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(Unedited Transcript)

I want to thank Alan, Senator Harris. It's an honor to be here, and it's also a pleasure to be with these two gentlemen, particularly the one on the far right -- I always thought he was a little bit on the far right.

(Laughter.)

We were doctoral students together, so we know each other well. 0131 I want to do something a tiny bit different from most, and that is I am going to follow a script that I have written, primarily because I'm a little bit like David Saperstein, except I'm a professor. So if my genes start to get wild and the voice starts to come out, I'm going to run for an hour, and I should only run for 15 minutes. And I'm from upstate New York, and it takes us longer to get warmed up than it does from Brooklyn.

(Laughter.)

I've been asked to answer the question that's been raised by Alan and by others, and that is, how would Father Baroni develop a piece of policy that balances faith-based and secular funding? When the fact of the matter is, is that it's not really faith-based social services that are effective, it's the capacity, organizational leadership, and the like.

And as I noted, asking a professor to do something like this in 15 minutes is risky, and to try to do it is Herculean. So, to avoid what my daughter Hannah would say is my style of "going on, and on, and on," I'll try 0132 to give you an executive summary of what my answer would be to this. But please, even as I read this, try to understand that behind each one of the things is a soul that's screaming and is passionate about everything that I say, I promise you.

(Laughter.)

I've been thinking about these matters for 20 years, and so what I'll respond to will be very much in the spirit of -- I didn't know Father Baroni either, but very much in the spirit of what I've heard so far today.

I want to put first things first. Three related questions:

Question number one, can this nation be more effective than it is presently at addressing poverty by using the resources of the religious community?

Question two, can this country create a system of human services that draws on the resources of local religious organizations across this country, in ways that truly enhance and nurture their voluntary spirit and action? They're volunteers. They are set up for prayer, not for social services. 0133 Question three, can this country exploit high-tech planning tools to bring the nineteenth and twentieth Century delivery system of services, of mandated services, services we have to deliver by law, into the twenty-first century?

Answering yes to each one of these questions should put us on the road to creating a far more effective policy than we presently have regarding faith-based and secular funding. There is absolutely and positively no other way to conceptualize a policy that uses the resources of sectarian organizations, outside of the context of the broader partnerships

among sectarian, nonsectarian, and public agencies in the system of care, in every community in the United States. Try it, you'll lose.

If indeed we can answer "yes" to all three of these questions, then it's clear to me that we might be on the road -- just getting on the road -- to developing a public policy that not only better balances secular versus faith-based funding than at present, but recasts the way we think about local systems of care, and consequently refigures, reconfigures the way we eventually reshape public and voluntary partnerships. Only then can the country truly solve, manage, or prevent human problems, and unnecessary suffering.

So we really have to reconceptualize the way we actually do things at the local level, if we want to be effective.

I'll get to the pragmatic piece of the policy as I move further along in this presentation, but I want to start here with three kind of underlying pieces of what an effective policy would be to balance this secular -- faith-based funding.

One, does the policy have a clear vision?

Two, does its spirit create unity or divisiveness?

And three, does the implementation plan -- assuming there is one -- account for the complexities in solving human problems, inside the system's disjointed and underfunded services?

My friend and spiritual leader of Temple Emanuel in Greensboro, North Carolina, Rabbi Fred Guttman, told me that we don't need a contract with America any longer. The United States government needs a covenant with the American people. He's right on many levels. But on the policy level he's exactly right, a hundred percent.

On closer examination of Contract with America -- I call it the "Contract on America" -- the contract with America is a myopic vision of a citizenry where each man and woman is for him or herself, and it embodies a spirit that really scorns government. Katrina and 9/11 before that taught us that government is the solution. Just look at the number of dollars -- how wasteful they might be spent -- from the federal government, needed to make a change in Louisiana, versus the money that came in from private philanthropy. Ram would say "well, if you add volunteer hours and things like that it would increase," but it's, like, one percent dollar amount -- increased to 10 percent with volunteer hours.

Government is the solution, but it can be the problem when those who govern are positioned merely to unravel government, instead of enhance its work. A covenant with the American people would be guided by a wide scope that sees government as a shepherd. And I don't want to get cute about that, but I mean that. It would embody a spirit that cries out to use every possible resource at its disposal, including all of the faith-based resources in the community -- which I'll get to -- all the resources at its disposal to ensure that all Americans -- and all guests -- are treated with the utmost respect and dignity.

We've lost those values in this society. I wrote my senior theme on the Peace Corps. I mean, I wanted to be an American. God, now it just doesn't exist anymore.

Our new policy needs this kind of vision and spirit. Ram and I were not only doctoral students together, but we sat in many classes together, and our policy teacher in the

1970s, Roy Luboff (phonetic), taught us that an important dynamic of policy is complexity itself. That complexity is a dynamic, that you can't implement without understanding the complexities. 0137 His cherished line that he invoked as he snarled at us said, "Social policy is complex despite the simplemindedness of its formulators."

(Laughter.)

And he said that in the seventies, he didn't say that -- today he'd be rolling in his grave if he'd seen what's going on.

Therefore, our new policy must be guided by a new covenant, and must avoid simplemindedness by planning for the complexities that come with implementation. The faith-based initiative had no implementation plan, just like the war didn't. Our current faith-based initiative lacks any planning for complexity.

What are those complexities? I'm down to about six or seven minutes so it's impossible, but I'll give you a quick snapshot.

At the June first, 2004 White House faith-based conference, President Bush said, "I can't think of a better place for a prisoner to go than church. We need to give faith a chance to heal a person's heart." Prisoners, however, do not return to 0138communities with just holes in their hearts. They return without job skills, are often broke, rarely free from their addictions. Increasingly, they are afflicted with HIV or hepatitis C. And little churches, no matter how faithful, cannot deal with administering AIDS drugs, job placement, mental health services, child support matters, and parole services. They're going to have to form partnerships if they want to do that.

Citizens all over the nation are crying "foul," because their communities lack the resources to do what is needed to deal with the prisoner reentry mess. In the last three years I've worked with a large, wealthy, white church that tried to develop a program to deal with prisoner reentry. It failed, because it refused to build the infrastructure needed to tackle the multiple problems that come when an ex-prisoner comes back to town. They wanted to just pray with him and use that energy of prayer, but if you don't know the system, don't know how to partner, don't know how to speak the right language, you lose.

Two others, both out of the black 0139churches, have thrived because they're dealing effectively with the barriers that prohibit its successful reentry. And they also develop case management systems to refer ex-prisoners to organizations that could help with health and mental health problems, educational concerns, and other matters.

My friends, Reverend O. Doug Cleveland, executive director of Welfare Reform Liaison Project, the nation's only faith-based community action program, says it best: "Poor people have plenty of religion. They need skills."

Elder Cliff Lovick who runs a residential drug rehab facility -- and three businesses to support it -- sought my help in developing a community strategy. Reverend Cleveland and Elder Lovick built the capacity and honed the leadership skills that enabled them to develop the kinds of community partnerships that form the basis for successful programming. We have 19,000 cities in the United States, 16,000 townships, 3000 counties, and 50 states. The Republican private systems of service share similarities, 0140but they also maintain differences with regards to lines of authority over funding, federal block grants, state-mandated services, and local ordinances. So if you put the

19,000, 16,000, 3000, and I just drew spider webs of lines, you'd see that managing local systems when the money comes in takes a lot of knowledge, skill, and ability, and a little chutzpah.

We have 350,000 religious congregations, give or take 8000 on any given day, because they spring up and they go away. And thousands of sectarian service providers. A new policy that balances faith-based and secular funding must build sound delivery systems and community nationwide. Must be guided not only by a covenant, but guided as well by plans for building and sustaining solid organizations, be they public organizations, private nonprofit organizations, or religious organizations. And those plans must include ways to develop strong leadership skills. Reverend Cleveland went to the Covey business training program, paid 5000 bucks out of his own pocket.

And when they asked him, "Why are you here? You're just training women to go from welfare to work," he said, "Why not? Why shouldn't we train leadership in the nonprofit sector?" He took it on his own, but you've got to know him to understand him.

They must build qualified and committed staff, have guidance from a well-trained Board of Directors and -- as somebody mentioned -- stick to mission. Adherence to mission. They must be resilient, operate from strategic and operational plans. They require professionally maintained accounting systems, up-to-date technology, well-managed, well-trained, well-placed, and well-rewarded volunteers.

Only then can they develop carefully nurtured partnerships throughout their systems of care.

We know that congregations and religious organizations come in many shapes and sizes. We know that most of their services that they provide are voluntary and short-term. So if they're to partner with public entities, their 0142contributions must be carefully targeted. We know that most services provided by public agencies must serve everyone and anyone who falls under the parameters of the mandate. But a new policy must go beyond reforming what we have now. It must leap into the next era of service development, taking into account the complexities of implementation, and be guided by a vision in the spirit of a new covenant.

Such a policy would provide funds to catalog the problems a community addresses from womb to tomb. And we do that with prenatal care, and we do that at hospice services, and everything in between. And there's a vast array of programs in between the womb and the tomb.

We need to catalog what needs are being met by the mandated services. Foster care, how many kids end up in foster care for long-term? That's a mandated service in every state in the United States.

How many people are coming back on parole? Prisoners can pray all they want, but they still have to meet with their parole 0143officer, and if they don't do it they're going back to jail which is going to cost us money.

So, we must know what those mandated services, and what holes there are. As you continue to de-fund programs, you don't take away the law that had the program in the first place, you're just making people shift their resources from doing more, to doing more with less. And that's what's taking place in our 19,000 cities across the United

States. And we'd shifted it kind of as an unfunded strip-mining of religious organizations. We just dump the problems at their door and run.

We also need to know what kind of voluntary efforts are allowed to be done by law? In those mandated services? Church members cannot provide home studies to certified foster care parents. But they could campaign to enlist more adoptive families in order to more effectively place hard-to-work-with children. There are organizations on the national level that do that already, but it really hasn't sunk down in community-to-community across the country.

Thus we must catalog the resources that are often buried in the religious community. Through careful efforts we could begin then, once we know the resources of the churches in our community -- Ram has done this. Ram knows exactly -- he's done it. But we've got to do it community by community and put it in a different context, "Okay, here are the resources, now here are the gaps in services." And once we've started to catalog the resources and we know the gaps in the mandated services, you know, we have to develop community education plans to get the community prepared, then, to have these institutions want to do the hard service.

So we need long-term mechanisms in place, and I envision community foundations and other philanthropic organizations working with government to fund these kinds of things. But we need to do stuff like that.

So not only would the community need to know how many of its children or adults cannot read, it would also need to know that it takes special training to tutor someone who cannot read because he or she suffers from dyslexia and/or ADHD. So I can just say, "Well, we're gonna have church-based tutoring program," put a tutor in there, and then they haven't got a clue how to work with one of these kids that does know how to -- that doesn't read like the rest of us.

And they probably don't know about the services for the blind and dyslexics to get books on tape to start the tutoring process. A lot of these kids can read when they have a book and can hear, but they can't read with just a book. But if you don't know that stuff you can't tutor for it, so your resources are being wasted. And I'm saying we've got to go to the next level of service development to chronicle it.

If a school system knew of the congregations whose resources included people with special skills, or people who could be trained easily to acquire them, then the resources of the religious community could be matched to the needs of special education services. Private -- public. Special-education is mandated.

Once we have matched available resources and cataloged needs all across the service
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realms, from prisoner reentry, transportation to work, and the like; a community could in fact begin to determine real gaps. And once real gaps are determined, a process of upgrading the skills in the pool of church resources could take place. And then we could eventually begin to fill the gaps, either through private philanthropic efforts if the skill base doesn't raise up, or then we could legitimately, and in a spirit of a new covenant, petition government to fill some of those broader-based gaps.

When we know clearly the nature and scope of the problems we face, have a systematic way to address them using the available resources in the best possible way, the question of balancing sectarian and nonsectarian funding will no longer be stuck in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries service delivery and thinking.

The sin is not in making mistakes, but in not learning from the mistakes. 25 years ago, Father Baroni, a man of faith, told us what makes effective organizations. And yet the information really and truly -- here's the 0147discussion just coming back through the feedback loop, to where we want to do something about it. And we've gotten stuck in between with all the -- as Ram said -- the politics of all this stuff. Now it's time to turn our politics to the poor.

We now have the knowledge and skills and ability to develop a policy that not only balances faith-based and secular funding. We need the will, the courage, the vision, and the plan to do something about it. One day longer is too long, as far as I'm concerned, for continuing the faith-based follies that we currently have, with the kind of confidence that rewards the true believers at the expense of the poor. Thank you.