



George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum

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Domestic Policy Council

W. Karl Zinsmeister

Position: Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Date Ranges: 2001-2009 (bulk 2006-2009)

Extent and Forms of Material: 20 linear feet, 7 linear inches, including CDs

Abstract:

W. Karl Zinsmeister served as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy from 2006-2009 in the Domestic Policy Council. This collection contains a large quantity of policy making material on a wide variety of topics including AIDS, education, the environment, FAA regulation, crime and drugs, agency and administration priorities, and the faith-based initiative.

Repository: George W. Bush Presidential Library, National Archives and Records Administration, Dallas, TX gwbush.library@nara.gov (214) 346-1557

Access: Access to Bush Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 USC 22) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552 as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or part in accordance with legal exemptions.

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Custodial History: Official records of George W. Bush's presidency are housed at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

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Biographical History: The following was taken from www.karlzinsmeister.com on November 6, 2015:

Karl Zinsmeister is vice president at the Philanthropy Roundtable, a Washington, D.C. organization that helps foundations, corporations, and major living donors be effective and efficient in their giving. Private philanthropic enterprise now totals more than \$360 billion

annually, and is central to American civic health. Among other responsibilities, Zinsmeister oversees the Roundtable's magazine, book publishing, and Web sites. He also established its new program in philanthropy for veterans and service members. He is writing and editing a series of "Wise Giver's Guides" that offer philanthropists practical help in specific fields. And in January of 2016, the *Almanac of American Philanthropy* which he created over a three-year period will be published as the definitive new reference book for the field.

From 2006 to 2009 Zinsmeister served in the West Wing as President George W. Bush's chief domestic policy adviser. His responsibilities stretched across many issues: the mortgage and student-loan credit crises, the formulation of new immigration policies, stem-cell and biotechnology innovation, improving care for military veterans, school reform, issues in health, transportation, environmental quality, and national competitiveness.

For nearly 13 years Zinsmeister was editor-in-chief of *The American Enterprise*, a national monthly magazine of politics, business, and culture based in Washington, D.C. Author and former Cabinet Secretary William Bennett called it "one of America's finest magazines.... intellectually interesting, well-written, lively, wide-ranging, and above all useful." Zinsmeister wrote nearly 300 articles for the magazine, and conducted interviews with public figures ranging from Rudy Giuliani to Pat Moynihan, and Andres Duany to Rupert Murdoch.

In the private sector, Zinsmeister was an executive in his native region of upstate New York at L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., an historic firm that designs, manufactures, and markets iconic American Arts & Crafts furnishings worldwide. His particular responsibilities included marketing and sales, advertising, catalogs, photography, Web sites, communications, the Stickley Museum, some product design, and the modernization of many business and data systems.

He has also operated his own business over a period of years that designs, finances, renovates, and builds properties with historic appeal. Seven historic boutique properties have been re-developed under his direct management, in Washington and New York.

Zinsmeister is the author of eleven books—reported stories, reference works, literary collections, and academic volumes. His recent *Finger Lakes Feast* is a storytelling cookbook and beautifully photographed regional culture guide he co-created with his daughter and son. It was praised by the *New York Times* and other reviewers. His book on charter schools was released in 2014, with a kickoff essay in the *Wall Street Journal* and an extract in *Philanthropy* magazine. His 2015 book on changing public policy via philanthropy was likewise excerpted in several places, including *National Review* and *Real Clear Politics*.

His two influential Iraq War journals were written during four lengthy stints embedded with infantry troops in urban war zones: *Boots on the Ground* (2003) was the first book published by an embedded journalist; *Dawn Over Baghdad* (2004) was the first book to provide details on the U.S. counterinsurgency effort. At the invitation of Marvel Comics, Zinsmeister also wrote a non-fiction graphic novel entitled *Combat Zone* (2005) that chronicled the actions of actual American soldiers.

In concert with his wife Ann, Zinsmeister conceived and produced a feature documentary film

entitled *Warriors* that aired nationally on PBS in 2007. The film won \$450,000 of funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in a major international competition. It presented personal profiles of America's fighting forces via on-the-scene footage that Zinsmeister and two combat cameramen shot in Iraq, and was described as "entirely compelling" by the *New York Times*.

Zinsmeister's articles, essays, and stories have been published in many national publications—from cover stories for *The Atlantic Monthly* and features in *Reader's Digest* to essays and reporting in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*.

A graduate of Yale University, Zinsmeister did further studies at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland. During college he won rowing championships in both the U.S. and Ireland.

He was a U.S. Senate aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, has been an adviser to many public policy groups, and has testified before Congressional committees and Presidential commissions on topics ranging from family issues to economic policy to the Iraq war.

He has given many public lectures, originated a weekly radio commentary syndicated nationally to 100 stations, and has appeared often on a wide variety of national television and radio programs. He has lived, worked, or traveled in 40 countries, and nearly every U.S. state. He holds the highest U.S. security clearance.

Zinsmeister is married and has three grown children. He has been an avid woodworker, photographer, gardener and keeper of hens, taught Sunday school, and sung in his church choir. He is an active outdoorsman and bicycles, sculls, kayaks, skis cross-country and downhill, and enjoys extended wilderness backpacking trips. He currently lives on a houseboat in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note: This collection is arranged in one series, Subject Files. This series is arranged alphabetically. It contains news articles, journal articles, printed emails, handwritten notes, letters from government officials, letters from policy organizations, talking points, briefings, seating charts, fact sheets, statements of administration policy, draft legislation, legislation summaries, press releases, presentations, spreadsheets, and charts. These documents represent a variety of topics including AIDS, education, the environment, FAA regulation, crime and drugs, agency and administration priorities, and the faith-based initiative.

System of Arrangement: This collection is arranged in one series. This series is arranged alphabetically.

Series 1, Subject Files

This collection is only partially processed and some boxes may be unavailable for research.

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- 2 2008 Regulations and Executive Orders [2]
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- 9 [Agency Goals and Priorities, Fall 2006] [1]
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- 3 AIDS: AIDS Day 2006
- 4 AIDS: AIDS Day 2007 [1]
- 5 AIDS: AIDS Day 2007 [2]
- 6 AIDS: Kenya Announcement 2008
- 7 AIDS: Malaria

- 8 AIDS: PEPFAR Problems
- 9 AIDS: PEPFAR/AIDS [1]
- 10 AIDS: PEPFAR/AIDS [2]
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- 12 AIDS: PEPFAR/AIDS [4]
- 13 [AIDS] PEPFAR Reauthorization [1]
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- 10 [AIDS] PEPFAR Reauthorization [15]
- 11 [AIDS] PEPFAR Reauthorization [16]
- 12 [AIDS] PEPFAR Reauthorization: MCP (Mexico City Policy) onto PEPFAR
- 13 [AIDS] PEPFAR Reauthorization: Kerry/Visa Waiver
- 14 Budget
- 15 Budget: FLOTUS Budget December 2007
- 16 Budget: Omnibus No-Nos December 2007

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- 1 CEA Briefing
- 2 College: Campus Speech Codes
- 3 College: College
- 4 College: College Financing [1]
- 5 College: College Financing [2]

- 6 College: College Financing [3]
- 7 College: College Financing [4]
- 8 College: Higher Education 2007 Legislation [1]
- 9 College: Higher Education 2007 Legislation [2]
- 10 College: Higher Education 2008
- 11 College: Higher Education Commission [1]
- 12 College: Higher Education Commission [2]
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- 1 College: Higher Education Commission [4]
- 2 College: Higher Education Commission [5]
- 3 College: NELNET (National Education Loan Network) [1]
- 4 College: NELNET (National Education Loan Network) [2]
- 5 College: NELNET (National Education Loan Network) [3]
- 6 Competitiveness: ACC - Academic Competitiveness Council [1]
- 7 Competitiveness: ACC - Academic Competitiveness Council [2]
- 8 Competitiveness: ACI - American Competitiveness Initiative [1]
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- 5 Crime: 2007 MTF (Monitoring the Future) Event - Drugs
- 6 Crime: BJS (Bureau of Justice Statistics) Victim Data Break
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- 10 Crime: Death Penalty and Other Race/Crime Comparisons
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- 8 Education II: Education Event, POTUS, 10/05/2006
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