living there.

23 I have also had several interracial couples  
24 where the white member of the interracial couple

1 told me about their partner going out and applying  
2 for housing, trying to get rental housing, being  
3 turned down. They go in and apply and get the place  
4 afterwards, and then they show up and the landlord  
5 is all shocked.

6 So those are just a few things at an  
7 impressionistic level that I've heard just through  
8 the grapevine, and I think that's just the skimming  
9 the surface, and I could give the same examples from  
10 New Bedford, but we're talking about Fall River now,  
11 and that's the stuff I've heard.

12 MR. CUSTODIO: I want to address the  
13 Department of Labor, the Department of Justice, the  
14 MCAD. Any of these organizations that are supposed  
15 to be geared towards Civil Service are nonexistent.  
16 When he said there was no complaints, there have  
17 been complaints turned in to Governor Weld as well  
18 as Governor Cellucci, who just came into power, plus  
19 the Representatives, our State Representatives,  
20 State Senators, and nothing ever happens.

21 Now, you know, you talk about being on  
22 vacation. I do this 365 days a year. I never stop,  
23 you see. And I'm consistently in the foreground. I  
24 guess I'm the most notorious lightning rod in the



1 area. As far as the action is concerned, I'm  
2 waiting for the Mayor to get here so I can confront  
3 him with some of these things that are not  
4 happening, even though he just became the Mayor. We  
5 have gone through six years of absolute turmoil and  
6 chaos because of a racist female, and that's  
7 unusual. I'm talking about Mayor Tierney.

8 But the point is, you people come in here  
9 very respectful looking and dignified and certainly  
10 well attired. If they want to come into New  
11 Bedford, let them speak to the people, not these  
12 ceremonial groups. And I defy anybody to contradict  
13 me. Trust me, there isn't one organization, black,  
14 white or green, including my own, Minority Action  
15 Committee, that is doing anything constructive  
16 progressively and with a little belligerency with  
17 regard to remedying conditions in New Bedford.

18 And at my advanced age of 83 years, things  
19 are the worst -- I have to use the term because it's  
20 more graphic -- that they ever have been, especially  
21 in regard to employment. I've been the victim of  
22 unemployment, underemployment most of my life. And  
23 it hasn't changed one bit, and I don't see anything  
24 that's optimistic for the future.

1           And the other thing is, if we're going to  
2 talk about this, we have to take off our little  
3 boxers' sparring gloves. We can't really hurt  
4 anybody; they're 16 ounces, I believe. It has been  
5 a long time, but I know one thing, when you put on  
6 the 6- and 8-ounce gloves, you're going to do a lot  
7 of damage.

8           This particular group, right from the  
9 beginning, I've been suspicious of it. I've made my  
10 statement to the public, to the press and everything  
11 else, and I'll reiterate, this particular group is  
12 not doing anywhere near what it was commissioned to  
13 do.

14           And the mere fact that you have a panel of  
15 17 names, most of whom I would disagree with  
16 entirely, black or white -- for instance, you don't  
17 have a black man on here. You don't have a Hispanic  
18 man on here. You have a couple of black women on it  
19 and Hispanic women, but who makes the choices of  
20 these people? I want to know, who makes the  
21 choices?

22           DR. BLANCHARD: Excuse me. I'm not clear  
23 on which group you are saying.

24           MR. CUSTODIO: In conjunction with the

1 newspaper stories I've read, and I have them right  
2 here, 17 people have been working on this for 18  
3 months, and there is no individual that -- I don't  
4 care what they say, I don't care what organization.  
5 I have been connected with it longer than anybody  
6 else. I've been involved with it longer than  
7 anybody else. I've paid physically, mentally and  
8 any way you can think of in regard to my role. And  
9 the funny part of it is, it's no better now,  
10 including the MCAD. None of it has done any good.

11 I made a complaint about a radio station,  
12 and they fired him, because they couldn't afford my  
13 money. I offered to work for free under the same  
14 circumstances. Yup, the decision is still upheld.

15 So when you talk about these organizations  
16 that have representatives and all that, they're  
17 establishment oriented, and I'm being nice, and  
18 they're establishment groups that we have here  
19 ostensibly to represent the poor, and that's what I  
20 said it was all about. This shouldn't be civil  
21 rights, this should be human rights, encompassing  
22 everybody, and the poor whites by far are the  
23 majority.

24 So I'll get off my soapbox. I want to save

1 all of this for Mayor Kalisz when he gets here.

2 DR. BLANCHARD: Just briefly, when we're  
3 finished with the meeting, I will take you through  
4 the names of the members on the State Advisory  
5 Committee and point out their gender and ethnicity  
6 for you.

7 MR. CUSTODIO: Give me their addresses as  
8 well.

9 DR. BLANCHARD: They are all part of the  
10 public record, sir, and you can have them. But I  
11 would like to move on.

12 MR. CUSTODIO: You're giving me political  
13 jargon. I don't want to hear about it. Your  
14 Commission and all the others are bogus.

15 DR. BLANCHARD: Thank you for your opinion.

16 MR. CUSTODIO: You don't have to thank me.  
17 It's for free.

18 DR. BLANCHARD: Emilio Cruz is scheduled to  
19 speak next, from the Mayor's Office for Hispanic  
20 Affairs.

21 (Applause)

22 MR. CRUZ: Good afternoon. It's a pleasure  
23 to be here talking about some civil rights issues  
24 that are affecting our community. Those issues are

1 not affecting only the Hispanics but the other  
2 communities, Cape Verdean, Portuguese as well. You  
3 know, I don't want to speak only on behalf of the  
4 Hispanics, I want to speak about the community, what  
5 I am seeing in the community.

6 I know a lot of people that are doing so  
7 many good things, trying to fix the discrimination  
8 in New Bedford, but there is still a lot to do to  
9 resolve the situation about civil rights. I would  
10 like to present some pictures that prove that  
11 discrimination and civil rights violation is still  
12 happening in our society.

13 Before that, there was a question about why  
14 the people are afraid to talk about these issues. I  
15 think the problem is, they are afraid of retaliation  
16 from the agencies that are supposed to bring -- to  
17 resolve the problems, and I know probably that's the  
18 reason people don't want to speak about those  
19 issues.

20 But number one, if we talk in terms of  
21 education, we are facing a big problem in the School  
22 Department. Some teachers are telling our students  
23 that they have no material to go to college, because  
24 they can work in factories, they can work in the

1 fishing industry, but they cannot go to college.

2 I feel that is something that is damaging  
3 our society, because our kids have been frustrated  
4 from some officials in the School Department, and I  
5 feel that should be resolved soon, because that is a  
6 big problem.

7 That's why many students don't like to go  
8 to school and many students have problems trying to  
9 accomplish their goals, because people in the School  
10 Department are telling them, "You have no material  
11 to go further. You only can work in the factory,  
12 you only can work in the fishing industry, and  
13 that's it." I think that is the wrong behavior from  
14 the School Department.

15 Another issue in the School Department is,  
16 in relation with the bilingual education, some  
17 students are in the bilingual program not because  
18 they have problems with the language, because  
19 sometimes the School Department thinks that because  
20 the people cannot talk, they cannot think right.  
21 And I think that is a big problem. You know, this  
22 program is to help the students to develop their  
23 linguistic skills, not because they are not capable  
24 to do a job like other people. I think that is

1 another issue that should be corrected, because our  
2 students are very intelligent, you know, to do  
3 whatever they want to do.

4 Another issue is in regards, last week, two  
5 weeks ago, we have a situation that I feel is a  
6 shame. A Puerto Rican woman was trying to rent an  
7 apartment in the South End of New Bedford, and  
8 everything went very good until she filled out the  
9 form when she put her last name.

10 When the landlord saw her last name, he  
11 asked her, "Where are you from? Where do you come  
12 from?" And she said, "Well, I'm Puerto Rican."  
13 "Oh, no, I cannot rent this apartment to you,  
14 because you are Puerto Rican. I don't want Puerto  
15 Ricans in this apartment, because the Puerto Ricans  
16 have damaged this country."

17 I think this is something that we cannot  
18 tolerate from anyone, you know, against the Puerto  
19 Rican or against the Cape Verdeans or against the  
20 Portuguese or whatever be the person, because that  
21 is a wrong, wrong attitude. We have to work to  
22 correct those things.

23 Talking about Housing Authority, we have a  
24 strong issue in Satellite Village. Satellite,

1 practically the people don't have any say in the  
2 Housing Authority, and I think that is wrong. For  
3 example, in Satellite Village, the Housing Authority  
4 tore down the fences in the back of their  
5 apartments. The tenants were against that. Nobody  
6 listened to them. Then they have a meeting with the  
7 director of that agency, and the director told them,  
8 "We're going to do what we have decided to do. It  
9 is to tear down the fences." And I think that's  
10 something that should be corrected, because I think  
11 the resident participation is something that has to  
12 be required in the New Bedford public housing.

13 Another issue is in regards to the  
14 hospitals and elderly homes. There are some  
15 Hispanics and probably Cape Verdeans and Portuguese  
16 people in those homes and hospitals, and nobody can  
17 understand the language, because after evening time  
18 there is no translators in the hospital.

19 When my wife was having the last baby, I  
20 had to translate for her, and also I had to  
21 translate for another woman that was having some  
22 complications. That is putting that life in danger,  
23 because in a person that has not been trained to do  
24 that job, if you have to do that job to translate,



1 it could be a dangerous thing for that patient. And  
2 I think that is something that should be corrected,  
3 that the health facilities should provide an  
4 environment that everybody can feel comfortable to  
5 explain what is happening with them.

6 Another issue is in regard to the Mayan  
7 Indians. The Mayan Indians are treated improperly  
8 in different workplaces, below minimum wages,  
9 extended hours of work, and improper attitude to  
10 those people. I think these people have to be  
11 respected and treated with equality like everybody  
12 else.

13 For example, another issue that I am  
14 concerned about is the 911 system. Some people call  
15 to the 911 system, and nobody can understand them  
16 unless they speak English. And I think all the  
17 ethnic groups should have that opportunity, when  
18 they call for an emergency, they can talk with  
19 somebody that they can understand and explain the  
20 situation clearly. In that way they can serve that  
21 person properly.

22 We cannot tolerate the discrimination and  
23 civil rights violation in our society. We have to  
24 educate our kids about equality and justice and also

1 to practice that. Thank you so much.

2 (Applause)

3 MS. WILBER: You are from the Mayor of New  
4 Bedford's Office.

5 MR. CRUZ: Yes.

6 MS. WILBER: He nominates and the City  
7 Council agrees to Mr. Finnerty. You control Mr.  
8 Finnerty, so you should be able to solve some of my  
9 problems. I am from housing. I live in Bay  
10 Village, but the Mayor and the City Council controls  
11 the Housing Authority, including the executive  
12 director, who from what I understand is coming up  
13 for his -- to renew his contract.

14 MR. CUSTODIO: Five-year contract.

15 MR. CRUZ: What I am going to say about  
16 that is I am talking about my department, and I am  
17 talking about on behalf of the Mayor's department,  
18 because the Mayor will be here, and he is going to  
19 talk about his office. I am talking about my  
20 Division of Hispanic Affairs. That's the only thing  
21 I can say about that.

22 MR. CUSTODIO: Then, Mr. Cruz, you have  
23 been advised personally by me on more than one  
24 occasion, the most important responsibility you have

1 is protecting the most grossly abused segment of the  
2 New Bedford population, specifically the Puerto  
3 Ricans. Now you're sort of disclaiming what she's  
4 asking you about, because you're only going to work  
5 for Puerto Ricans, which is nonsense, and I'm going  
6 tell the Mayor that when he comes here.

7           You do not, let me repeat this, you do not  
8 attend the meetings of the New Bedford Housing  
9 Authority, which has a Spanish-speaking woman on it,  
10 and you do not fulfill your responsibilities as to  
11 the stupidity of the Housing Authority and the  
12 abuses they heap upon people.

13           And now you come in here and give this  
14 beautiful rhetoric about Hispanics --

15           MR. CRUZ: Let me tell you something.

16           MR. CUSTODIO: And you make --

17           DR. BLANCHARD: What I would like to do --

18           MS. ROSARIO: Excuse me, Mr. Custodio.

19 This really isn't the place or the time to be doing  
20 this, okay?

21           MR. CUSTODIO: You don't tell me the time  
22 or the place to do it. I'm invited here. I'm a  
23 citizen.

24           MS. ROSARIO: You are invited here not for

1 insults.

2 MR. CUSTODIO: I'm a taxpaying citizen. He  
3 represents the Hispanic group, and he's going to  
4 bear the responsibility.

5 DR. BLANCHARD: Excuse me. What I would  
6 like to do, as I talked about this morning, is have  
7 an opportunity for you to --

8 MR. CUSTODIO: You said comments and speak  
9 on his remarks. I made comments in regard to his  
10 remarks.

11 DR. BLANCHARD: I did, and so far, for the  
12 most part, I think we've kept with the flavor of the  
13 discussion.

14 MR. CUSTODIO: Don't interfere with me.

15 DR. BLANCHARD: Excuse me just a minute.

16 MR. CUSTODIO: They can call me up any time  
17 they want to. My number is in the book. They know  
18 who I am. They should call me up instead of trying  
19 to prevent this exposure of everything that is not  
20 correct.

21 DR. BLANCHARD: Sir, we will --

22 MR. CUSTODIO: That's quite obvious.

23 MS. ROSARIO: Mr. Custodio, all I'm saying  
24 is --

1 DR. BLANCHARD: Excuse me just a minute.  
2 I'm trying to respond, and then you can too. We  
3 want you to speak.

4 MR. CUSTODIO: I'm going to speak, unless  
5 you --

6 DR. BLANCHARD: We want you to speak, so  
7 long as you don't limit other people's speaking.

8 MR. CUSTODIO: She is attacking me.

9 DR. BLANCHARD: I want to hear her  
10 comments.

11 MR. CUSTODIO: Let her make them now to Mr.  
12 Cruz.

13 DR. BLANCHARD: Sir, I'm ruling you out of  
14 order right now.

15 MR. CUSTODIO: I'm out of order. I stand  
16 committed and out of order.

17 DR. BLANCHARD: And I ask you to wait  
18 primarily to speak when you have an opportunity to  
19 come up here.

20 MR. CUSTODIO: You're doing the same thing  
21 any white individual does to people that are visibly  
22 different.

23 DR. BLANCHARD: Well, I'm white, you're  
24 right.

1 MR. CRUZ: You certainly are.

2 DR. BLANCHARD: I think I would like to  
3 move on.

4 MR. COLE: This is just in defense of Mr.  
5 Cruz. You said Cruz is talking about Puerto Ricans.  
6 He mentioned the Mayans and the Guatemalans, so he  
7 represents all Latinos. I've been involved in what  
8 he's doing, and he's not only -- it's Colombians,  
9 Dominicans, it's Cubanos, it's people here in New  
10 Bedford. So if he has the Hispanic office,  
11 Spanish/Latino, then he is representing all of us.

12 MR. CRUZ: Let me tell you something.

13 MR. COLE: You said Puerto Ricans. He just  
14 got through talking about the Mayans.

15 MR. CRUZ: Let me tell you something.

16 MR. CUSTODIO: Puerto Ricans specifically  
17 are --

18 MR. CRUZ: I want to mention something. I  
19 want to mention something very clear. I am working  
20 in the Office of Hispanic Affairs, but I am working  
21 for the betterment of the community at large,  
22 Hispanic, Cape Verdean, African-America, et cetera.  
23 (Applause)

24 I have no problem with anyone, because I

1 have publicly identified myself as Hispanic and  
2 African-American. Everybody knows that. I have no  
3 problem with anybody else. But my office, the name  
4 of my office is Hispanic Affairs. But it doesn't  
5 mean that I don't want to help all the people. I  
6 have to, because I am entitled to help the  
7 community.

8 DR. BLANCHARD: Thank you very much for  
9 speaking today. I said I would call on Marla  
10 Valois.

11 MS. VALOIS: I just want to say that, and I  
12 am going to speak to this gentleman, but I'm want to  
13 address it to this body, that there are  
14 contradictions and flaws, and I understand there is  
15 anger, but what he is saying is he doesn't want  
16 people just based on their position to represent  
17 groups. But then when Emilio goes and speaks about  
18 something, he is not -- he has contradictions in  
19 his philosophy there that he's got going on.

20 And for a side note, I'm a participant in  
21 this forum. I'm disappointed, you know, just angry  
22 at how this is -- how you are taking over control  
23 of this and trying to make it a negative thing when  
24 it's supposed to be a positive thing. And you're

1 speaking out of turn, and you're being  
2 argumentative.

3 I take offense to that, and I hope this  
4 whole process and everybody here is probably taking  
5 offense to it. I wish you would stop it and let the  
6 process go on, because I personally have invested a  
7 lot of time and energy into this, and I'm sure  
8 others have, and you're just being argumentative,  
9 and it's not helping to solve the problem.

10 If that's the goal that you want, then you  
11 should try to listen more and learn more, because if  
12 you feel that you have learned it all, then that's a  
13 problem.

14 DR. BLANCHARD: Let's have one more  
15 comment, and then I'm going to turn it over to Mr.  
16 Garron.

17 MS. ROSARIO: I just wanted to say --

18 DR. BLANCHARD: No, I'm not. Pamela Cruz.  
19 Would you like to speak?

20 MS. ROSARIO: I just wanted to say that you  
21 have a right to your opinion, but there is no reason  
22 for public insults, really.

23 MR. CUSTODIO: When did I insult anybody?

24 MS. VALOIS: You are insulting me by your



1 demeanor.

2 MS. ROSARIO: I'm insulted.

3 MR. CUSTODIO: Why are you insulted?

4 DR. BLANCHARD: Let's move on now.

5 MR. CUSTODIO: I mentioned a specific  
6 responsibility.

7 DR. BLANCHARD: We're going to move on now,  
8 and I misspoke, and it should be Pamela Cruz who  
9 will speak next. Pamela, while you are coming to  
10 the front, Dale Jenkins had a point of information.

11 MR. JENKINS: Just a point of information  
12 to the last speaker. I'm Undersecretary of Public  
13 Safety for the Commonwealth and a former Special  
14 Assistant to the Governor for Public Safety.

15 I'm a candidate for statewide office, but  
16 I've spent the last seven years overseeing 21 public  
17 safety agencies. And there is no solution to  
18 bilingual problems. However, as a point of  
19 information to save lives, I would hope that we  
20 could get to the individual communities that speak  
21 different dialects and different languages and get  
22 them to at least be able to identify themselves to a  
23 911 operator as to what language, what ethnic  
24 background they are from, because the police, in

1 order to be certified as 911 operators, have a hot  
2 line where they can connect a translator at any  
3 time.

4 So as a point of information, to save  
5 lives, until bilingual problems are solved, I think  
6 we need to educate the communities that we're  
7 dealing with that they can get a translator at any  
8 time from 911, if they're able to tell the operator  
9 what language they're speaking. So we need to teach  
10 them that much English or present it in phonetic  
11 form or whatever it may be. But just again as a  
12 point of information.

13 DR. BLANCHARD: Thank you, Dale.

14 I would like to introduce Pamela Cruz from  
15 the New Bedford Community Connections Coalition.

16 MS. WILBER: The University of  
17 Massachusetts works with a fellow named Bruce, I  
18 can't remember his last name. He has a computer.  
19 He can fix that for you. He can fix that problem.

20 MR. JENKINS: We have TDYs for the deaf,  
21 and I assume you're saying something similar, some  
22 sort of translator.

23 MS. WILBER: Like Lorraine Deutsch, he made  
24 a computer specifically for her, because she has

1 cerebral palsy, does not know how to read and write,  
2 and for people to understand her, he made that  
3 computer for her. Maybe he can make a computer -- I  
4 have a Packard-Bell.

5 DR. BLANCHARD: Why don't we come back to  
6 this in a private conversation, and let's move on to  
7 Ms. Cruz now.

8 MS. CRUZ: My name is Pam Cruz, and I'm a  
9 coordinator for the Community Connections Coalition,  
10 which is a coalition -- actually, New Bedford is one  
11 of 18 sites in the State of Massachusetts to have a  
12 Community Connections Coalition, whose goal is to  
13 organize and strengthen family support in at-risk  
14 neighborhoods throughout the Commonwealth with the  
15 goal of reducing the community risk factors that  
16 lead to childhood treatment.

17 When I was called by Mr. Blanchard and  
18 asked to speak or attend this panel, I really  
19 questioned whether I was an appropriate person to be  
20 part of this panel, if I had enough to offer. But  
21 as I thought about my professional work over the  
22 last 20 years and my personal life, I decided that I  
23 think I did have something to offer.

24 Just so that you can have an understanding

1 about my opinions and ideas and recommendations for  
2 a lot of solutions, I think, on issues of civil  
3 rights and particularly around our future racial  
4 landscape, I just want to tell you a little bit  
5 about me and my background so that you better  
6 understand where those opinions come from.

7           Before working as coordinator for Community  
8 Connections in New Bedford, I spent about ten years  
9 working for the City of New Bedford's job training  
10 program, and I worked primarily with economically  
11 disadvantaged adults. For a short period, for about  
12 four years, before that I worked for the  
13 Massachusetts Department of Corrections, as a  
14 correctional counselor working with women who are  
15 transitioning back to the community.

16           And for a short time between that I worked  
17 as a coordinator for a pregnant and parenting teen  
18 program in Roxbury, serving youth, primarily  
19 minority youth from Mattapan and Dorchester.

20           So my work in the public sector and with  
21 families and children over the last decade certainly  
22 gives me reason to have a lot of opinions on issues  
23 of race and discrimination, but I think where I  
24 probably have the most input and value is being a

1 parent, a white parent of two biracial children, who  
2 certainly consider themselves and see themselves as  
3 black Americans.

4           So that's why I'm here today and want to  
5 speak to you on some issues.

6           I think certainly the folks that I have  
7 heard this morning from Fall River and the folks,  
8 Lee and Emilio, who spoke before me -- I guess I  
9 want to start with the issue or just making some  
10 comment as far as what Lee was saying, Mr. Charlton,  
11 on the issue that the real issue or some of the  
12 problems right now that we're facing with race,  
13 clearly what the bottom line is is clearly about  
14 economics, and I think that's a very, very important  
15 part.

16           However, I would debate that in some ways,  
17 because I know, and I certainly have no disrespect  
18 to people like Mr. Barrows or other individuals here  
19 of color, that when you take that shirt and tie off,  
20 and you're riding home on the highway, sometimes  
21 people, no matter what class or jobs, oftentimes  
22 black faces remain to be or people of color remain  
23 to be the bottom of the well. While I agree with  
24 that in many ways, I also recognize that when all is

1 said and done, and those ties come off, and we're  
2 not in a setting where people know what authority or  
3 power or influence we have -- I just want to make  
4 that point.

5 I also want to make a point that I think  
6 certainly welfare reform and the issue of economics  
7 is very important, make the point that I myself  
8 spent probably the first seven years of my son's  
9 life on welfare. He is now 21, on welfare and  
10 living in public housing in New Bedford. So my  
11 opinions are not only from the professional work  
12 that I've done with families and children, but my  
13 own personal experiences.

14 I guess what I would like to say is that  
15 despite the undeniable progress that we have made  
16 over the years, clearly racism is alive and well,  
17 not only in New Bedford or Fall River as we heard  
18 today, but certainly throughout our country, and  
19 that no person of color or minority is insulated  
20 from those incidents of racial discrimination.

21 The racism that made slavery feasible in  
22 the early history of this country definitely is  
23 still alive. And while in this day and age our  
24 schools and businesses and universities and things

1 are not segregated, there is still discrimination.

2 My daughter is a student at New Bedford  
3 High, probably the largest high school in the State  
4 of Massachusetts. She is a sophomore. In her four  
5 major classes at the high school, in three of them,  
6 she is the only student of color. She is in  
7 advanced learning classes, concentrated classes,  
8 whatever you call them. And out of the four classes  
9 she's in, she is the only person in the class of  
10 color in three of them, and in the other class there  
11 is one other person of color. That is really an  
12 issue.

13 So while we've come a long way, we just  
14 have to look at, while we can dispute the issue of  
15 racism and discrimination, the numbers and  
16 statistics don't lie. We just have to look at the  
17 dismal state for many minority families and children  
18 in New Bedford and throughout the country.

19 And I think that when we look at some of  
20 the obstacles and problems that minority families  
21 face, those problems and issues, while, you know,  
22 some would have us believe that it is because of a  
23 lack of values or, you know, culture or some other  
24 thing, that the problems that people face started

1 way beyond the boundaries of their homes and  
2 neighborhoods from oppression and just continued,  
3 and we could talk or I could talk on and on about  
4 that, but what I would like to do is just offer at  
5 least my personal opinions of some solutions and  
6 what I see are some promising initiatives.

7           If our country really was founded on the  
8 principle that we're created equal, we need to take  
9 immediate action to find solutions to the failure of  
10 the American dream for the vast majority of  
11 minorities, not only in New Bedford but in  
12 everywhere in our country.

13           Solutions. I think one of the things that  
14 we must do is that we cannot realistically improve  
15 the future racial landscape of our country without  
16 honestly assessing our past. We as America have to  
17 acknowledge our past atrocities. We have to face  
18 them, we have to publicly state them. They have to  
19 go into our textbooks. And unlike most -- and our  
20 kids today, in schools, in public schools, need to  
21 learn the truth, unlike myself, in going to public  
22 schools and taking college level courses, well, that  
23 you get some of that information, if you so choose.

24           And people, our kids today in public



1 schools need to know the history of the real  
2 American history. In order for them to -- in order  
3 for us to move toward improving race relations in  
4 America, we need to acknowledge that.

5 Last semester I was taking a course here,  
6 and the course was social movement something or  
7 other. It was a wonderful class, but there were  
8 probably about 35 people in the class, and we  
9 started out with The Eyes on the Prize, and there  
10 were several other readings and discussions.

11 And one day during break, probably into the  
12 fifth session, there was a person who was with  
13 several women about my age, 40ish, in the hall, and  
14 we had met through -- we were watching films and  
15 having debates, and these women were talking, and  
16 they said, "I can't believe some of this stuff. I  
17 just never knew this stuff went on. This is heart-  
18 breaking."

19 And I stood there, and I thought, well,  
20 have I lived in another world? I guess my point is  
21 that because I -- where I grew up in New Bedford,  
22 and the life that I lived, I was exposed to, not  
23 because I was educated in the public schools about  
24 it, but I was exposed to cultural diversity and

1 discrimination and experience. But then I thought  
2 about these white women who were there talking about  
3 never knowing much of this true history, and I  
4 thought, well, how were they to learn if they had  
5 never been taught?

6 So I really do believe that our children  
7 would be better off knowing the truth and that we  
8 would begin to have a better understanding and  
9 appreciation of why things are the way they are  
10 today.

11 We need to move to solutions rather than to  
12 keep rehashing, debating and discussing and  
13 pounding, and turn it over upside-down, the  
14 problems. We know the problems, the statistics  
15 don't lie, and many of us have experienced  
16 ourselves, but we need to find solutions, and we  
17 need to be part of the solution.

18 We need to have a renewal of emphasis of  
19 personal responsibility. And I know that the  
20 Reverend earlier today said that each and every one  
21 of us has a responsibility to be part of the  
22 solution. And that should begin with us, and at  
23 each point we should encourage people to do that.

24 Each and every one of us has the

1 responsibility to stand up to and answer those who  
2 perpetrate stereotypes and spread the poison of  
3 prejudice against any group of people. I find it  
4 intolerable that there are actually individuals who  
5 I've known who claim to be civil rights activists,  
6 yet at the same time feel free to make derogatory  
7 remarks against individuals because of their sexual  
8 orientation. America is supposed to be, if we talk  
9 about civil rights, we're talking about civil rights  
10 for all people, regardless of their color, their  
11 class, their race, their handicap or their sexual  
12 orientation.

13 Government needs to take a coordinated  
14 approach. We have all kind of efforts going on. We  
15 have efforts at the federal level, we have efforts  
16 at the state level, we have local efforts. Nothing  
17 is coordinated. They are fragmented, and those that  
18 are making policy decisions, because it's so  
19 fragmented, nothing seems to be making sense.

20 We need to begin to have honest dialogue  
21 between unusual partners. You know, so many of us  
22 here today are the usual suspects. We see each  
23 other at all of the meetings. You know, where is  
24 the private sector? Are there folks from the

1 private corporate sector here?

2 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Retired or active?

3 MS. CRUZ: Either/or.

4 FROM THE AUDIENCE: (Raises hand)

5 MS. CRUZ: You're retired?

6 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes.

7 MS. CRUZ: So where is corporate America  
8 here? They play a very important part in that.

9 So, you know, we talk about building  
10 bridges and having dialogue, real honest dialogue  
11 between people, and while sometimes we may even  
12 bring people of different color to the table, are  
13 they a different class? You know, do we have  
14 parents as full partners in the community? Are we  
15 always setting policy? We need to cut across those  
16 class lines.

17 While we must have a multifaceted approach  
18 to discrimination, racism and systemic poverty, I  
19 believe that our greatest investment and emphasis  
20 must be made in public education of our youth. We  
21 must direct new energy and funding toward  
22 eliminating the current inequities in education.

23 Again, I think about my daughter being one  
24 of only, certainly, you know, just one in three of

1 her classes. I think about when she came here last  
2 year to the University. She was invited to be --  
3 well, she was selected by New Bedford High to be  
4 part of, I don't know what it was called, the  
5 Spotlight Program, and I think I came into this very  
6 room for parent orientation.

7           And I walked in, and the place was filled,  
8 and I looked around, and I was looking for a face of  
9 color, because I was just assuming how many other,  
10 and I didn't see any. And I know I did check, and  
11 certainly knowing -- and while I know that, as I  
12 talked to some University folks about that, I knew  
13 that the high schools, the regional high schools had  
14 selected the children to participate in this  
15 program. But my feeling is, the University was  
16 hosting it; they should have done a better job in  
17 making sure that children of color were  
18 participating in the program.

19           You know, students with the greatest  
20 advantages at home still get the most advantages at  
21 school, and until we fix that, you know, children  
22 are still -- we're just going to -- minority  
23 children are going to continue to not fare as well  
24 as others.

1           We need to set clear national education  
2 standards for all our children, and we should expect  
3 nothing less from our students of color. We need to  
4 raise our expectation levels.

5           I would like to see -- and I am again sorry  
6 too that the Mayor is not here, or Dr. Cressy, or  
7 someone; maybe, Ray, you're representing the  
8 University -- number one, for the University to  
9 partner with the Fall River and New Bedford high  
10 schools. And I know we're doing some things, but I  
11 think a commitment from the University to the high  
12 schools to ensure that more is being done to make  
13 sure that minority students are getting what they  
14 need in the public schools, so that they can come to  
15 the University, and that the University is  
16 supporting them to do well, because I really do  
17 believe that education is the key to power.

18           So, those are my, I think, broader  
19 solutions as far as discriminatory practices, and I  
20 do believe that education of our youth will -- that  
21 there is hope for our next generation. Thank you.

22           (Applause)

23           MR. JOHNSON: Ms. Cruz, I know your comment  
24 was directed towards me, but that's okay. One of

1 the things I wanted to ask you, do you know -- do  
2 you think that the debate in the African-American  
3 community is what you say, or is it about class?

4 MS. CRUZ: I'm sorry, I didn't understand.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Do you think that the debate  
6 in the African-American community today is what you  
7 just spoke about, or do you think that it is a class  
8 issue that is being debated in the black community?

9 MS. CRUZ: I think it's combination.

10 MR. JOHNSON: A combination of what?

11 MS. CRUZ: A combination of racism, of  
12 class, of...

13 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Do you also suggest  
14 that gay people, be they male or female, are not  
15 racist? Because we can start with Michael Duffy,  
16 the former chairman of the MCAD, we can start with  
17 Barney Frank, we can start with all of those people  
18 who have racist behavior, and Barney has a racist  
19 behavior against our elected official. So when you  
20 start talking about -- when you direct something at  
21 me about my --

22 MS. CRUZ: I wasn't directing it at you.

23 MR. JOHNSON: I'm not going to argue with  
24 you about that. For you to suggest to people that

1 gay people are not racist is a bunch of nonsense.

2 MS. CRUZ: Let me clarify, if I could  
3 clarify. First of all, you know, your thought is  
4 that I suggested or it was directed at you. I  
5 think -- and I didn't mention your name, while it  
6 may have in fact been directed at you, I guess. But  
7 what I did say, and I would absolutely agree with  
8 you, whether gay, minority, male, female, what have  
9 you, one of -- I think I was very clear when I said  
10 that each and every one of us has the responsibility  
11 to stand up to and answer those who perpetrate  
12 stereotypes and spread the poison of prejudice  
13 against any group.

14 (Applause)

15 MR. JOHNSON: One final question. One  
16 final question. When the ministers, the two  
17 ministers, Reverend Woodbury and Reverend Paige,  
18 were accosted over here in Dartmouth, how many  
19 people you know, your civil rights activists, stood  
20 up for those people? How many people assisted them  
21 when --

22 DR. BLANCHARD: Is that a question?

23 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, it is.

24 DR. BLANCHARD: How many people?



1 MR. JOHNSON: How many people stood up for  
2 them? I'm just giving you examples. When Kalumba,  
3 the African student that was here, was beat up by  
4 the cops over here in Dartmouth, how many civil  
5 rights organizations or people in terms of your  
6 organizations that you have stood up for those  
7 folks?

8 DR. BLANCHARD: There's a question.

9 MS. CRUZ: I have -- I don't know. I  
10 mean, you say my organization. I mean, that  
11 incident that you're talking about, you know, if I'm  
12 here representing -- when I came up to the podium, I  
13 said "Pam Cruz, Community Connections Coalition  
14 coordinator," but I also talked about that my  
15 comments today were based on my personal experiences  
16 of raising biracial children and my work in the  
17 public sector and feelings in 20 years. So I wasn't  
18 specifically talking about -- when you say "your  
19 organization," I don't know --

20 DR. BLANCHARD: So you don't really know  
21 the answer to his question.

22 MS. CRUZ: No, I don't.

23 DR. BLANCHARD: You were speaking.

24 MR. ANDRADE: The answer is none. There

1 were no black organizations, no white  
2 organizations.

3 MR. JOHNSON: In terms of the dedicatory  
4 statement, or this Commission, the dedicatory  
5 statement right now before the City, there has not  
6 been one organization that stood up for them and  
7 their family.

8 MR. ANDRADE: Including African-American  
9 students.

10 DR. BLANCHARD: Mr. Johnson and Mr. Andrade  
11 are both on the list. We have added you, and you  
12 will have a chance to speak.

13 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

14 DR. BLANCHARD: So why don't you, when you  
15 make your comments, save it for that. And now we've  
16 reserved time for questions.

17 I would like to introduce now Chester  
18 Garron, who is the Director of Equal Opportunity for  
19 the City of New Bedford.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. GARRON: We're having fun today. Hi,  
22 everybody. My name is Chet Garron. I'm the  
23 Director of EEO for the City of New Bedford. What I  
24 am going to talk about is a little bit of what this

1 function is. You know, when I came into this job,  
2 one of the things I found right away is that  
3 everybody has an issue, an individual issue that  
4 they bring to the table and they want you to address  
5 right away, take care of it, make it go away.

6 We've been working these issues over for  
7 years, and historically -- I apologized to a group  
8 when I came over and did a lecture, and I apologized  
9 for still being in this job, because 40 years later  
10 we are still doing the same things we did back when  
11 we first started doing EEO, civil rights and  
12 affirmative action. I don't want to apologize  
13 anymore. I want to make people responsible for  
14 changing things.

15 It's one thing to bring an issue to the  
16 table that is your personal issue or you feel is the  
17 most important issue. What we've got to deal with  
18 is the system. We have to change the system. We  
19 have to first evaluate, which is what we're doing  
20 today. We have to first evaluate what are the  
21 problems that keep people back and away from  
22 resolving these issues. Every time we go off, and  
23 there are people who are probably angry at me today  
24 because I don't go off doing fire fights. You bring

1 me an issue that's something I can deal with, I'll  
2 deal with it. If it's an issue that takes time to  
3 work, we're going to build it into the system,  
4 evaluate it, and come up with solutions, and those  
5 solutions are going to be long-standing.

6           This time next year my hope is, and I feel  
7 very comfortable if we do the things we have to do,  
8 we're not going to be dealing with some of the  
9 issues we're dealing with today, because we're going  
10 to look at the system, we're going to change the  
11 system, and it takes everyone.

12           Too often they put somebody in charge and  
13 then make you responsible for changing all of the  
14 mind-sets and the patterns that have been developed  
15 over the years. It is impossible, folks. No one  
16 person is going to do that.

17           It's going to take education, it's going to  
18 take time, and it's going to take collaboration.  
19 It's going to take working with each other, finding  
20 ways to communicate over very dedicated  
21 communication lines, talk about things that you only  
22 talk about with people you trust. You're going to  
23 have to trust that the person is listening to you,  
24 believes what you said, and is willing to work to do

1 something about it.

2           You can't go off and look at racism  
3 today -- I was born in Mississippi. You want to  
4 know about racism? I was raised in Chicago, during  
5 Mayor Daley's era. You want to know about racism?  
6 I marched, I fought, got beat up. I've done all of  
7 those things. The bottom line is it's going to take  
8 each and every one of us working toward a single  
9 goal to change the face of what's going on today.

10           Let's look at the City of New Bedford. I  
11 work in New Bedford. That was a good question, was  
12 it class or was it racism.

13           MR. JOHNSON: It's both.

14           MR. GARRON: It's a lot of everything  
15 that's going on. You can go out someplace and find  
16 that people won't let me in because I'm not the  
17 right color, but there are other people who can't  
18 get in even if they are the same color, they can't  
19 get a break. People won't take care of you. You  
20 don't make enough money, you don't look quite right,  
21 you don't drive a nice car, you don't live in the  
22 right neighborhood, north or south, or maybe even in  
23 the south section or the western section.

24           But the issue becomes one of who decides,

1 who decides what people can be.

2           Let me say something about the people who  
3 are somewhat put upon. They own a piece of not  
4 letting it happen to them. My child comes home and  
5 tells me that somebody had done something to them  
6 that was racial in its manner, and my question is,  
7 "What did you say? What did you do? Did you just  
8 bow your head and walk away, defeated, a victim, or  
9 did you tell them your rights and stand up for your  
10 rights as a person? Because if you didn't, then  
11 we've got a conversation. Yes, I'm going to go out  
12 and do battle for you, and everybody that hurts you,  
13 I'm going to take them on. But I want you to learn  
14 now to start to take care of yourself."

15           And those people who would walk around  
16 being victimized all their lives, "I'm poor," "I'm  
17 black," "I'm a woman," "I'm gay," "I'm handicapped,"  
18 all of these things, it's easy to tag yourself,  
19 become a victim, and stay there. The only way  
20 you're going to change that is take the time, you  
21 understand what your needs are, and you go after  
22 them.

23           It's scary. And unfortunately, as we sit  
24 in this crowd, I think, Pam, you made a good

1 observation, I see some of the same faces and the  
2 same faces as we go. We need to get to the broader  
3 population, we need to get to the people who need to  
4 hear these things, we need to get to the people who  
5 need to know what they can do, what their rights  
6 are, and what their privileges are.

7 As a citizen in this United States, you  
8 have a lot of privileges.

9 MR. ANDRADE: Nobody knew about this  
10 conference. That's why they're not here.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Nobody.

12 MR. ANDRADE: It was supposed to be in the  
13 Standard-Times. I was here last week 10:15. Nobody  
14 was here. I thought I was too early, and then I  
15 came back and I found out, when I called some people  
16 in the administration over here, they said, "Oh,  
17 no. It's next week."

18 MR. JOHNSON: We don't fault the Civil  
19 Rights Commission. We understand.

20 MR. GARRON: Is that by design? I read  
21 last week on Thursday that the conference was that  
22 day, which threw me a little bit. So I'm not  
23 accusing, nor is anybody at fault for where we are.  
24 What we have to do is do the work to get this

1 happening and make sure we start communicating with  
2 the system.

3 I mean, we can walk through and find fault  
4 with everything. Let's find reasons to do something  
5 better. And I think as you start to do that, taking  
6 on the challenges -- when I took this job, I said it  
7 would be a challenge, and it has been a challenge.

8 MR. JOHNSON: Did you read the job  
9 description?

10 MR. GARRON: It's a learning experience.  
11 We're growing from it. I truly believe within  
12 myself, and I think there are people who work with  
13 me that believe that we can make a difference, we  
14 can change some of the things that happen. We can  
15 make a difference.

16 I want to thank you. I told you ten  
17 minutes was too long.

18 (Applause)

19 DR. BLANCHARD: Dan Gilbarg is a professor  
20 of sociology at Bristol Community College.

21 PROFESSOR GILBARG: I'd like to do two  
22 things. One is share a few of the things that I've  
23 seen either through work in the community or through  
24 my job in terms of the forms of racism that seem to



1 be still playing our area, and then secondly talk  
2 about, focus down a little bit on a couple of issues  
3 that I think we need to work on.

4           Some things were said about the educational  
5 system. There are some classrooms, some school  
6 systems, some schools around the country that have  
7 been well publicized that really have believed that  
8 all their students can learn, and they've  
9 demonstrated that, and we have kids from all sorts  
10 of backgrounds that have been stereotyped as  
11 unteachable, whose parents have been stereotyped as  
12 uninterested in school, who have succeeded in  
13 learning, and that's happened in all sorts of  
14 places.

15           I don't think New Bedford has internalized  
16 that. I don't see any serious effort in the New  
17 Bedford school system to look at why it is, as Pam  
18 Cruz said, that there was only one or two children  
19 in an advanced learning class and to say, "What is  
20 going on here?" Why? Because I still think people  
21 don't expect anything more of minority students, and  
22 to the extent that that's the attitude, it's not  
23 seen as a problem.

24           But we've demonstrated, some places at

1 least in this country, that that can be turned  
2 around, and I don't think New Bedford is so  
3 different.

4 So that would be the first thing I would  
5 say, that there needs to be serious effort within  
6 the school system to change the attitude and the  
7 commitment to reaching out to black, Cape Verdean  
8 and Spanish students, recognizing that they have the  
9 potential to succeed, and doing whatever it takes,  
10 and if they're not succeeding, then there is  
11 something wrong with what's going on in the school  
12 system.

13 The second thing I wanted to address is in  
14 terms of housing. A couple of anecdotes, we had a  
15 woman working with us in the Coalition Against  
16 Poverty as a welfare recipient who was paying \$495 a  
17 month for a pretty junky place in the South End of  
18 New Bedford, was making that \$579 that was cited  
19 before as the standard welfare grant. Actually it's  
20 down to \$564 now since they cut it. And she was --  
21 so she wanted to get Section 8.

22 After a very long wait, she managed to get  
23 a Section 8 certificate, and she spend 120 days,  
24 amidst her busy schedule, looking for apartments in

1 the City of New Bedford and had to turn the  
2 certificate back. She is a black woman, and I'm  
3 convinced that it was because she is black that she  
4 could not get a place, because in a lot of -- you  
5 have basically got two types of places in New  
6 Bedford.

7           You've got places which are two- and  
8 three-families that are fairly well kept up where  
9 the landlords do not want to rent to people of color  
10 because they think -- they basically see them as  
11 riffraff, and on the other hand, they would rather  
12 bring relatives in and people they know personally.  
13 And on the other hand you have slumlords, who don't  
14 offer anything that would be worth taking. It was  
15 no improvement over what she had.

16           So that's one example, but I think among  
17 many, and that's in the federal program, that's in  
18 the Section 8. So that's something that we need to  
19 address.

20           The issue of jobs. Buddy Andrade, I know,  
21 can speak much more concretely to this than I can,  
22 but there are a number of cases where there is  
23 building and construction going on in the city. It  
24 might be by the Housing Authority, it might be by

1 other sources. And not only aren't people of color  
2 represented, but oftentimes even local people are  
3 not represented in the construction jobs.

4 These are important jobs. These are  
5 sometimes better paying jobs, for once, that could  
6 really make a difference. And yet it's not  
7 happening, and again, maybe there will be further  
8 discussion that can draw that out further.

9 I wanted to focus a little bit on the issue  
10 of welfare. Per se, welfare is not a minority  
11 issue, it is not a race issue, it's a class issue;  
12 it's the people that are the poorest, it's single  
13 mothers and so on and so forth. But it is a race  
14 issue. It's a race issue because if you walk  
15 through public housing or go down to the welfare  
16 office, you see disproportionate representation,  
17 particularly from Puerto Rican and Latino women, and  
18 also from African-American, Cape Verdeans.

19 So there is an overrepresentation of  
20 minorities, and I think the community as a whole  
21 looks at that and says, "See, they're lazy and they  
22 don't want to work," or "See, they're irresponsible,  
23 and they just keep going out and keep having  
24 babies."

1           Those are stereotypes. And the reality is  
2 that I think you can explain very easily why there  
3 is a higher proportion of minorities on welfare, and  
4 it comes back to things like jobs and access to jobs  
5 and education. People that are more educated,  
6 regardless of race, are much less likely to be on  
7 welfare, for the obvious reason. They can go out  
8 and get a job, and they can do better than they can  
9 on welfare, so they do it.

10           If you can't get a job, or you can only get  
11 a part-time job, or you can only get a minimum wage  
12 job, once you pay some expenses out involved with  
13 working, you do worse than you do on welfare. And  
14 so if you care about your children, you will take  
15 the worst of the two -- the better of the two  
16 situations, the less bad of the two situations,  
17 which is to get that \$564 for that welfare grant and  
18 somehow scrape by, because in fact you can do better  
19 than you can by working at a part-time job. So  
20 education and job opportunities are the bottom line  
21 that help explain that.

22           There is not that many people that have  
23 those eight or nine kids. Here and there you find  
24 that, but that's the exception, that's the old

1 school. That's not the way people are now, right?

2           So I think that understanding that is  
3 important. So how do we address that in a positive  
4 way? First of all, one of the things I want to say  
5 is that addressing it in a positive way is something  
6 that can transcend race and win broad support, in  
7 the sense that, although it is disproportionately  
8 people of color that are affected by this, it is  
9 also people across the board. There are white  
10 welfare mothers in large numbers also in public  
11 housing or throughout the city.

12           So if you address the obstacles, whether it  
13 be education, whether it be child care, whether it  
14 be whatever it is, you're also going to be  
15 addressing something that affects everyone. So  
16 there is a basis for coming together.

17           Let me just mention a couple of issues.  
18 Education. A lot of women, single mothers, need  
19 education to be able to advance. They recognize  
20 that. Yet now the way the welfare system is set up,  
21 it's not suited for that. If you want to get a  
22 college education, you are told, "Well, you only  
23 have two years, so there is not time for you to get  
24 any kind of college degree, even a two-year degree,

1 so go for a certificate program or go for a  
2 short-term training program."

3           Secondly, what they're really pushing is  
4 dress for success programs -- learn to do a resume,  
5 learn how to dress right, learn how to say the right  
6 things on a job interview -- on the assumption that  
7 people don't know how to apply for a job. Now, most  
8 people on welfare had a history of working at one  
9 time or another. They know how to apply for a job,  
10 and if they don't, they can be taught pretty  
11 quickly.

12           The problem isn't not knowing how to  
13 apply. The problem is, is that job there? And the  
14 problem is, is the child care there if they get that  
15 job? Those are the issues. So what we really need  
16 is substantive education programs, and it takes  
17 time, and two-year time limits do not make sense for  
18 that.

19           Now, in terms of broadening this out, I  
20 don't think it should just be welfare mothers who  
21 get access to that. I think there should be  
22 education programs that encourage all sorts of  
23 people to be able to go back to school. To some  
24 extent we have that, we have Pell Grants, but we

1 need more. We need people to be helped out with  
2 their living expenses so they can go back to school  
3 in all walks of life if they are in need, regardless  
4 of whether they're on welfare or not. So that  
5 broadens it out a little bit. There has got to be  
6 access to real education and training.

7 Another aspect is child care. Now, there  
8 is a lot of subsidized child care at the state  
9 level, but there is not enough. There is a waiting  
10 list of 13,000 people statewide. That's probably --  
11 that's the official waiting list. Then there's all  
12 the people that didn't apply or didn't put their  
13 name on the waiting list because they were told it  
14 was going to be two or three years, and they  
15 figured, why bother? So maybe there is 25,000  
16 people on waiting list for child care statewide, and  
17 we have our share of that.

18 Now, that's ridiculous. There ought to  
19 be enough slots so that anyone who needs child care  
20 can get it. And how are you supposed to afford  
21 child care in the open market if you don't get a  
22 subsidy, right? I mean, what's the going rate, \$125  
23 a week? So, you know, somebody who makes a close to  
24 minimum wage job, how do you afford \$125 a week for



1 child care? You can't do it.

2           So now you're putting people in a position  
3 where they have to make a choice. The choice is  
4 neglecting their kids and being irresponsible with  
5 their kids or not working, and if they're not  
6 working, how are they going to get their money then?  
7 So you're talking about homelessness, you're talking  
8 about people doubling, tripling up with one  
9 another. You already know that the rates have  
10 increased as far as that goes.

11           We also have a problem with child care of  
12 not having child care available at different shifts  
13 and different times. People get trained in CNA  
14 programs as nurse's aides. That's a job that  
15 happens to be available to a greater degree than a  
16 lot of other jobs. People get that degree, and what  
17 they find when they go out to the nursing home is  
18 that they can only get a second shift or third shift  
19 job, because until you're served your time, you  
20 don't have preference over the people that are  
21 already working there, and they want to work first  
22 shift and have a life.

23           So people are willing to work second and  
24 third shift, but where is the child care at second

1 and third shift? Or maybe what they can get is  
2 weekend jobs. The child care doesn't match  
3 necessarily with what people's needs are. So there  
4 is a lot more that needs to be done in terms of  
5 child care. That's not just a local issue, that's a  
6 statewide issue.

7           There is also the issue of jobs, and you  
8 know there is not a lot to say about that, partly  
9 who gets the jobs, but as Lee Charlton said before,  
10 it's where are the jobs, period, and in our area  
11 that's particularly serious.

12           I think there needs to be a really serious  
13 discussion about public job creation. I mean, back  
14 in the Depression, we understood, because it was an  
15 extreme case, but we finally understood, after about  
16 five years of wrangling, that we needed to have a  
17 public jobs program. And the WPA was created and  
18 some other public job programs that employed about a  
19 third of all the unemployed in this country.

20           Then we go to the '60s and '70s and '80s,  
21 and we have very meager public job programs, and now  
22 we have even less. It seems we have backed away  
23 from that. I don't understand that. We have needs  
24 in the community. We have needs to rehab housing,

1 we have needs to build housing, we have needs to fix  
2 up our parks, we have needs to fix up our streets.

3 We can go right down the line and come up  
4 with 20 needs that would employ every single  
5 unemployed person, every single former welfare  
6 recipient. Every single person that wants to work  
7 full-time who is now working part-time could be  
8 easily employed doing these things. And of course  
9 we would need to train people to be able to do them,  
10 right, and people could be employed doing these  
11 things and fix up the community at the same time.  
12 It's a very logical solution, but we don't even go  
13 to first base on that; it's not even part of the  
14 public debate.

15 Now, what do we do at the local level about  
16 that? Mayor Kalisz is sitting here saying, "I don't  
17 have the resources at the city level to do a public  
18 jobs program of any size," and that's true. Child  
19 care, there is something you can do as a mayor about  
20 child care, but the fact is most of the money is  
21 going to have to come from state and federal.

22 So when we do, I think what we have to do  
23 is we have to make a lot of noise, we have to be  
24 fighting really hard at the local level at both

1 grass roots and public officials saying, "This is a  
2 responsibility, to provide these things, and it is  
3 up to the State and the Federal Government to be  
4 doing it," and making so much noise and reaching out  
5 to other people in other communities who are making  
6 so much noise, that eventually the ground swell is  
7 such that these resources start coming down.

8           Then we have make sure that, when they do  
9 come down, they are allocated fairly so that all  
10 segments of the community get their piece of the  
11 pie, rather than going to who happens to be the most  
12 powerful or on the basis of race, I mean, in the  
13 sense that whites get jobs in construction and not  
14 blacks.

15           Anyway, that's about what I had to say, so  
16 I'm open for questions.

17           (Applause)

18           MR. JOHNSON: Professor Gilbarg, from the  
19 '70s up until now, you're still talking the same  
20 socialist, Communist agenda on the part of the  
21 people that you were talking back in the '70s. Now,  
22 you came up with some stuff here. How many times  
23 have you presented your same speech there to either  
24 the Housing Authority Board or the School Committee?

1 PROFESSOR GILBARG: Well --

2 MR. JOHNSON: How many times?

3 PROFESSOR GILBARG: First of all, I don't  
4 think I'm here to be on trial, and it seems to me  
5 that --

6 MR. JOHNSON: I asked you how many times  
7 you have presented that to the School Committee or  
8 the Housing Authority.

9 PROFESSOR GILBARG: I can give you my  
10 credentials as an activist and --

11 MR. JOHNSON: You always --

12 PROFESSOR GILBARG: I'm trying to answer  
13 your question. I can present my credentials as an  
14 activist, and I think they go pretty far. I don't  
15 feel I need to defend myself.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Everybody in this room can do  
17 that.

18 PROFESSOR GILBARG: Okay. So that's not  
19 the issue. The issue is, do you think these ideas  
20 make sense? Do they offer anything to the  
21 discussion or not?

22 MR. JOHNSON: If you come into this room --

23 PROFESSOR GILBARG: You have the right to  
24 like them or not.

1 MR. JOHNSON: -- without offering anything  
2 that you haven't before the School Committee or the  
3 Housing Authority, why are you preaching here? They  
4 are the people that can change what you're talking  
5 about.

6 DR. BLANCHARD: Sir, we've got your name on  
7 the list to speak. This is the time for questions  
8 and answers.

9 PROFESSOR GILBARG: Chris?

10 MR. RIVERA: I'm going to get back to when  
11 you started earlier, you mentioned about the School  
12 Department. Well, things have been done in the  
13 past. We have tried to get together in the past  
14 with the School Department. The thing is that the  
15 people who are in power, who have the time to make a  
16 difference, are indifferent to the problems, so  
17 having worked with the parents and people who are  
18 involved, you know, they just give up, because it  
19 seems like nobody gives a damn.

20 You see, that's the whole problem right  
21 there, and until we come together and we demand  
22 those changes, it's not going to happen. And that's  
23 a problem. We have to demand changes. We have to  
24 have people who are held accountable who have the

1 kids in school. But people have not -- people have  
2 worked together. In fact, I have gone to school.  
3 Activists have been going to school. You don't any  
4 get changes. Nothing happens, you know. Today  
5 people are going to the school. They have been  
6 going for the past 20 years.

7 PROFESSOR GILBARG: I agree with you.

8 DR. BLANCHARD: Mr. Andrade, did you have a  
9 question?

10 MR. ANDRADE: I know you're very up to date  
11 on what's going on with the welfare reform stuff.  
12 One issue that I have regarding that is the family  
13 unit, and most of the time we're talking about  
14 households headed by women, in general, and we're  
15 talking about employment. Where and how does the  
16 male population fit into that, particularly when  
17 we're talking about whether it's child support or  
18 whether it's whatever it may be that makes up the  
19 family?

20 PROFESSOR GILBARG: Well, the way I see it  
21 first, because -- I mean, first of all, I have to  
22 think about why do we have so many single mothers.  
23 And I say the bottom line is not the welfare system,  
24 that the bottom line is the lack of jobs, lack of

1 job opportunities.

2 MR. JOHNSON: We have single mothers  
3 because of a lack of jobs?

4 PROFESSOR GILBARG: You can very easily  
5 trace statistically the rise of single-parent  
6 families in Puerto Rican communities, black  
7 communities around the country, as the manufacturing  
8 base declined.

9 For instance, the decline of the garment  
10 industry as a employment -- for decent paying jobs,  
11 now sweatshops, but decent paying jobs for Puerto  
12 Rican males, resulted in the breakup of the Puerto  
13 Rican family in New York City, because young men  
14 came in and couldn't get a way of supporting their  
15 family, and the husbands couldn't find a way of  
16 carrying out their responsibilities. So families  
17 split up, and families don't come together.

18 The same thing happened with the decline of  
19 steel and auto and other industries around the  
20 country that affected all sorts of group.

21 So I think that opportunities, job  
22 opportunities, which you were asking about, is at  
23 the root of the high rate of single parents in this  
24 country, and unless you can address that, it's going



1 to continue to be the case.

2 I think that if we could have -- so we  
3 need some kind of really positive job program that's  
4 not just accessible for women coming off welfare,  
5 but it's accessible for all breadwinners regardless  
6 of sex, that creates the basis for families to come  
7 together and stay together. That's what I see as  
8 the fundamental solution.

9 Now, I think it's hard to work around that  
10 stuff, how to do it. You've done some good work,  
11 but it's difficult. You know, that's why I  
12 mentioned the public job things. That's something  
13 that at least we need to introduce into the public  
14 discussion. But I think that has to be done, and  
15 short of that, it's hard to deal with it.

16 MR. COLE: Short question for you,  
17 observation and short question. You mentioned the  
18 WPA, no problem. The CCC, Jack knows about that.  
19 But here's the problem: The whole country, if  
20 you're going back to the old AT&T, to what's called  
21 the tailor experiment, the man was an extension of  
22 the machine, that was the manufacturing and  
23 industrial area. Technology has changed, to the  
24 point that even I left my gig in 1980 working as an

1 engineer to come here -- I had been working for 35  
2 grand -- to come back here because the technology  
3 was changing even for me.

4           Now, when you brought up the fact about,  
5 okay, the job thing, there should be jobs for the  
6 seniors and retraining people that are on  
7 unemployment and must be in transition, but where is  
8 this money going to come from? Whose tax dollars?  
9 Who's going to make the decisions, some more  
10 bureaucrats? Because I don't want it coming off my  
11 tax dollars. To answer the thing about bottom line  
12 about kids, don't have the damn kids in the first  
13 place if you can't afford them. That's where my tax  
14 dollars are going.

15           (Applause)

16           PROFESSOR GILBARG: It's easy to lecture  
17 people about not having kids, but I look for  
18 policies that actually have results, because  
19 morality lectures don't get you anywhere, okay? But  
20 to answer your question --

21           MR. COLE: It does if you follow it. I've  
22 lived in a lot of different countries where I have  
23 seen this work, and you know what, I am not talking  
24 about the Chinese model, "We're going to knock your

1 daughters off; your sons are worth more."

2           You go prior to the days of '64, the Brown  
3 versus Board of Education, and into the '60s, and I  
4 went to school down there, and I was down there, and  
5 I played the game, and I'll tell you something:  
6 That was a well-known thing within families of  
7 color, African, Cuban, whatever you want, that you  
8 don't have the kid you can't afford, because in the  
9 Anglo-Saxon Manifest Destiny society, you had fun  
10 having them, you have fun taking care of them.

11           PROFESSOR GILBARG: Well, let me try to  
12 answer your question in terms of the jobs. First of  
13 all, the jobs that are needed, I think there has to  
14 be -- local communities have to sit down and discuss  
15 with local input what kind of jobs are needed in any  
16 given community. So I don't see it as a bureaucracy  
17 thing. Now, whether it be implemented that way  
18 obviously is a struggle, because you know that is  
19 the tendency. So that's the first part.

20           The second part, where the money comes  
21 from, I think there are three things to say. Number  
22 one, we have a bloated military budget at a national  
23 level with lots of waste. There is a lot of money  
24 that could be allocated for jobs in the areas that

1 are needed. The military budget, a lot of it is  
2 high tech. They don't create very many jobs. Most  
3 of the jobs that do get created are very high paid  
4 for a very narrow segment of the population. So I  
5 think if you redirected some of that money, that  
6 would make a big difference.

7 Also there is a lot of corporate welfare,  
8 we know that, and a lot of tax loopholes that large  
9 corporations are taking advantage of. That money  
10 can be used. We have had an enormous cut in the tax  
11 rate both for corporations and for rich individuals  
12 both at the state level and nationally over the  
13 years. If we simply went back to the taxes of 1980,  
14 we would have a couple of hundred billion dollars  
15 coming in that could be used for these purposes.

16 But the other thing is, if I was faced as a  
17 taxpayer, as a middle income taxpayer, with a choice  
18 of paying what I do now, which by the way is a lower  
19 tax than any other country in the industrial world,  
20 okay, or paying a little bit higher tax, but knowing  
21 that that money was going to be used for child care,  
22 for health care, for job creation, for things that  
23 we truly need to deal with the social problems of  
24 this country, I would be the first one to pay it.

1 (Applause)

2 DR. BLANCHARD: One last quick one.

3 MR. CHARLTON: Dan, does the Humphrey-  
4 Hawkins Bill make the U.S. Government the employer  
5 of last resort?

6 PROFESSOR GILBARG: Yes, the rhetoric  
7 does. It's right there. When the legislation was  
8 passed, it said that, but there has been no teeth in  
9 it. So that's exactly -- that's right, the  
10 legislation spells out this concept that if private  
11 enterprise cannot provide the jobs, that the public  
12 sector should invest in jobs. It's right there  
13 written in law. But there is no teeth in it for  
14 enforcement.

15 MR. CHARLTON: Because it's our  
16 government's failure and its failed policy that's  
17 allowing the jobs to migrate out of the country.

18 DR. BLANCHARD: Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 DR. BLANCHARD: Brian Gomes was not able to  
21 make it, and Maria Rosario had to leave, but in a  
22 moment we'll hear her statement.

23 Mayor Kalisz, would you offer us your  
24 remarks now, please.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Dr. Fletcher, what is going  
2 to happen from the -- before Mayor Kalisz speaks to  
3 you, what is the purpose of this, and will this be a  
4 part of something that is going to be presented as  
5 policy on civil rights?

6 DR. BLANCHARD: Not as policy. We are a  
7 fact-finding and information-gathering body, that  
8 rises most directly to the U.S. Commission on Civil  
9 Rights. We are today transcribing verbatim the  
10 accounts of people who offer their opinions in this  
11 briefing, and that account will be available to  
12 everyone, and it will be provided to the  
13 Commissioner.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

15 DR. BLANCHARD: Very happy to have you  
16 here, Mayor. Thank you very much for coming.

17 (Applause)

18 MAYOR KALISZ: I'm not here today to  
19 announce the largest public works program to be  
20 initiated by local government, but rather  
21 acknowledging at this point in time the fact that  
22 there are very serious civil rights issues that are  
23 prevalent in our community, challenges that are  
24 probably as great as they have been over the past 30

1 years.

2           However, I'd like to share with you just a  
3 brief experience, listening to the comments of the  
4 previous speakers that are here today, that I  
5 encountered just recently. I had the pleasure of  
6 being in the company of the United States Conference  
7 of Mayors, and I was introduced to several mayors,  
8 and there were four of us at a social event having a  
9 discussion, Mayor Cianci from Providence, Mayor  
10 Rindello from Philadelphia, Mayor Menino from  
11 Boston, and last mayor was myself from New Bedford,  
12 Massachusetts.

13           They were speaking about the impact in  
14 their communities with regards to race relations,  
15 with regards to civil rights. And they were talking  
16 at length about the challenges that they faced,  
17 Providence, Boston and Philadelphia.

18           To say the least, I was horrified. I was  
19 born and brought up and raised my entire life in the  
20 City of New Bedford, some 41 years. I had never  
21 heard the type of incidents that Menino, Cianci and  
22 Rindello shared with us in discussing the impact of  
23 urban living in the 1990s.

24           The City of New Bedford has far different

1 challenges, and I say that as opposed to generic,  
2 general civil rights issues that plague our country  
3 today. And I will agree with what Mr. Gilbarg made  
4 reference to earlier, that the crux of the problem  
5 of civil rights issues, if they're characterized as  
6 such, in a city such as New Bedford, bear down to  
7 just one very important factor, economics, because  
8 economics is what determines what happens in our  
9 community. Be you white, black, Hispanic,  
10 Portuguese, Irish, French, it amounts to who has the  
11 dollar has the power.

12 And that's a sad criticism, but on the  
13 other hand, it's a challenge in our community that  
14 is one that can be overcome. It can be overcome by  
15 developing the industry potential, the commercial  
16 resources, the business acumen that a city such as  
17 New Bedford can have.

18 Now, I'm a mayor of only five months, and  
19 maybe I'm a little idealistic in my approach to  
20 doing things, but the fact of the matter is there is  
21 the potential in a community of our size for a  
22 economic resurgence. And when this economic  
23 resurgence takes place, people have jobs, and if  
24 that means people are home, instead of creating



1 babies, they're out working, if they're creating  
2 livelihoods, they're going to the bank on Friday  
3 night and standing in line, rather than the local  
4 bar, having a few drinks and wondering what's going  
5 to happen tomorrow, then maybe we've made an impact.

6 I want to tell you that as a community, I  
7 believe, I am taking seriously the concerns that are  
8 raised as they pertain to these questions of civil  
9 rights. Do we recognize that there is bigotry and  
10 racism in the City of New Bedford? Yes, we do. Do  
11 we realize that our public servants have to be more  
12 sensitive to all of our population, and not just  
13 certain segments? Yes, I do.

14 Do I recognize the fact that people are  
15 coming together and are trying to do something in  
16 our community? Yes. Are there resources  
17 available? Yes. Be they highly controversial and  
18 very vocal, as Mr. Johnson may be, or someone who  
19 takes a community activist perspective, as Mr.  
20 Gilbarg does, there are resources there. But the  
21 sad part is, they haven't been channelled, they  
22 aren't effective, and as a result of this, the  
23 problem seems to perpetuate itself.

24 Mr. Garron made reference in his comments

1 earlier today that what took place 40 years ago  
2 really hasn't changed, and he is probably right.  
3 Maybe it's time to change. Maybe we won't have  
4 hopefully the problems that Philadelphia, Providence  
5 and Boston have. But the problems that plague our  
6 community are as serious to our population as those  
7 are to those municipal entities.

8           We have to work on creating an economy.  
9 Now, as Mayor, I have a responsibility of going out  
10 there and, as I see it, looking to create jobs, not  
11 just an environment, as it may have been said in the  
12 past, of having business take a place, but actually  
13 searching, going to other communities, going out of  
14 the country, making phone calls, asking people to  
15 entertain the actual land resource and capital  
16 within our community to bring jobs forward. Once  
17 you have jobs, you will see a resurgence of the  
18 economy.

19           Take a look a very short period of time  
20 ago, people like Chamberlain and Morse and John I.  
21 Pauldings, which were all large local manufacturing  
22 firms, existed in the City of New Bedford. The  
23 problems were of a different nature. There were  
24 problems then, there probably will be problems in

1 the future, but at least the economic strength will  
2 be there, across the board, for all people in the  
3 community to be able to afford to get housing in our  
4 community.

5           You know, a couple of comments were passed,  
6 and I came here this afternoon from attending an  
7 event, the opening of a halfway house in the City of  
8 New Bedford in this case for women who have been  
9 challenged by the substance alcohol or some type of  
10 abuse in their life.

11           There were approximately 60 people that  
12 were assembled at that opening, and I have to be  
13 honest with you, maybe I was being a little bit  
14 typical of the American person in trying to figure  
15 out who the client was and who the staff person was,  
16 and as I stereotyped this crowd, I realized that it  
17 was all staff that was present, until the program  
18 got under way. Everyone had been dressed up,  
19 cleaned up, their best face put on, and put in front  
20 of everyone that was there.

21           There was a significant number of  
22 participants in this newly created program in the  
23 City of New Bedford, but you know what, it didn't  
24 look like one would expect going to the opening.

1 Maybe what was said earlier about the fact that it's  
2 an image and a perspective that we put on these  
3 civil rights issues, maybe it's very, very  
4 important.

5 Now, you don't want to create a community  
6 of all one type of person. Our cultural diversity  
7 and the richness of New Bedford is because of so  
8 many people over such a long period of time who have  
9 contributed. But if we recognize what the  
10 challenges of '90s and the year 2000 will be, if we  
11 apply ourselves as I am doing as Mayor for the  
12 economic development of our community, I am sure  
13 that as I go around and I meet with the Meninos and  
14 the Ciancis and the Rindellos of this country, our  
15 problems will be that much less.

16 I also take exception -- maybe that's the  
17 wrong way of saying it -- when we look at such  
18 issues as we ticked down as education, education has  
19 not changed in the City of New Bedford because no  
20 one has sat in the position of leadership that is  
21 willing to make the change. That's not time for  
22 applause, and I don't want it to appear to be a  
23 political statement, but as chairman ex officio of  
24 the School Board, I take exception to the fact that

1 our School Department does not operate the way it  
2 should, and I'm trying to make the changes.

3 We have people that now are looking to  
4 apply tremendous amounts of resources to cure ills  
5 which are not ills that are going to be created --  
6 or that are going to be taken care by pouring money  
7 into it. It means taking the time and looking at  
8 what's taking place.

9 Our housing stock is on a decline in the  
10 City of New Bedford. We have a list right now of  
11 some 250 homes subject to demolition, 250 buildings,  
12 housing three to four family potential each, to be  
13 taken off the face of the earth and not returned  
14 because of future zoning.

15 Today we saw the revamping of a house for  
16 \$60,000 that is going to serve as a social service  
17 shelter in our community, and that's not an  
18 impossibility. If you create that better face in  
19 the neighborhood, people feel better about it.

20 Jobs I have spoken about lastly as the  
21 welfare issue that is causing such a controversy  
22 that I myself cannot answer what is taking place in  
23 our community in the future. I have people on my  
24 immediate staff that are worried about tent cities

1 developing in the City of New Bedford and planning  
2 the contingencies for such impact as early as this  
3 December. I don't want to be naive, but I also want  
4 to be realistic and believe that we are not going to  
5 have 900 families turned to the streets this  
6 December.

7           You know, we turn around, and we look at  
8 what the legislative leadership affords us as far as  
9 opportunities, and as much as a person as Barney  
10 Frank can be criticize on the one hand, he is one of  
11 the few members of Congress that stands these days  
12 for the taking away of armed services money and  
13 putting it back into our communities.

14           Our local legislative delegation that goes  
15 to the State House happens to have the  
16 characteristics of purely Democratic values, as  
17 opposed to a Republican administration, and as such  
18 we get often put into a different category of  
19 political discrimination because of not having the  
20 appropriate letter after our name. And at the local  
21 level, well, five months is proven to the test. You  
22 can make a difference if you stand up to the plate  
23 and try to do it.

24           I hope a year from now, if this type of

1 testimony is taken again, we can show measurable  
2 results. The standard has been set. The concern in  
3 the community is there. The activists that were  
4 there yesterday and the day before I know will be  
5 there tomorrow and in the future. I am just hoping  
6 that we're able to make the respectable difference  
7 to incorporate all of the concerns and resources and  
8 apply this.

9           The comments that have been said here today  
10 are not beyond applying. Maybe we can't create a  
11 massive public works program, but maybe we can  
12 create a nucleus for job creation. I'll certainly  
13 be reaching out to Dan, because I've never really  
14 heard him speak or talk about the ideals he's  
15 presented, and Eddy is constantly holding me to a  
16 standard and introducing what elements there are  
17 that a mayor has to be able to be accountable for.

18           So today I have to be honest, I really  
19 didn't know what I could say. I come from a white  
20 community. I come from a Catholic upbringing. My  
21 first interaction with the minority community is  
22 when I went to high school, and very honestly, and I  
23 would like to share this quick story with you, we  
24 had a young man who was in school with us who was

1 black in a Catholic private high school.

2 I remember one day sitting in the  
3 cafeteria, and a group of us were together, and a  
4 black family walked through the cafeteria, and  
5 everyone said, "Oh, look. Who are they?" The kid  
6 that was sitting next to me said, "Well, that's my  
7 parents." We didn't look at him as black until the  
8 day that his parents walked into school.

9 We were a family brought together on a  
10 common ground, educated, working day in and day out  
11 together. It only took one day when another element  
12 entered our environment that we really realized who  
13 he was. And it really didn't make a difference at  
14 that point. He was no different than us, but  
15 because something else was introduced into the  
16 environment, it threw off our balance.

17 That was an important education for me that  
18 I still look back on today. I don't consider  
19 myself, and I hopefully will continue this way, to  
20 be any different than anyone else. Economically  
21 I've had certain advantages, socially I've had  
22 certain challenges, but if I apply that theory and  
23 that thinking that I was brought up with into our  
24 community, I am sure that we can make differences



1 that will continue to keep us apart from the  
2 Providences and the Philadelphias and the Bostons of  
3 this world.

4 We have a community that is rich in  
5 cultural diversity. We just have to maximize our  
6 economic potential and bring that family together.

7 I would be happy to take any questions.

8 MR. JOHNSON: Before you go, Mr. Mayor, and  
9 for the record, because I think that other than Jack  
10 Custodio, a few people in here just do not know  
11 this, I think that you should be put on the record,  
12 for you have been one of the first presidents of the  
13 City Council that recognized Black History Month and  
14 started recognizing our black and Cape Verdean  
15 senior citizens, Jack Custodio, Ms. Eloise Pina and  
16 Ms. Vera Hunt. You were the first City Councilor  
17 that had ever done that. You were the last  
18 president of the City Council who has ever  
19 recognized anyone.

20 I am totally, excuse the expression, pissed  
21 off right now that the president of the City  
22 Council -- you as the Mayor certainly have a busier  
23 schedule than anybody in the city right now, and for  
24 those people who are supposed to represent us and

1 are not here, well, I want that to go in the record  
2 too.

3 But I want to personally thank you for your  
4 work that you didn't publicize, you didn't look for  
5 publicity for it. It is filmed, it is documented, a  
6 copy of that film will be given to Jack, and you  
7 were the first person to do it. You didn't look for  
8 any publicity for it, but it should be known, and it  
9 should be a part of this record.

10 MAYOR KALISZ: Thank you.

11 (Applause)

12 PROFESSOR GILBARG: I just wanted your  
13 assessment in terms of jobs, coming from the welfare  
14 angle, which is generally the unemployment angle.  
15 Obviously jobs is a very serious problem. What is  
16 your assessment of, is there an agency in this city  
17 that really has the information about jobs and can  
18 be called on?

19 For example, can someone go to the Mayor's  
20 Office or some other agency and get help, someone  
21 coming off the time limit, someone who has been  
22 long-term unemployed and run out of benefits? Who  
23 do they go to to get help? Is there anyone that has  
24 really centralized that information?

1           MAYOR KALISZ: That process is taking place  
2 now, the formation or the recreation of what is now  
3 the new New Directions. The administrative entity  
4 under the JTPA, job training programs, Jesse Hurley  
5 is now taking those steps of bringing together,  
6 under the plan I campaigned upon, the resource of  
7 what jobs are available and, secondary to that, the  
8 training specifically needed for those jobs.

9           I broke the mold on the educational  
10 training model after becoming Mayor to prepare  
11 people for the general entry into the work force  
12 concept. As you made reference earlier, fix up a  
13 resume, know how to look good, know what time to  
14 show up -- that doesn't do the job, if you go to  
15 Riverside Manufacturing and they need an operator  
16 that operates a certain type of machine with a  
17 certain degree of proficiency.

18           We are now setting our job training skills  
19 in order to address industry needs in New Bedford as  
20 well as the degree of proficiency required to  
21 introduce and to enter into the job market. New  
22 Directions are doing those assessments and that  
23 training, and that's how that organization has  
24 changed.

1           PROFESSOR GILBARG: The other question I  
2 had is, I know that we've discussed after-school  
3 child care with you at our speak-out, United  
4 Interfaith Action has discussed it with you in the  
5 two big meetings with you, and you have also talked  
6 about it in your campaign. How do your plans shape  
7 up right now to develop schools into centers where  
8 youths can have things to do after school?

9           MAYOR KALISZ: This coming September, based  
10 upon a 36-week program which is what we discussed  
11 with UIA, we have committed \$150,000 for opening up  
12 the three middle schools, junior high school levels,  
13 to have programming five days a week, three hours a  
14 day, five units in each operation. In other words,  
15 you may have one day, among the five units,  
16 intramural activity, sporting, you may have an  
17 audiovisual club, you may have a health care  
18 education program, you may have a Boy Scouts of  
19 America exploration program, and another.

20           Five days a week, five modules within a  
21 school that a student can participate in, anywhere  
22 from 15 to 25 per module; we're talking about the  
23 first 36 months of implementation having a program  
24 for about 675 students in the City of New Bedford,

1 as an introduction.

2           Once again, this has not been done formally  
3 before, and we are just laying all the groundwork.  
4 The model is designed, and it's out there for  
5 implementation. The requests for proposals for the  
6 actual modules go out next month.

7           PROFESSOR GILBARG: Thank you.

8           DR. BLANCHARD: Thank you very much.

9           MR. CHUN: I have a question. Let me make  
10 a comment before I ask my question. As I was  
11 listening to you, I found myself very deeply  
12 impressed. I think that was partly because you  
13 appear to be speaking from convictions, and I  
14 compliment you. My question has to do with, is  
15 there one of the civil rights issues that you are  
16 giving priority for your administration so that  
17 something can be done on it?

18           MAYOR KALISZ: Any one particular issue?  
19 The one issue that we're addressing specifically is  
20 job creation, showing measurable increases in job  
21 opportunities in the City, and that's by providing  
22 economic enhancements, initiatives for companies to  
23 locate within our community. And I'm actually going  
24 on the road and being the salesman itself for the

1 City, trying to entice companies to locate here.

2 MR. CHUN: How will that affect minority  
3 communities?

4 MAYOR KALISZ: Well, very simply, we look  
5 at the fact that many of the industries that we are  
6 looking at for blue collar industry are going to be  
7 based upon people with high school or lower  
8 educational attainment levels. And what we are  
9 finding primarily in our community is that is where,  
10 in the minority community, a portion of the  
11 unemployed community comes from. So those entry  
12 levels jobs in non-high-school or beyond  
13 manufacturing positions can take in that segment of  
14 the population.

15 MR. CHUN: Thank you.

16 DR. BLANCHARD: Thank you very much.

17 Marla Valois volunteered to present to us  
18 briefly Maria Rosario's comments that she wished to  
19 offer today, but she had to leave.

20 Sir, you are third on the list.

21 MR. CUSTODIO: I was first on the list  
22 before. I've been going at you ever since the Fall  
23 River segment.

24 DR. BLANCHARD: I asked you to put your

1 name on the list.

2 MR. CUSTODIO: I don't have to put my  
3 name. I think I should be given preference as much  
4 as I was here first.

5 MS. VALOIS: Excuse me. I'm reading this  
6 for Maria Rosario because she was unable to speak  
7 here today also, and she had been here since 10:30  
8 listening. And I think we need to look at that  
9 aspect a little bit more, listening instead of  
10 barking and things of that nature.

11 This is a statement from Maria Rosario:  
12 "It has been said that education is the jewel  
13 casting brilliance into the future. We all know  
14 that a child's education is precious. It is the key  
15 to personal success and to social and economic  
16 development of our community. My mother, who did  
17 not have the chance to go beyond fourth grade, knew  
18 how important education is. When at 16 I thought  
19 about dropping out of high school, she told me that  
20 if I didn't stay in school, I had to go to work.

21 "Sadly, it was that threat of my  
22 uneducated mother that encouraged me to stay in  
23 school, not the encouragement of my teachers,  
24 counselors and administrators that kept me in

1 school. Children and youth need role models, yet  
2 there were no Hispanic teachers, counselors or  
3 administrators in New Bedford High School. There  
4 was no school professional I could aspire to be like  
5 or I could turn to or who could identify with me and  
6 understand the obstacles that I faced. Many of my  
7 friends dropped out of school. No one expected them  
8 to do any better than that, and they struggle to  
9 this day due to a lack of education.

10 "Unfortunately, the situation hasn't  
11 changed much. The teachers, counselors and  
12 administrators in the New Bedford public schools do  
13 not reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of  
14 the families they serve. Children are being  
15 suspended for speaking in Spanish. What are we  
16 teaching our children, to be ashamed of their home  
17 language and their culture? Where is the  
18 partnership between the home and the school that is  
19 so important for the child's growth and  
20 development? There are still no counselors. A  
21 Spanish-speaking student cannot speak in their first  
22 language regarding their desire to go to school  
23 and/or college.

24 "There has been a lot of attention put on



1 the fact that one New Bedford elementary school has  
2 an Hispanic principal, yet it is a terrible burden  
3 to be one, to have to represent the entire cultural  
4 community. We are one of five New Bedford residents  
5 and growing. Moreover, the Hispanic community is  
6 not homogeneous. We are Puerto Rican, Dominican,  
7 Mexican, Guatemalan, Salvadorian and more.

8 "The problem is not just about the lack of  
9 Hispanic personnel in our schools, it is about the  
10 attitudes and expectations. There are teachers and  
11 counselors who continue to tell the multicultural  
12 students that they are not college material,  
13 encouraging them to accept mediocrity. I am one of  
14 the team parents, and when a parent of one of my  
15 Hispanic clients expressed concerns about the poor  
16 grades of his daughter, the counselor responded, and  
17 this is direct quote, 'Well, she is doing better  
18 than most students, passing.'

19 "Getting by should not be good enough.  
20 Many Hispanic students come to school with a lot of  
21 internalized depression and a lack of belief in  
22 themselves and their ability to succeed in school.  
23 We have a responsibility to have high expectations  
24 for all" -- and "all" is underlined -- "students, to

1 instill in them a sense of their own responsibility  
2 in pursuit of excellence."

3           These are her proposals of some ideas that  
4 she think might work. "We need educational  
5 opportunities, and the well-being of this community  
6 depends upon our being educated. To this end, we  
7 need to hire teachers, counselors and administrators  
8 who represent the linguistic and cultural diversity  
9 of the community, conduct training among school  
10 staff to promote multicultural awareness and  
11 respect, develop an innovative school program that  
12 is linguistically acceptable and culturally  
13 relevant, introduce course books and material that  
14 reflect our experience as Hispanics and  
15 African-Americans," and that's underlined.

16           "I remembered as a youth being questioned  
17 about my cultural identity, wondering whether I  
18 would be accepted. I hesitated to say that I am  
19 Puerto Rican." That's sad. "Tragically, Hispanic  
20 children and youth still feel the stigma of their  
21 home language and culture, the stigma of being seen  
22 as other.

23           "Yet diversity is our strength, our hope,  
24 and as the African-American writer Ralph Ellison put

1 it, 'Whence all this passion toward conformity?  
2 Diversity is the word.' We need to pool our wealth  
3 of ideas, skills and resources to build our  
4 community so that we can all prosper."

5 (Applause)

6 DR. BLANCHARD: Mr. Andrade, and then I  
7 have Mr. Johnson.

8 MR. ANDRADE: My name is John Andrade. I'm  
9 the Executive Director of the Old Flint Village  
10 Community Development Corporation. I was on my way  
11 here to a meeting representing the New Bedford Focus  
12 Group on Education. As I was walking out of the  
13 parking lot, this particular flyer was laying on  
14 ground. My son and I happened to pick it up and  
15 read it. That's how I knew about this particular  
16 forum.

17 I would have to first criticize the  
18 Massachusetts Advisory Committee and the U.S.  
19 Commission for not properly advertising this  
20 particular event, and we really do injustice to the  
21 fact that we here in this region need to have your  
22 ears, need to have you hear us in this region.

23 The New Bedford area has the highest  
24 unemployment rate in this region. When I say

1 "region," now I'm talking about New England. And  
2 it has had this unemployment rate since 1988. In  
3 1988 we were around 21 to 22 percent. Here we are  
4 in 1998, and we're at 11.6 percent, where the rest  
5 of the country is either at 3.4 or 4.4 percent. And  
6 now we talk about -- are we talking just economic  
7 issues, are we talking about racism? It's a  
8 combination of all.

9 But unfortunately, the key issue is that,  
10 you know, the federal agencies that are charged with  
11 regulatory issues are not doing their job. I'm  
12 telling the United States government that you're not  
13 doing your job. I'm telling the Massachusetts  
14 government that they're not doing their job.

15 They're not doing the job that is needed to  
16 hear what we are saying in regards to the needs of  
17 economic development for this region, the needs for  
18 more employment and training programs, more  
19 conducive employment and training programs that will  
20 meet the needs of the 21st century, how do we bring  
21 our young people and our adults who are breadwinners  
22 into the 21st century, and to be able to take care  
23 of their families and not have to worry about  
24 entitlement programs and things of that nature.

1           We would like to make HUD accountable to  
2 the area in regards to empowerment zones. We have  
3 attempted to get an empowerment zone in the City of  
4 New Bedford. That application was turned down  
5 because of local politics. Fortunately we have a  
6 new Mayor, so some of those politics have  
7 disappeared.

8           The building trades unions are the biggest  
9 discriminatory institutions in this area. I am  
10 asking that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights come  
11 and investigate our building trades unions. I am  
12 demanding that you come.

13           The apprenticeship programs, the programs  
14 for entry level in any of the construction  
15 industries, all of the construction companies need  
16 to be investigated. I have asked when we first  
17 talked about starting setting up the New Bedford  
18 Focus Group -- Mr. Johnson, the Minority Action  
19 Committee was actually one of the people who  
20 established the New Bedford Focus Group -- we asked  
21 for a disparity study to be done in the City of New  
22 Bedford, similar to what the City of Boston has done  
23 and what the State of Massachusetts has done. We  
24 have asked for one to be done here in the City of

1 New Bedford and for this region.

2 I am demanding that the U.S. Commission  
3 look into HUD's practices in enforcing Section 3 and  
4 in making Section 8 housing certificates more  
5 readily available and the administration of that to  
6 be more fair.

7 I am demanding that the U.S. Commission  
8 have the Department of Labor Office of Federal  
9 Contract Compliance come down and do their job. I  
10 am demanding that the EPA come in and do its job in  
11 regards to brown fields, in regards to jobs that the  
12 EPA is presently involved with in this region, in  
13 regards to Superfund sites, brown field sites. I am  
14 demanding that those agencies and those officials of  
15 these particular capacities who have not done their  
16 job be removed from their jobs.

17 And that is within HUD, that is within the  
18 Department of Labor, that is within the Office of  
19 Federal Contract Compliance, that's within the  
20 Department of Education, that's within the Health  
21 and Human Services.

22 When we talk about here with regards to  
23 racism, racism here, I am talking about in regards  
24 to economic racism, and that includes environmental

1 racism. That means racism, how it is dealt with in  
2 the building trades, where if you go to any building  
3 trades union, whether it is the steel workers, the  
4 iron workers, the carpenters, the laborers, you will  
5 not find any black, Cape Verdean, Hispanic youths in  
6 their apprenticeship programs, and if you do, it is  
7 only because his father has been in the union for  
8 the last 30 years, and he is probably the only one  
9 left.

10 And when you find minority workers on any  
11 construction site, he is going to be at least 55  
12 years old and up, because from 25 years old to 55 or  
13 60, we aren't recognized within that work force.  
14 We're not there. So if we're not there, our sons  
15 and daughters aren't going to be there, because the  
16 white work force within the unions, that's all they  
17 take care of is their sons and their daughters and  
18 their nieces and their nephews and all of that. So  
19 we can't do that with our own, because we're not in  
20 it.

21 They have left us out, and they've got a  
22 big iron gate there to keep us out. And when we  
23 have local administrations, whether it is the City  
24 or State administration, that continuously talks

1 about equal opportunity and affirmative action and  
2 don't know what either one means, and then tell us,  
3 who are the activists, "You don't know what you're  
4 talking about, we've got 20 percent over there,"  
5 we're not talking about 20 percent, we're not  
6 talking about 5 percent.

7           We don't deal with the goals and the quotas  
8 that the Republicans like Newt Gingrich say we are  
9 talking about. That is put on by all Democrats and  
10 Republicans who are racist and who do not want to go  
11 ahead and see us get into the door and make our  
12 families comfortable in regard to getting good-  
13 paying jobs.

14           That's the same thing with businesses.  
15 Small Business Administration needs to be  
16 investigated. Economic Development Administration,  
17 Department of Commerce, the EDA needs to be  
18 investigated as to what it is doing here in regards  
19 to bringing in more business opportunities,  
20 commercial opportunities in regards to the minority  
21 communities in this area.

22           You know, it's very easy for you to come  
23 here and listen to us. My question will be, what  
24 are you going to really hear, and what are you going



1 to really take back besides the tape, and what is  
2 going to happen, what kind of feedback do we get?

3 I can remember being in the auditorium a  
4 few years ago when SOMBA, the State Office of  
5 Minority Business Administration, came in, very  
6 similar, when MCAD came in here, when the State  
7 Commission on Discrimination came to the City  
8 Council about two years ago. They never came back,  
9 we don't know what their report was, and  
10 discrimination is going up higher in New Bedford.  
11 All you have to do is go over to the Human Relations  
12 Commission and see how many more complaints have  
13 been filed.

14 So what have they done? What are you going  
15 to do? What is the U.S. Commission going to do?  
16 Are we going to get somebody to say, "Here is a  
17 letter to you, Mr. Andrade," or to Mr. Gilbarg or  
18 anyone else that's here, saying, "These are the  
19 things that we can do. Call us, invite us to come  
20 down"? Well, I'm not going to wait for that. I'm  
21 inviting you to come down now.

22 Another point that was said, unemployment  
23 rate, that's not just because of bad economy in our  
24 neighborhoods, because in our neighborhoods it's 22

1 percent, and that's according to the 1990 census and  
2 the 1995 census and the information that has been  
3 put together by the City of New Bedford's own  
4 Economic Development Office. The unemployment rate  
5 in Census Tracts 18, 19, 26, 27 and 13 is 22  
6 percent. And that is not just because of racism.  
7 That is because of lack of responsibility and  
8 accountability by the agencies and those supposedly  
9 responsible in those agencies to do their job.

10           When you call MCAD in Boston, you will be  
11 goldarn lucky if you get anybody in three days by  
12 telephone, then two or three, four weeks before they  
13 can come down to even come investigate. We have a  
14 case right now of sexual harassmt that is being  
15 investigated, but because the MCAD here locally and  
16 the Human Relations Rights Commission here locally  
17 and the State MCAD dragged their feet, now the lady  
18 can't file her complaint for the sexual harassmt  
19 because the time has elapsed. That in itself is  
20 discrimination, when the system is really set up to  
21 hurt you more than to help you.

22           I am demanding that the U.S. Commission on  
23 Civil Rights come to New Bedford themselves to see  
24 what is happening here. We are in fear of -- this

1 little City of New Bedford is a mirror to what is  
2 going on across this country. We don't need  
3 lynchings here. We don't need anybody to be dragged  
4 by cars here. We don't need the KKK here. It's  
5 wide open here. There is no hidden discrimination  
6 here. There is not hidden racism here. It's wide  
7 open.

8           And unfortunately, when you sit here and  
9 hear us amongst ourselves who are here debating  
10 amongst ourselves, arguing amongst ourselves, this  
11 is what it does to us. Okay, instead of us sitting  
12 here working and being more forceful, in unity,  
13 we're splintered.

14           And we came here today for being with the  
15 assistant superintendent, and I apologize to him for  
16 not being able to have that meeting with him today,  
17 because this took precedence over that meeting. And  
18 fortunately I am glad I did come for that meeting  
19 and bumped into this particular issue, because we  
20 are right now talking about doing a class action  
21 suit against the unions in this area because of them  
22 keeping us out of the job market.

23           We have contractors right now working for  
24 the City. Just last Thursday I caught one

1 bicycling. Bicycling means moving a minority from  
2 one spot to another spot to say, "Yes, we've got  
3 minorities working," and they're doing that right  
4 here. J.F. White Construction Company was doing  
5 that last week. So that is happening now.

6 And, you know, it's so unfortunate that  
7 time is of the essence. You have been here all day,  
8 I'm here at the end, and I'm probably boring some of  
9 you, but you want to know something, when you talk  
10 about really wanting to know what is going on in  
11 here, what's happening, I know I am one of the major  
12 civil rights activists in this community that need  
13 to be heard and need to be heard a lot more of,  
14 because we have the facts, and we have the -- we  
15 can show you, not just tell you.

16 I can show you with the housing the  
17 discrimination that's going on, where there's  
18 deterioration and slums and blighted areas exist and  
19 who lives there, and what is being done with the 8  
20 to 10 to 15 million dollars a year that are coming  
21 into this community and being spent where it has  
22 already been spent once or twice already.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 (Applause)

1           MR. JOHNSON: While we are at this  
2 University, one of the things that I want to go on  
3 record, and I'm glad that Ray Barrows is sitting  
4 here, and for this U.S. Commission on Civil Rights,  
5 as we are speaking right now, this University has a  
6 civil rights problem, and let me tell you what that  
7 problem is.

8           You have two men, Ken Pyres, Joe Andrews.  
9 Joe Andrews has been working here for 25 years. Ken  
10 Pyres has been here over 20 years. The director of  
11 EEO -- I saw that George Smith got up and left  
12 here. When we looked at the files of what they had  
13 done, they had wrote letters to the files to nobody  
14 in order to try to resolve the problem. The problem  
15 is still not solved. It is in litigation as we  
16 speak right now.

17           So when we look at you, Mass. Dartmouth,  
18 where you are sitting today, I would hope that this  
19 Commission would talk to Dr. Cressy to see when and  
20 if the civil rights strategy and the discrimination  
21 at this University is going to stop.

22           Buddy just talked about people who are not  
23 doing their job. This University has a major budget  
24 for EEO and affirmative action, but if you tried to

1 get a job here -- for example, I have a two-year  
2 college degree, and I have been on the list to get a  
3 job here as a janitor for six years, for a janitor  
4 for six years. So when you talk about civil rights  
5 and educational rights and all of that, then you  
6 start with this University where you are sitting at  
7 right now.

8           The other thing I wanted to talk about in  
9 terms of this Commission, I'm glad that Mr. Charlton  
10 was contacted, because if Lee hadn't been contacted,  
11 there wouldn't have been another black organization  
12 here. We today do not know who organized this event  
13 and who gave up the names of the people who should  
14 have been here. Eloise Pina, who has worked in this  
15 community for 30 years -- there are many more; Ms.  
16 Pina is just one of the names -- knew nothing about  
17 that.

18           We hear all of this crap here today about  
19 government creating jobs. We have a program in this  
20 city called PACE, and they have a program called  
21 Youth Build. They have had black and Cape Verdean  
22 and Puerto Rican youngsters in this program for  
23 three years or more. Not only have they not built a  
24 house, they haven't graduated, and they will never

1 get any apprenticeship opportunities, and that's all  
2 based upon this social crap and this social agenda.

3 We have Professor Gilbarg sit up here and  
4 tell us about spending money. Well, we spend pretty  
5 close to \$20 trillion on the War on Poverty, and as  
6 we speak here, every government official can sit and  
7 tell you here, over \$300 billion a year is spent on  
8 EEO, affirmative action and civil rights. Has  
9 anything basically changed?

10 And my exception to all of this and  
11 particularly from Professor Gilbarg, I may have a  
12 disagreement, but there are NAACP and there are  
13 black institutions and there are Hispanic  
14 institutions and there are Cape Verdean  
15 institutions, we are not on the plantation, and we  
16 do not suggest that any professor, from wherever he  
17 is from, who has tried for the last 25 years to put  
18 everybody on a plantation so they can be in charge  
19 of the plantation -- I will be willing to bet my  
20 life that Dan Gilbarg was the one that put this  
21 together, and we had less than 30 people in this  
22 room, as serious as this matter is.

23 So to talk about civil rights, and all of  
24 those things, we start -- if we quit doing civil

1 wrong, and we quit trying to herd people into this  
2 little plantation kind of mentality here that we got  
3 from these socialistic ex-Communists now turned  
4 Social Democrats who constantly --

5 DR. BLANCHARD: Excuse me. One of the  
6 federal regulations is that we're to intervene if  
7 you personally defame people. So I would ask you --

8 MR. JOHNSON: If you were a socialist and  
9 you were a Communist and that's part of the public  
10 record, is that defamation?

11 DR. BLANCHARD: I have no idea. So if you  
12 steer clear of defamation, we'll be happy.

13 MR. JOHNSON: I just truly want to say  
14 this. I think that the behavior -- this is not  
15 defamation -- of Mr. Gilbarg is discriminatory  
16 within itself, constantly telling African-Americans  
17 and Cape Verdeans and Hispanic people that "We're  
18 going to create a social program for you, and this  
19 social program is going to lift you out of the  
20 depths of poverty and discrimination." That's just  
21 as big a bunch of bull crap as you have ever heard.

22 And I would hope that this University,  
23 which is the leading educational institution in this  
24 south coastal, southeastern Massachusetts or



1 whatever you want to call it, would begin to get  
2 together and pull people together as an educational  
3 institution that can have an impact for our folks.

4 We don't need Dan Gilbarg or anybody else  
5 to tell us that "You still need social programs in  
6 order to eradicate civil rights violations." That's  
7 nonsense. And coming -- he talked about his civil  
8 rights credentials. I too have those, and I'll  
9 finish with this:

10 Having worked for and been an aide to  
11 Philip Randolph, Biak Rustin, Ernie Green of the  
12 Little Rock Nine, and Secretary of Labor Alexis  
13 Herman, I would think that those people are doing  
14 whatever they can, and I would think that that  
15 agenda that they have set, including the economic  
16 agenda for the NAACP -- the NAACP has an economic  
17 agenda, it's called Operation Fair Share, and I'm  
18 pretty sure that anybody who has been on this  
19 Commission long enough knows that that agenda  
20 exists.

21 My final comment is that in Southeastern  
22 Massachusetts, institutional racism, as Buddy spoke  
23 of, when it comes to craft unions and the rest of  
24 those things, are alive and well, and discrimination

1 is alive and well right here at U Mass. Dartmouth  
2 and in most institutions in this City. And those  
3 people who are supposed to be responsible for those,  
4 they will do everything they can to violate someone  
5 else.

6 And no one at this University can tell me  
7 that Ken Pyres and Joe Andrews, who are 25-year  
8 employees, longer than George Smith and Mr. Ramos  
9 here, are without rights. That's what they are  
10 saying.

11 Have a good day.

12 DR. BLANCHARD: Does anyone have any  
13 questions?

14 MR. ANDRADE: Yes. Eddy, could you  
15 elaborate more on the apprenticeship program.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Sure.

17 MR. CHUN: I don't think we have time.

18 MR. JOHNSON: He said we don't have time.

19 MR. CHUN: Go ahead.

20 MR. JOHNSON: Well, in terms of the  
21 apprenticeship program, I think that a lot of people  
22 in this room -- that's how I got to New Bedford. I  
23 came to New Bedford, and the reason that I came to  
24 New Bedford, at that time the Department of Labor

1 funded our program, RTP, and our forte was both  
2 women and nontraditional occupations, as well as  
3 making sure that the construction industry was  
4 integrated via its apprenticeship route, because  
5 that is the way to go. You want a youngster to be  
6 fully qualified.

7           In New Bedford for the last 25 years,  
8 apprenticeship, which is major in this country, is a  
9 nonexistent factor. And until government, including  
10 the U.S. Department of Labor in particular, steps in  
11 and says, "Hey, even you people over here, Youth  
12 Builders, PACE, who are using these children" -- and  
13 that's all they are doing, using them to build up a  
14 real estate portfolio -- nothing will be done unless  
15 the community organizations like NAACP, like black  
16 churches, like Cape Verdean organizations and like  
17 Hispanic organizations -- I'm willing to step aside  
18 for that, if that is to happen, and I think that  
19 Emilio Cruz and Lee Charlton and all those guys can  
20 work together and do these things, and, Buddy, if  
21 they can work together, that should be done.

22           But let's not try to hide the problem and  
23 sweep it under the table. And I notice that George  
24 Smith left, and I don't know whether he was here

1 this morning or not. I would hope that this  
2 University would also say to you, "Hey, we need to  
3 help, and what can you do for us?"

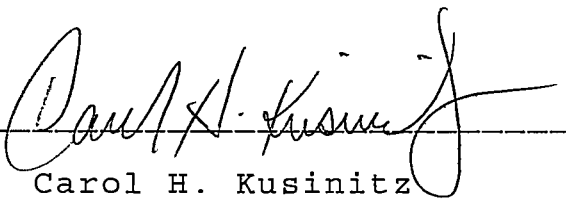
4 Thank you very much.

5 DR. BLANCHARD: I would like to thank you  
6 all for coming today, and I apologize for the length  
7 of the agenda. I look forward to distributing the  
8 comments to all of you who have signed the sheet  
9 that we passed around. If you would like to be on  
10 that mailing list and haven't signed, please do so  
11 now. Thank you.

12 (Whereupon the meeting was  
13 concluded at 3:30 p.m.)  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Carol H. Kusnitz, Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript, Volume I, is a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes taken on June 18, 1998.

  
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Carol H. Kusnitz

Registered Professional Reporter

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