

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 11, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND CONFERENCE

The Washington Hilton
Washington, D.C.

1:52 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen; distinguished members of the Children's Defense Fund board; Secretary Reich and Secretary Riley -- did you see the way Secretary Reich rushed out when they said the President of the United States? (Laughter.) That's not true; I pushed him through the door so I could get a laugh out of it. (Laughter.)

My dear friend, Marian Wright Edelman, as usual, your introduction has left me nothing to say. (Laughter.)

I will say this: I know a lot of people will come here and tell you how much they appreciate people who are children's advocates; not very many people appreciate it enough to marry one -- and I did. (Laughter and applause.) I also have savaged the ranks of the CDF board. My wife had to resign because she was married to a presidential candidate. And then Donna Shalala had to resign because I gave her a job. (Laughter.) Which on Sunday, she'd probably rather swap for being chair of the Children's Defense Fund board.

I am delighted to be here. I look out on this crowd and I see many old friends that -- you know, a lot of people ask me what it's like to be President. And I don't know if I can explain it, but it is different. (Laughter.) And the other day -- people either want to walk around on tippy-toe or take a baseball bat and whack your head off. There seems to be nothing in between. And the other day Hillary had a number of people into the White House on the first floor to some sort of meeting. And I got off on the floor and I had to go someplace else. And all of a sudden, all these people were there. And walked out into this crowd and I started shaking their hands. And the guy who was with me said, "Oh, Mr. President, I'm so sorry that you had to deal with all those people." I said, "That's all right, I used to be one." (Laughter.)

I hope I will be again some day. (Laughter.)
Meanwhile, I'm going to depend on you and the American people to keep me just as close to humanity as I possibly can.

I've just come from a remarkable event in Maryland with a number of members of the Congress who are friends of the Children's Defense Fund. We were there -- Secretary Reich was there with me; we flew back. And we were at a plant that belongs to Westinghouse. It

used to be a defense plant and it is increasingly becoming a domestic technology plant. And we went there to announce an economic conversion program to try to help more people who are losing their jobs from military cutbacks either in the private or the public sector find new opportunities moving toward the economy of the 21st century. (Applause.)

This is a very important thing. We've been reducing defense since 1985, and no nation would so reduce one sector of its economy that provided so many high-wage, high-growth jobs that was on the cutting edge of new technology. No other nation would ever have done what we've done with no clear strategy but what to do with all those resources, all those people, to try to help to build our economic base. So we will continue to reduce defense, as we must, but we're trying to plan for the future of those people and those incredible resources.

I saw military technology turn into an electric car that will drive over 80 miles an hour and which may hold the promise of ending our dependence on foreign oil and cleaning up our atmosphere. I saw a police car with a computer screen with visual imaging developed for defense technology, which can now be used immediately to transmit to police officers who have it pictures of missing children immediately while they're in their car. (Applause.) I saw a plane with radar technology which just came back from dealing with the difficult incident in Waco, Texas; and another plane -- defense technology -- another plane with a different sort of technology now which can be put on all of our commercial air flights to detect wind shears, which is one of the major causes of airline misfortunes now among commercial airlines.

I say all this because -- everybody says, well, that's a great idea, and it's self-evident, and why haven't we been doing this. But it is simply reflective of a problem we have had in this country for some time, which is that we have undervalued the importance of increasing the capacity of our people. We have talked a lot about a lot of things in America, but when you strip it all away and you look at where we have been sort of out of sync with many other countries and with where we have to go in the future, it is clear that on a broad range of areas, we have simply undervalued the importance of making a commitment to the idea that we don't have a person to waste, that everybody counts, and that what you can do affects not only your future but mine as well. (Applause.)

These, of course, are the arguments that the Children's Defense Fund has been making since its inception in its struggles to get a better deal for America's children. They have become far more important arguments in the last decade.

In 1985, a remarkable thing happened, a thing altogether laudatory in our country: our senior citizens became less poor than the rest of us -- a thing we can be proud of. People used to have to live in absolute agony wondering what would happen to their parents. You still do if you have long-term care problems. But most elderly people now, because of Social Security and supplemental security income and Medicare, can look forward to a security -- and because of the pension reforms of the last several years, can look forward to a security in their later years that 10 or 20 or 30 years ago was utterly unheard of. And it is really a testimony to the far-sightedness of our country.

However, at the same time, in the same decade, we began to experience a new class of poor people who were dramatically undervalued. They were little children and their poor parents -- usually their single poor parents. And they had no advocates in many councils of power. If it hadn't been for the Children's Defense Fund and a few others who walked with them through life, many of the good things which have been done would not have been done, and all the things which were done were not enough to reverse the trends of the 1980s when the elderly became less poor and the children became more poor.

Now, because many of you in this room have continued this fight, and because of the decisions the American people made in the last election, we once again have a chance to invest in the hopes and the dreams of our children. (Applause.)

I have asked the United States Congress to embrace a program that recognizes, as was said earlier, that we have two big deficits in this country. We have a huge budget deficit, but we also have a huge investment deficit. It was a cruel irony of the last 12 years that we not only took the government debt from \$1 trillion to \$4 trillion, with annual deficits now in excess of \$300 million projected for the next few years unless we change it, but we found a way in all of that to actually reduce our investment in our future at the national level.

How could it happen? Well, it happened because of a big military buildup, it happened because of a big tax cut early, it happened because health care costs have been completely out of control, it happened because an underperforming economy didn't produce many revenues. But it happened also because there were not enough people who said we must constantly invest in the most important thing in a modern society -- the capacity of the people to be healthy and strong and good.

So you have all these anomalies. The United States, the world's strongest economy, has the third worst record in the Western Hemisphere for immunizing its children against preventable childhood diseases. The United States, a country that has dominated the economy of the world for the last half a century, has higher rates of adult illiteracy and school dropout and dysfunction among adults than most of its major competitors, and the highest rate of incarceration of any country in the world -- something we rank first in.

That bespeaks our inability to make the diversity of our country a source of strength instead of weakness, and to deal with the stark dilemmas of poverty in ways that at least give the children a chance to do better. Well, now we have a chance.

The good news is we know a lot about what works. We've known for years through clear studies that, though not perfect, Head Start and WIC and immunizations really do make a difference. We know that if you give children a better life and you strengthen their families, you make the economy stronger and you free up money to be spent on things like that economic conversion program I just visited today.

We know that if we focus on people and their capacities, it really does work. That's why I was really pleased that the first

bill I signed was the Family and Medical Leave Act because it will, even to those who oppose it, make their businesses more productive, not less, by securing family life and making it possible for people to be good parents. (Applause.) That's why the long-term economic plan and the short-term economic stimulus I asked the Congress to embrace includes funds to put our people first for 700,000 summer jobs for young people; for the beginnings of summer Head Start programs where they don't exist; for beginning to set up the infrastructure of immunization where it isn't so that we can start to do the work that has to be done.

We have simply got to invest in our people in ways that work. Marian has already said it, but I will reiterate -- this budget if funded by the Congress, will fully fund Head Start and WIC -- (applause) -- will create a network of immunization efforts which will permit us to finally immunize our little children against preventable childhood diseases. (Applause.) Something that will save, over the long run, ten bucks for every dollar we put into it. How do you explain -- I mean, how can you possibly justify to anybody, that our country with the power of it's economy, that produces the vast majority of vaccines produced anywhere in the world, is better only than Bolivia and Haiti in this hemisphere in immunizing our children?

And you know, you have to have a certain core of immunization to make sure that there will be no outbreak of diseases. We are dangerously, perilously close to falling below that core of immunized children in many different areas. This is a big deal, folks.

So I hope that we will have this attitude now, that we ought to invest as we cut the deficit. The plan that I presented to the Congress reduces the deficit dramatically, has 150 specific budget cuts, starts with an example from the White House staff. We cut the staff in the next fiscal year 25 percent below the staffing levels that I found when I came. We cut \$9 billion out the administrative costs of federal agencies. And I mean they're real cuts; they're going into the budget. They cannot be escaped. (Applause.)

I'm glad you're clapping for that, you know, because the people that are attacking me act like anybody that wants any money from the government just loves all that bureaucracy you have to put up with. I know better. (Laughter and applause.)

We also raised some tax money. I saw the proof of an article by David Stockman coming out in a magazine soon which talked about how the clear problem is that the tax base of this country was dramatically, fundamentally and permanently eroded in 1981; that Social Security's about the same percentage of gross national product today it was back in 1981.

So we have to raise some more money if we want to reduce the debt. But we also try to reverse the investment gap in things that you didn't come here to talk about, like transportation and clean water and better sewage systems, and things that will strengthen the environment and put people to work and increase our productivity. (Applause.) And things like community development operations to add jobs to high unemployment areas; in national service, which Marian mentioned, and in other areas that will

increase the capacity of people to work, to grow, to learn, to flourish.

Now, there are people, believe it or not, who, number one, don't want to pass a stimulus package at all because they say the economy's great. That's because most people in Washington are employed. Talk to them about that, will you. (Laughter.) And who think that this program would be even better if it didn't have any new investment at all.

Now, to be fair to those people, there are basically three lines of attack -- you're going to the Hill; I want you to know I need your help. I need your help because there are a lot of people without jobs, there are a lot of people without adequate jobs. Most of the new jobs created in this last round -- 365,000 last month -- hallelujah, that's great. But more than half of them were part-time jobs that don't have health care benefits for the kids and the families. (Applause.)

You need to know what they are saying -- the people against whom you must argue. They will say, number one, we can cut the deficit even more if we just didn't have any investment. Or if we didn't take -- pass any of the President's spending programs, we could cut the deficit as much and raise taxes less.

The problem with that argument is those people think there is absolutely no difference between putting another child in Head Start and keeping somebody working in an agency when the job is no longer needed and can be phased out, in supporting a regulatory apparatus that has long since lost its justification, in funding a pork barrel project that can't possibly be justified. In other words, these people think anything the government spends is equally bad. Educating a kid to go to college is the same as continuing the subsidy for sheep or any other program. No difference. Government spending is government spending is government spending. There is no difference.

Now, do you believe that in your own lives?

Q Noooo.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I mean, in your lives. If you take home a check every month, is it the same whether you spend it on making a house payment, making a car payment, saving money for your child's education, or just paying for an extra helping at dinner? Of course not. There are distinctions in the relative impact of how you spend your pay, how your business invests its money, and how your government invests your money. And so when people tell you there's no difference, tell them that's wrong. (Applause.)

And then there is a crowd that say, well, these programs don't really make any difference; Head Start doesn't work and there's no proof Head Start works. Now, this is an interesting argument. (Laughter.) These people say -- most of those who think there's no proof Head Start works still believes trickle-down economics did. (Applause.)

Until I proposed phasing in the full funding of this program, many of those who themselves objected had previously voted to expand it. To be fair, President Bush praised Head Start at every

turn. A few years ago, Senator Dole introduced his own legislation to expand it. Sure, there are serious criticisms rooted in the fact that this is now not a new program. There are people who say it's not evenly good across the country. That is true. There are people who say it could be managed better. That's true. There are people who say that cognitive improvements don't always last more than two years after children stop attending, depending on where they are. That's true.

One big deal is how strong the parents' involvement really is. There are those who say -- (applause) -- there ought to be more school-based programs or more home-based programs, and we've worked hard on that at home. All that's true. That is not an excuse not to fully fund Head Start. (Applause.)

Our program will serve more children, but it will also strengthen the quality of Head Start and put some flexibility back into the program so that it can meet the needs of the different communities that are served. But those who choose to ignore the overwhelming evidence of the program's success have an obligation to tell us why more children with high self-esteem and better grades and better thinking skills and better predictable long-term performance is such a bad idea. I think it's a great idea. (Applause.)

But we must, in fairness to the criticisms, become our own most severe critics. That's where you come in, because all of you live out there where these programs work. You could give a better criticism of what's wrong with most of these public programs than those who don't want to fund them. Most of you could. So tell them you know it is up to us to be our own most severe critics.

I just asked the Vice President to review every program in the government; come back to me in six months with all kinds of other things that we can stop doing or that we can modify, or that we can push back to people at the grassroots level. If we who believe in government don't have the courage to change it, we cannot expect those who don't to help us in our efforts. (Applause.)

And this is just the beginning. Just two days ago I asked Secretary Shalala to draft a new child welfare initiative to combine family support and family preservation services -- (applause) -- to do more to build on the work of Senator Rockefeller and Congressmen Matsui and Congresswoman Shroeder; and to do more for families at risk, especially those at risk of foster care placement, even as we try to strengthen our efforts to enforce child support enforcement for those who have been abandoned by one parent. (Applause.)

Now, there is a third argument against this effort. There are those who say, yes, Head Start's a good deal; WIC is a good deal; the immunization's a good deal; and, yes, we ought to invest as opposed to consume. There is a distinction to be drawn in the way this money is spent and investment is better -- investment in our children, our future. But we still ought not to do it because we need even more deficit reduction.

And let me say, that is an argument you must treat with respect. We have gone from a \$1-trillion deficit to a \$4-trillion deficit in 12 years. We have imposed a crushing burden on the present, and a bigger one on the future. And if you think about it,

it's really an income transfer. Now that we're spending 15 cents of every dollar you pay the government -- most of you are middle class people -- and we spend 15 cents of every dollar you pay the government paying interest on the debt. Those bonds are largely held by upper income people. So there are now a lot of liberals in the Congress who are rethinking their old positions on things like the mechanisms by which we move to balance the budget on the theory that we're spending all this money having an income transfer from middle-class taxpayers, lower-income taxpayers, to people who hold the bonds because we didn't have the discipline to run our budgets better.

And if we don't do something about the deficit -- we just keep on spending like we are -- by the end of the decade, your annual debt will be \$653 billion a year. The interest service will be about 22 cents of your tax dollar. Twenty cents on the dollar of every dollar in America, public and private, will go to health care. So we have to change.

But my answer to those who say, well, let's just don't invest because this deficit is such a big problem, is, number one, we got into this mess over 12 years, and we have more than four years to get out of it. (Applause.) Number two, we are reaping the benefits of the clear and disciplined and determined effort that the congressional leadership has now agreed to make with me to bring the deficit down. We have interest rates at very, very low rates. We have the stock market back up.

People say, hey, this thing is going to work. All of you can now look at whether you should refinance your home or your car. Businesses should refinance their debt. If we get all this debt refinanced in the next year, that will add \$80 to \$100 billion back in our economy. We are reaping the benefits of a disciplined program to reduce the deficit today. But if we do not also at the same time recognize that for 12 years we have ignored our obligations to invest in our jobs, in our people, in our education, if we don't do that we will pay for that neglect tomorrow, just like we're paying for yesterday's neglect today. We can do both things. (Applause.)

There's another argument you need to make -- and I'm speaking for my wife now, as well as for me -- which is that if you just cut out all these programs that we believe in, if you just cut them plumb out, you'll still have an increase in the deficit again, starting in about five years, because of the explosion in health care costs. The real, ultimate answer to the deficit problem is to bring health care cost in line with inflation and provide a decent system of health care for all Americans. (Applause.)

And we can do that. So, with discipline, with a willingness to both cut and tax, with a willingness to reduce consumption expenditures and increase investment in our future, we can do the things that we have to do. But we can't walk away from any of our challenges and expect the results America needs. If we walk away from the health care challenge, it doesn't matter what they do on all these other cuts, you'll be swallowed up in debt five or six years again -- if we walk away from the health care challenge.

If we walk away from the challenge to raise some more revenues and cut the spending we must, we'll lose control of our economic destiny even if we spend more money on the programs you want. You'll be raising and educating healthier, more well-educated

kids to a weaker economy.

But if we reduce the deficit and we forget about the fact that in the world we live in, the only thing that really counts is people, every factory can be moved overseas. Three trillion dollars in money crosses national lines every day. Everything is mobile except us; we're here, we don't want to move. (Laughter.) All we've got's each other now in America. (Applause.)

That's what we've got. And if we ignore that, we don't think those little kids that live in the Mississippi Delta, in my home state, many of whom never see a dentist the whole time of their childhood, need a better shot in life because of us as well as them; if we don't believe that those kids that are sitting out there in the barrios in Los Angeles, in the black community, in the Hispanic community, in the Asian-American community, waiting for the resolution of the Rodney King trial only because it stands for everything else that ever happened to them -- (applause) -- not because of the trial but because of what it stands for -- if we don't think that we need to prove that a county like Los Angeles County with people from 150 different racial and ethnic groups can live together and learn together and grow together and if they play by the rules can have the right to earn a decent living, and we don't think that effects the rest of us, we haven't learned very much in the last 12 years. (Applause.)

And so I ask you to do this: I ask you to go to the Congress and ask them to support this program. And go with respect, because I promise you most of these people are trying to come to grips with the dilemmas of this time. And they have gotten one big message; that is that we made a horrible mistake to let the deficit get out of hand like we did in the last 12 years. And they deserve respect for getting that message. And they now have a President who will take the lead and fade some of the heat for the unpopularity of the decisions which have to be made. Go with respect for that. Say you had to do that and we respect that. (Applause.)

But remind them that out in the country where you live, bringing down the deficit is important if it gives people jobs and raises people's incomes, and if there are people out there who can seize the opportunities of the future. And what you represent is the future. You represent the needs of the people who will not be able to perform even with a sensible economic policy unless we do better in health care, in education, and in dealing with the needs of our poorest children. That is what you represent. None of this other stuff will amount to a hill of beans unless we put the American people first in all of these decisions.

That is the message I plead with you to bring to the Congress. (Applause.) Thank you, and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

2:20 P.M. EST

Office of Domestic Policy

TO: Bill Galston
FROM: Carol H. Rasco
SUBJ: Speech/Meeting/Interview
15 min. / Child Welfare League
DATE of speech: 3/17

~~Attached is the background information I have to date on the function listed. I would appreciate briefing materials by noon.~~ Close of
business on today 3/16.

* Bill - I intend to use your briefing on what we're doing along w/ notes from Clinton CDF speech. I don't think there is anything else I need but wanted to give you a chance to give me other info if you wished. If you have nothing more then dump this note! Thanks!

March 16, 1993

TO: Carol Rasco
FROM: Bill Galston (WA9)
SUBJ: Family structure

This article from the latest issue of The Atlantic Monthly summarizes the best recent research on the relation between family structure and the well-being of children. This is what I had in mind in my bullet-point in the memo I did for you a few days ago. In my judgment, this line of argument represents an essential foundation-stone for our children, youth, and family policies. It may be controversial, but I believe that it must be taken very seriously.

The social-science evidence is in: though it may benefit the adults involved, the dissolution of intact two-parent families is harmful to large numbers of children. Moreover, the author argues, family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families does not strengthen the social fabric but, rather, dramatically weakens and undermines society

DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

BY BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD

DIVORCE AND OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDBIRTH ARE TRANSFORMING THE LIVES of American children. In the postwar generation more than 80 percent of children grew up in a family with two biological parents who were married to each other. By 1980 only 50 percent could expect to spend their entire childhood in an intact family. If current trends continue, less than half of all children born today will live continuously with their own mother and father throughout childhood. Most American children will spend several years in a single-mother family. Some will eventually live in stepparent families, but because step-

families are more likely to break up than intact (by which I mean two-biological-parent) families, an increasing number of children will experience family breakup two or even three times during childhood.

According to a growing body of social-scientific evidence, children in families disrupted by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth do worse than children in intact families on several measures of well-being. Children in single-parent families are six times as likely to be poor. They are also likely to stay poor longer. Twenty-two percent of children in one-parent families will experience poverty during childhood for seven years or more, as compared with only two percent of children in two-parent families. A 1988 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics found that children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems. They are also more likely to drop out of high school, to get pregnant as teenagers, to abuse drugs, and to be in trouble with the law. Compared with children in intact families, children from disrupted families are at a much higher risk for physical or sexual abuse.

Contrary to popular belief, many children do not "bounce back" after divorce or remarriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life—love and work—that are most essential to happiness. Needless to say, not all

children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.

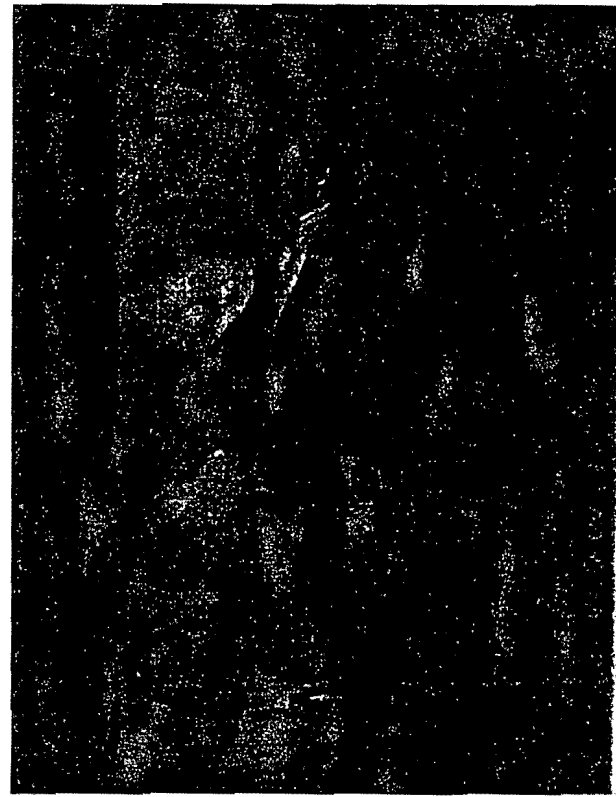
Despite this growing body of evidence, it is nearly impossible to discuss changes in family structure without provoking angry protest. Many people see the discussion as no more than an attack on struggling single mothers and their children: Why blame single mothers when they are doing the very best they can? After all, the decision to end a marriage or a relationship is wrenching, and few parents are indifferent to the painful burden this decision imposes on their children. Many take the perilous step toward single parenthood as a last resort, after their best efforts to hold a marriage together have failed. Consequently, it can seem particularly cruel and unfeeling to remind parents of the hardships their children might suffer as a result of family breakup. Other people believe that the dramatic changes in family structure, though regrettable, are impossible to reverse. Family breakup is an inevitable feature of American life, and anyone who thinks otherwise is indulging in nostalgia or trying to turn back the clock. Since these new family forms are here to stay, the reasoning goes, we must accord respect to single parents, not criticize them. Typical is the view expressed by a Brooklyn woman in a recent letter to *The New York Times*: "Let's stop moralizing or blaming single parents

and unwed mothers, and give them the respect they have earned and the support they deserve.”

Such views are not to be dismissed. Indeed, they help to explain why family structure is such an explosive issue for Americans. The debate about it is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is surely an important part of the discussion. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values. How do we begin to reconcile our long-standing belief in equality and diversity with an impressive body of evidence that suggests that not all family structures produce equal outcomes for children? How can we square traditional notions of public support for dependent women and children with a belief in women's right to pursue autonomy and independence in childbearing and child-rearing? How do we uphold the freedom of adults to pursue individual happiness in their private relationships and at the same time respond to the needs of children for stability, security, and permanence in their family lives? What do we do when the interests of adults and children conflict? These are the difficult issues at stake in the debate over family structure.

In the past these issues have turned out to be too difficult and too politically risky for debate. In the mid-1960s Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then an assistant secretary of labor, was denounced as a racist for calling attention to the relationship between the prevalence of black single-mother families and the lower socioeconomic standing of black children. For nearly twenty years the policy and research communities backed away from the entire issue. In 1980 the Carter Administration convened a historic White House Conference on Families, designed to address the growing problems of children and families in America. The result was a prolonged, publicly subsidized quarrel over the definition of “family.” No President since has tried to hold a national family conference. Last year, at a time when the rate of out-of-wedlock births had reached a historic high, Vice President Dan Quayle was ridiculed for criticizing Murphy Brown. In short, every time the issue of family structure has been raised, the response has been first controversy, then retreat, and finally silence.

Yet it is also risky to ignore the issue of changing family structure. In recent years the problems associated with family disruption have grown. Overall child well-being has declined, despite a decrease in the number of children per family, an increase in the educational level of parents, and historically high levels of public spending. After dropping in the 1960s and 1970s, the proportion of children in poverty has increased dramatically, from 15 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 1990, while the percentage of adult Americans in poverty has remained roughly constant. The teen suicide rate has more than tripled. Juvenile crime has increased and become more violent. School performance has continued to decline. There are no signs that these trends are about to reverse themselves.



If we fail to come to terms with the relationship between family structure and declining child well-being, then it will be increasingly difficult to improve children's life prospects, no matter how many new programs the federal government funds. Nor will we be able to make progress in bettering school performance or reducing crime or improving the quality of the nation's future workforce—all domestic problems closely connected to family breakup. Worse, we may contribute to the problem by pursuing policies that actually increase family instability and breakup.

From Death to Divorce

ACROSS TIME AND ACROSS CULTURES, FAMILY disruption has been regarded as an event that threatens a child's well-being and even survival. This view is rooted in a fundamental biological fact: unlike the young of almost any other species, the human child is born in an abjectly helpless and immature state. Years of nurture and protection are needed before the child can achieve physical independence. Similarly, it takes years of interaction with at least one but ideally two or more adults for a child to develop into a socially competent adult. Children raised in virtual isolation from human beings, though physically intact, display few recognizable human behaviors. The social arrangement that has proved most successful in ensuring the physical survival and promoting the social development of the child is the family unit of the biological mother and father. Consequen-

any event that permanently denies a child the presence and protection of a parent jeopardizes the life of the child.

The classic form of family disruption is the death of a parent. Throughout history this has been one of the risks of childhood. Mothers frequently died in childbirth, and it was not unusual for both parents to die before the child was grown. As recently as the early decades of this century children commonly suffered the death of at least one parent. Almost a quarter of the children born in this country in 1900 lost one parent by the time they were fifteen years old. Many of these children lived with their widowed parent, often in a household with other close relatives. Others grew up in orphanages and foster homes.

The meaning of parental death, as it has been transmitted over time and faithfully recorded in world literature and lore, is unambiguous and essentially unchanging. It is universally regarded as an untimely and tragic event. Death permanently severs the parent-child bond, disrupting forever one of the child's earliest and deepest human attachments. It also deprives a child of the presence and protection of an adult who has a biological stake in, as well as an emotional commitment to, the child's survival and well-being. In short, the death of a parent is the most extreme and severe loss a child can suffer.

Because a child is so vulnerable in a parent's absence, there has been a common cultural response to the death of a parent: an outpouring of support from family, friends, and strangers alike. The surviving parent and child are united in their grief as well as their loss. Relatives and friends share in the loss and provide valuable emotional

and financial assistance to the bereaved family. Other members of the community show sympathy for the child, and public assistance is available for those who need it. This cultural understanding of parental death has formed the basis for a tradition of public support to widows and their children. Indeed, as recently as the beginning of this century widows were the only mothers eligible for pensions in many states, and today widows with children receive more-generous welfare benefits from Survivors Insurance than do other single mothers with children who depend on Aid to Families With Dependent Children.

It has taken thousands upon thousands of years to reduce the threat of parental death. Not until the middle of the twentieth century did parental death cease to be a commonplace event for children in the United States. By then advances in medicine had dramatically reduced mortality rates for men and women.

At the same time, other forms of family disruption—separation, divorce, out-of-wedlock birth—were held in check by powerful religious, social, and legal sanctions. Divorce was widely regarded both as a deviant behavior, especially threatening to mothers and children, and as a personal lapse: "Divorce is the public acknowledgment of failure," a 1940s sociology textbook noted. Out-of-wedlock birth was stigmatized, and stigmatization is a powerful means of regulating behavior, as any smoker or overeater will testify. Sanctions against nonmarital child-birth discouraged behavior that hurt children and exacted compensatory behavior that helped them. Shotgun marriages and adoption, two common responses to nonmari-

tal birth, carried a strong message about the risks of premarital sex and created an intact family for the child.

Consequently, children did not have to worry much about losing a parent through divorce or never having had one because of nonmarital birth. After a surge in divorces following the Second World War, the rate leveled off. Only 11 percent of children born in the 1950s would by the time they turned eighteen see their parents separate or divorce. Out-of-wedlock childbirth barely figured as a cause of family disruption. In the 1950s and early 1960s, five percent of the nation's births were out of wedlock. Blacks were more likely than whites to bear children outside marriage, but the majority of black children born in the twenty years after the Second World War were born to married couples. The rate of family disruption reached a historic low point during those years.

A new standard of family security and stability was established in postwar America. For the first time in history the vast majority of the nation's children could expect to live with married biological parents throughout childhood. Children might still suffer other forms of adversity—poverty, racial discrimination, lack of educational opportunity—but only a few would be deprived of the nurture and protection of a mother and a father. No longer did children have to be haunted by the classic fears vividly dramatized in folklore and fable—that their parents would die, that they would have to live with a stepparent and stepsiblings, or that they would be abandoned. These were the years when the nation confidently boarded up orphanages and closed foundling hospitals, certain that such institutions would never again be needed. In movie theaters across the country parents and children could watch the drama of parental separation and death in the great Disney classics, secure in the knowledge that such nightmare visions as the death of Bambi's mother and the wrenching separation of Dumbo from his mother were only make-believe.

In the 1960s the rate of family disruption suddenly began to rise. After inching up over the course of a century, the divorce rate soared. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the divorce rate held steady at fewer than ten divorces a year per 1,000 married couples. Then, beginning in about 1965, the rate increased sharply, peaking at twenty-three divorces per 1,000 marriages by 1979. (In 1974 divorce passed death as the leading cause of family breakup.) The rate has leveled off at about twenty-one divorces per 1,000 marriages—the figure for 1991. The out-of-wedlock birth rate also jumped. It went from five percent in 1960 to 27 percent in 1990. In 1990 close to 57 percent of births among black mothers were nonmarital, and about 17 percent among white mothers. Altogether, about one out of every four women who had a child in 1990 was not married. With rates of divorce and nonmarital birth so high, family disruption is at its peak. Never before have so many children experienced family breakup caused by events other than death. Each year a million

children go through divorce or separation and almost a million more are born out of wedlock.

Half of all marriages now end in divorce. Following divorce, many people enter new relationships. Some begin living together. Nearly half of all cohabiting couples have children in the household. Fifteen percent have new children together. Many cohabiting couples eventually get married. However, both cohabiting and remarried couples are more likely to break up than couples in first marriages. Even social scientists find it hard to keep pace with the complexity and velocity of such patterns. In the revised edition (1992) of his book *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, the sociologist Andrew Cherlin ruefully comments: "If there were a truth-in-labeling law for books, the title of this edition should be something long and unwieldy like *Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, More Cohabitation, and Probably Remarriage*."

Under such conditions growing up can be a turbulent experience. In many single-parent families children must come to terms with the parent's love life and romantic partners. Some children live with cohabiting couples, either their own unmarried parents or a biological parent and a live-in partner. Some children born to cohabiting parents see their parents break up. Others see their parents marry, but 56 percent of them (as compared with 31 percent of the children born to married parents) later see their parents' marriages fall apart. All told, about three quarters of children born to cohabiting couples will live in a single-parent home at least briefly. One of every four children growing up in the 1990s will eventually enter a stepfamily. According to one survey, nearly half of all children in stepparent families will see their parents divorce again by the time they reach their late teens. Since 80 percent of divorced fathers remarry, things get even more complicated when the romantic or marital history of the noncustodial parent, usually the father, is taken into account. Consequently, as it affects a significant number of children, family disruption is best understood not as a single event but as a string of disruptive events: separation, divorce, life in a single-parent family, life with a parent and live-in lover, the remarriage of one or both parents, life in one stepparent family combined with visits to another stepparent family; the breakup of one or both stepparent families. And so on. This is one reason why public schools have a hard time knowing whom to call in an emergency.

Given its dramatic impact on children's lives, one might reasonably expect that this historic level of family disruption would be viewed with alarm, even regarded as a national crisis. Yet this has not been the case. In recent years some people have argued that these trends pose a serious threat to children and to the nation as a whole, but they are dismissed as declinists, pessimists, or nostalgists, unwilling or unable to accept the new facts of life. The dominant view is that the changes in family structure are, on balance, positive.

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY THIS IS SO, but the fundamental reason is that at some point in the 1970s Americans changed their minds about the meaning of these disruptive behaviors. What had once been regarded as hostile to children's best interests was now considered essential to adults' happiness. In the 1950s most Americans believed that parents should stay in an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children. The assumption was that a divorce would damage the children, and the prospect of such damage gave divorce its meaning. By the mid-1970s a majority of Americans rejected that view. Popular advice literature reflected the shift. A book on divorce published in the mid-1940s tersely asserted: "Children are entitled to the affection and *association* of two parents, not one." Thirty years later another popular divorce book proclaimed just the opposite: "A two-parent home is not the only emotional structure within which a child can be happy and healthy. . . . The parents who take care of themselves will be best able to take care of their children." At about the same time, the long-standing taboo against out-of-wedlock childbirth also collapsed. By the mid-1970s three fourths of Americans said that it was not morally wrong for a woman to have a child outside marriage.

Once the social metric shifts from child well-being to adult well-being, it is hard to see divorce and nonmarital birth in anything but a positive light. However distressing and difficult they may be, both of these behaviors can hold out the promise of greater adult choice, freedom, and happiness. For unhappy spouses, divorce offers a way to escape a troubled or even abusive relationship and make a fresh start. For single parents, remarriage is a second try at marital happiness as well as a chance for relief from the stress, loneliness, and economic hardship of raising a child alone. For some unmarried women, nonmarital birth is a way to beat the biological clock, avoid marrying the wrong man, and experience the pleasures of motherhood. Moreover, divorce and out-of-wedlock birth involve a measure of agency and choice; they are man- and woman-made events. To be sure, not everyone exercises choice in divorce or nonmarital birth. Men leave wives for younger women, teenage girls get pregnant accidentally—yet even these unhappy events reflect the expansion of the boundaries of freedom and choice.

This cultural shift helps explain what otherwise would be inexplicable: the failure to see the rise in family disruption as a severe and troubling national problem. It explains why there is virtually no widespread public sentiment for restigmatizing either of these classically disruptive behaviors and no sense—no public consensus—that they can or should be avoided in the future. On the contrary, the prevailing opinion is that we should accept the changes in family structure as inevitable and devise new forms of public and private support for single-parent families.

WITH ITS AFFIRMATION OF THE LIBERATING effects of divorce and nonmarital childbirth, this opinion is a fixture of American popular culture today. Madison Avenue and Hollywood did not invent these behaviors, as their highly paid publicists are quick to point out, but they have played an influential role in defending and even celebrating divorce and unwed motherhood. More precisely, they have taken the raw material of demography and fashioned it into a powerful fantasy of individual renewal and rebirth. Consider, for example, the teaser for *People* magazine's cover story on Joan Lunden's divorce: "After the painful end of her 13-year marriage, the *Good Morning America* cohost is discovering a new life as a single mother—and as her own woman." *People* does not dwell on the anguish Lunden and her children might have experienced over the breakup of their family, or the difficulties of single motherhood, even for celebrity mothers. Instead, it celebrates Joan Lunden's steps toward independence and a better life. *People*, characteristically, focuses on her shopping: in the first weeks after her breakup Lunden leased "a brand-new six-bedroom, 8,000 square foot" house and then went to Bloomingdale's, where she scooped up sheets, pillows, a toaster, dishes, seven televisions, and roomfuls of fun furniture that was "totally unlike the serious traditional pieces she was giving up."

This is not just the view taken in supermarket magazines. Even the conservative bastion of the greeting-card industry, Hallmark, offers a line of cards commemorating divorce as liberation. "Think of your former marriage as a record album," says one Contemporary card. "It was full of music—both happy and sad. But what's important now is **YOU!** the recently released **HOT, NEW, SINGLE!** You're going to be at the **TOP OF THE CHARTS!**" Another card reads: "Getting divorced can be very healthy! Watch how it improves your circulation! Best of luck! . . ." Hallmark's hip Shoebox Greetings division depicts two female praying mantises. Mantis One: "It's tough being a single parent." Mantis Two: "Yeah . . . Maybe we shouldn't have eaten our husbands."

Divorce is a tired convention in Hollywood, but unwed parenthood is very much in fashion: in the past year or so babies were born to Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, Jack Nicholson and Rebecca Broussard, and Eddie Murphy and Nicole Mitchell. *Vanity Fair* celebrated Jack Nicholson's fatherhood with a cover story (April, 1992) called "Happy Jack." What made Jack happy, it turned out, was no-fault fatherhood. He and Broussard, the twenty-nine-year-old mother of his children, lived in separate houses. Nicholson said, "It's an unusual arrangement, but the last twenty-five years or so have shown me that I'm not good at cohabitation. . . . I see Rebecca as much as any other person who is cohabiting. And *she* prefers it. I think

most people would in a more honest and truthful world." As for more-permanent commitments, the man who is not good at cohabitation said: "I don't discuss marriage much with Rebecca. Those discussions are the very thing I'm trying to avoid. I'm after this immediate real thing. That's all I believe in." (Perhaps Nicholson should have had the discussion. Not long after the story appeared, Broussard broke off the relationship.)

As this story shows, unwed parenthood is thought of not only as a way to find happiness but also as a way to exhibit such virtues as honesty and courage. A similar argument was offered in defense of Murphy Brown's unwed motherhood. Many of Murphy's fans were quick to point out that Murphy suffered over her decision to bear a child out of wedlock. Faced with an accidental pregnancy and a faithless lover, she agonized over her plight and, after much mental anguish, bravely decided to go ahead. In short, having a baby without a husband represented a higher level of maternal devotion and sacrifice than having a baby with a husband. Murphy was not just exercising her rights as a woman; she was exhibiting true moral heroism.

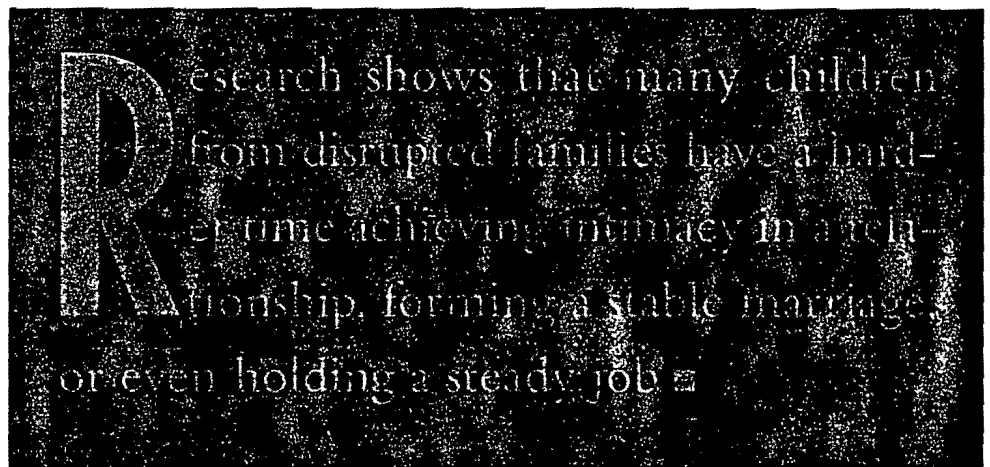
On the night Murphy Brown became an unwed mother, 34 million Americans tuned in, and CBS posted a 35 percent share of the audience. The show did not stir significant protest at the grass roots and lost none of its advertisers. The actress Candice Bergen subsequently appeared on the cover of nearly every women's and news magazine in the country and received an honorary degree at the University of Pennsylvania as well as an Emmy award. The show's creator, Diane English, popped up in Hanes stocking ads. Judged by conventional measures of approval, Murphy Brown's motherhood was a hit at the box office.

Increasingly, the media depicts the married two-parent family as a source of pathology. According to a spate of celebrity memoirs and interviews, the married-parent family harbors terrible secrets of abuse, violence, and incest. A bumper sticker I saw in Amherst, Massachusetts, read UNSPOKEN TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES: ABUSE, ALCOHOLISM, INCEST. The pop therapist John Bradshaw explains away this generation's problems with the dictum that 96 percent of families are dysfunctional, made that way by the addicted society we live in. David Lynch creates a new aesthetic of creepiness by juxtaposing scenes of traditional family life with images of seduction and perversion. A Boston-area museum puts on an exhibit called "Goodbye to Apple Pie," featuring several artists'

visions of child abuse, including one mixed-media piece with knives poking through a little girl's skirt. The piece is titled *Father Knows Best*.

No one would claim that two-parent families are free from conflict, violence, or abuse. However, the attempt to discredit the two-parent family can be understood as part of what Daniel Patrick Moynihan has described as a larger effort to accommodate higher levels of social deviance. "The amount of deviant behavior in American society has increased beyond the levels the community can 'afford to recognize,'" Moynihan argues. One response has been to normalize what was once considered deviant behavior, such as out-of-wedlock birth. An accompanying response has been to detect deviance in what once stood as a social norm, such as the married-couple family. Together these responses reduce the acknowledged levels of deviance by eroding earlier distinctions between the normal and the deviant.

Several recent studies describe family life in its postwar heyday as the seedbed of alcoholism and abuse. Ac-



According to Stephanie Coontz, the author of the book *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, family life for married mothers in the 1950s consisted of "booze, bowling, bridge, and boredom." Coontz writes: "Few would have guessed that radiant Marilyn Van Derbur, crowned Miss America in 1958, had been sexually violated by her wealthy, respectable father from the time she was five until she was eighteen, when she moved away to college." Even the budget-stretching casserole comes under attack as a sign of culinary dysfunction. According to one food writer, this homely staple of postwar family life brings back images of "the good mother of the 50's . . . locked in Ozzie and Harriet land, unable to move past the canvas of a Corning Ware dish, the palette of a can of Campbell's soup, the mushy dominion of which she was queen."

Nevertheless, the popular portrait of family life does not simply reflect the views of a cultural elite, as some have argued. There is strong support at the grass roots for much of this view of family change. Survey after survey

shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals. Motherhood no longer defines adult womanhood, as everyone knows; equally important is the fact that fatherhood has declined as a norm for men. In 1976 less than half as many fathers as in 1957 said that providing for children was a life goal. The proportion of working men who found marriage and children burdensome and restrictive more than doubled in the same period. Fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others as a positive moral virtue.

Dinosaurs Divorce

IT IS TRUE THAT MANY ADULTS BENEFIT FROM divorce or remarriage. According to one study, nearly 80 percent of divorced women and 50 percent of divorced men say they are better off out of the marriage. Half of divorced adults in the same study report greater happiness. A competent self-help book called *Divorce and New Beginnings* notes the advantages of single parenthood: single parents can "develop their own interests, fulfill their own needs, choose their own friends and engage in social activities of their choice. Money, even if limited, can be spent as they see fit." Apparently, some women appreciate the opportunity to have children out of wedlock. "The real world, however, does not always allow women who are dedicated to their careers to devote the time and energy it takes to find—or be found by—the perfect husband and father wanna-be," one woman said in a letter to *The Washington Post*. A mother and chiropractor from Avon, Connecticut, explained her unwed maternity to an interviewer this way: "It is selfish, but this was something I needed to do for me."

There is very little in contemporary popular culture to contradict this optimistic view. But in a few small places another perspective may be found. Several racks down from its divorce cards, Hallmark offers a line of cards for children—To Kids With Love. These cards come six to a pack. Each card in the pack has a slightly different message. According to the package, the "thinking of you" messages will let a special kid "know how much you care." Though Hallmark doesn't quite say so, it's clear these cards are aimed at divorced parents. "I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me but I hope you know I'm always just a phone call away." Another card reads: "Even though your dad and I don't live together anymore, I know he's still a very special part of your life. And as much as I miss you when you're not with me, I'm still happy that you two can spend time together."

Hallmark's messages are grounded in a substantial body of well-funded market research. Therefore it is worth reflecting on the divergence in sentiment between the divorce cards for adults and the divorce cards for kids. For grown-ups, divorce heralds new beginnings (A HOT NEW

SINGLE). For children, divorce brings separation and loss ("I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me").

An even more telling glimpse into the meaning of family disruption can be found in the growing children's literature on family dissolution. Take, for example, the popular children's book *Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families* (1986), by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown. This is a picture book, written for very young children. The book begins with a short glossary of "divorce words" and encourages children to "see if you can find them" in the story. The words include "family counselor," "separation agreement," "alimony," and "child custody." The book is illustrated with cartoonish drawings of green dinosaur parents who fight, drink too much, and break up. One panel shows the father dinosaur, suitcase in hand, getting into a yellow car.

The dinosaur children are offered simple, straightforward advice on what to do about the divorce. *On custody decisions*: "When parents can't agree, lawyers and judges decide. Try to be honest if they ask you questions; it will help them make better decisions." *On selling the house*: "If you move, you may have to say good-bye to friends and familiar places. But soon your new home will feel like the place you really belong." *On the economic impact of divorce*: "Living with one parent almost always means there will be less money. Be prepared to give up some things." *On holidays*: "Divorce may mean twice as much celebrating at holiday times, but you may feel pulled apart." *On parents' new lovers*: "You may sometimes feel jealous and want your parent to yourself. Be polite to your parents' new friends, even if you don't like them at first." *On parents' remarriage*: "Not everyone loves his or her stepparents, but showing them respect is important."

These cards and books point to an uncomfortable and generally unacknowledged fact: what contributes to a parent's happiness may detract from a child's happiness. All too often the adult quest for freedom, independence, and choice in family relationships conflicts with a child's developmental needs for stability, constancy, harmony, and permanence in family life. In short, family disruption creates a deep division between parents' interests and the interests of children.

One of the worst consequences of these divided interests is a withdrawal of parental investment in children's well-being. As the Stanford economist Victor Fuchs has pointed out, the main source of social investment in children is private. The investment comes from the children's parents. But parents in disrupted families have less time, attention, and money to devote to their children. The single most important source of disinvestment has been the widespread withdrawal of financial support and involvement by fathers. Maternal investment, too, has declined, as women try to raise families on their own and work outside the home. Moreover, both mothers and fathers commonly respond to family breakup by investing more heavily in themselves and in their own personal and romantic lives.

Sometimes the tables are completely turned. Children are called upon to invest in the emotional well-being of their parents. Indeed, this seems to be the larger message of many of the children's books on divorce and remarriage. *Dinosaurs Divorce* asks children to be sympathetic, understanding, respectful, and polite to confused, unhappy parents. The sacrifice comes from the children: "Be prepared to give up some things." In the world of divorcing dinosaurs, the children rather than the grown-ups are the exemplars of patience, restraint, and good sense.

Three Seventies Assumptions

AS IT FIRST TOOK SHAPE IN THE 1970S, THE OPTIMISTIC view of family change rested on three bold new assumptions. At that time, because the emergence of the changes in family life was so recent, there was little hard evidence to confirm or dispute these assumptions. But this was an expansive moment in American life.

The first assumption was an economic one: that a woman could now afford to be a mother without also being a wife. There were ample grounds for believing this. Women's work-force participation had been gradually increasing in the postwar period, and by the beginning of the 1970s women were a strong presence in the workplace. What's more, even though there was still a substantial wage gap between men and women, women had made considerable progress in a relatively short time toward better-paying jobs and greater employment opportunities. More women than ever before could aspire to serious careers as business executives, doctors, lawyers, airline pilots, and politicians. This circumstance, combined with the increased availability of child care, meant that women could take on the responsibilities of a breadwinner, perhaps even a sole breadwinner. This was particularly true for middle-class women. According to a highly regarded 1977 study by the Carnegie Council on Children, "The greater availability of jobs for women means that more middle-class children today survive their parents' divorce without a catastrophic plunge into poverty."

Feminists, who had long argued that the path to greater equality for women lay in the world of work outside the home, endorsed this assumption. In fact, for many, economic independence was a stepping-stone toward freedom from both men and marriage. As women began to earn their own money, they were less dependent on men or marriage, and marriage diminished in importance. In Gloria Steinem's memorable words, "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle."

This assumption also gained momentum as the meaning of work changed for women. Increasingly, work had an expressive as well as an economic dimension: being a working mother not only gave you an income but also made you more interesting and fulfilled than a stay-at-home mother. Consequently, the optimistic economic

scenario was driven by a cultural imperative. Women would achieve financial independence because, culturally as well as economically, it was the right thing to do.

The second assumption was that family disruption would not cause lasting harm to children and could actually enrich their lives. *Creative Divorce: A New Opportunity for Personal Growth*, a popular book of the seventies, spoke confidently to this point: "Children can survive any family crisis without permanent damage—and grow as human beings in the process. . . ." Moreover, single-parent and stepparent families created a more extensive kinship network than the nuclear family. This network would envelop children in a web of warm and supportive relationships. "Belonging to a stepfamily means there are more people in your life," a children's book published in 1982 notes. "More sisters and brothers, including the step ones. More people you think of as grandparents and aunts and uncles. More cousins. More neighbors and friends. . . . Getting to know and like so many people (and having them like you) is one of the best parts of what being in a stepfamily . . . is all about."

The third assumption was that the new diversity in family structure would make America a better place. Just as the nation has been strengthened by the diversity of its ethnic and racial groups, so it would be strengthened by diverse family forms. The emergence of these brave new families was but the latest chapter in the saga of American pluralism.

Another version of the diversity argument stated that the real problem was not family disruption itself but the stigma still attached to these emergent family forms. This lingering stigma placed children at psychological risk, making them feel ashamed or different; as the ranks of single-parent and stepparent families grew, children would feel normal and good about themselves.

These assumptions continue to be appealing, because they accord with strongly held American beliefs in social progress. Americans see progress in the expansion of individual opportunities for choice, freedom, and self-expression. Moreover, Americans identify progress with growing tolerance of diversity. Over the past half century, the pollster Daniel Yankelovich writes, the United States has steadily grown more open-minded and accepting of groups that were previously perceived as alien, untrustworthy, or unsuitable for public leadership or social esteem. One such group is the burgeoning number of single-parent and stepparent families.

The Education of Sara McLanahan

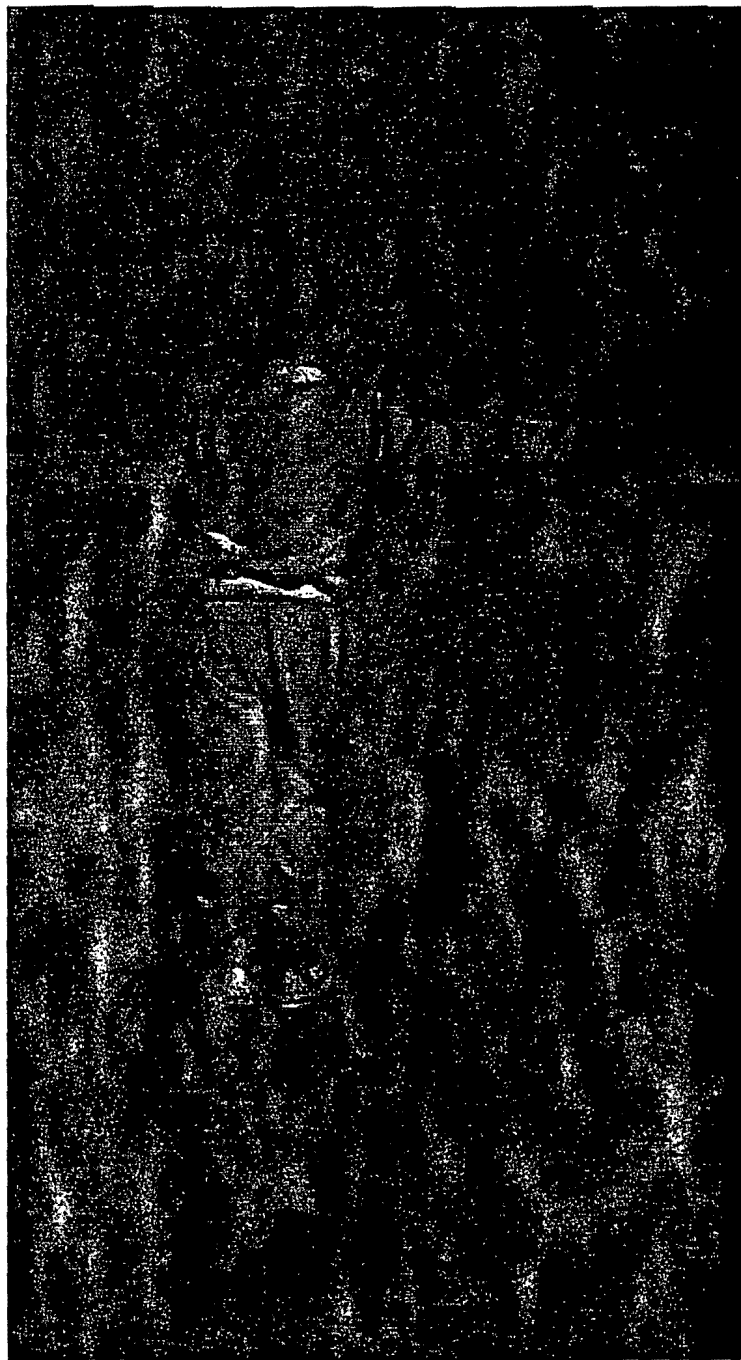
IN 1981 SARA MCLANAHAN, NOW A SOCIOLOGIST AT Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, read a three-part series by Ken Auletta in *The New Yorker*. Later published as a book titled *The Underclass*, the series presented a vivid portrait of the drug addicts, welfare mothers, and school dropouts who took part

in an education-and-training program in New York City. Many were the children of single mothers, and it was Auletta's clear implication that single-mother families were contributing to the growth of an underclass. McLanahan was taken aback by this notion. "It struck me as strange that he would be viewing single mothers at that level of pathology."

"I'd gone to graduate school in the days when the politically correct argument was that single-parent families were just another alternative family form, and it was fine," McLanahan explains, as she recalls the state of social-scientific thinking in the 1970s. Several empirical studies that were then current supported an optimistic view of family change. (They used tiny samples, however, and did not track the well-being of children over time.)

One, *All Our Kin*, by Carol Stack, was required reading for thousands of university students. It said that single mothers had strengths that had gone undetected and unappreciated by earlier researchers. The single-mother family, it suggested, is an economically resourceful and socially embedded institution. In the late 1970s McLanahan wrote a similar study that looked at a small sample of white single mothers and how they coped. "So I was very much of that tradition."

By the early 1980s, however, nearly two decades had passed since the changes in family life had begun. During the intervening years a fuller body of empirical research had emerged: studies that used large samples, or followed families through time, or did both. Moreover, several of the studies offered a child's-eye view of family disruption. The



Irwin Garfinkel in a 1986 book, *Single Mothers and Their Children*, her portrait of single motherhood proved to be as troubling in its own way as Auletta's.

One of the leading assumptions of the time was that single motherhood was economically viable. Even if single mothers did face economic trials, they wouldn't face them for long, it was argued, because they wouldn't remain single for long: single motherhood would be a brief phase of three to five years, followed by marriage. Single mothers would be economically resilient: if they experienced setbacks, they would recover quickly. It was also said that single mothers would be supported by informal networks of family, friends, neighbors, and other single

National Survey on Children, conducted by the psychologist Nicholas Zill, had set out in 1976 to track a large sample of children aged seven to eleven. It also interviewed the children's parents and teachers. It surveyed its subjects again in 1981 and 1987. By the time of its third round of interviews the eleven-year-olds of 1976 were the twenty-two-year-olds of 1987. The California Children of Divorce Study, directed by Judith Wallerstein, a clinical psychologist, had also been going on for a decade. E. Mavis Hetherington, of the University of Virginia, was conducting a similar study of children from both intact and divorced families. For the first time it was possible to test the optimistic view against a large and longitudinal body of evidence.

It was to this body of evidence that Sara McLanahan turned. When she did, she found little to support the optimistic view of single motherhood. On the contrary. When she published her findings with

mothers. As McLanahan shows in her study, the evidence demolishes all these claims.

For the vast majority of single mothers, the economic spectrum turns out to be narrow, running between precarious and desperate. Half the single mothers in the United States live below the poverty line. (Currently, one out of ten married couples with children is poor.) Many others live on the edge of poverty. Even single mothers who are far from poor are likely to experience persistent economic insecurity. Divorce almost always brings a decline in the standard of living for the mother and children.

Moreover, the poverty experienced by single mothers is no more brief than it is mild. A significant number of all single mothers never marry or remarry. Those who do, do so only after spending roughly six years, on average, as single parents. For black mothers the duration is much longer. Only 33 percent of African-American mothers had remarried within ten years of separation. Consequently, single motherhood is hardly a fleeting event for the mother, and it is likely to occupy a third of the child's childhood. Even the notion that single mothers are knit together in economically supportive networks is not borne out by the evidence. On the contrary, single parenthood forces many women to be on the move, in search of cheaper housing and better jobs. This need-driven restless mobility makes it more difficult for them to sustain supportive ties to family and friends, let alone other single mothers.

Single-mother families are vulnerable not just to poverty but to a particularly debilitating form of poverty: welfare dependency. The dependency takes two forms: First, single mothers, particularly unwed mothers, stay on welfare longer than other welfare recipients. Of those never-married mothers who receive welfare benefits, almost 40 percent remain on the rolls for ten years or longer. Second, welfare dependency tends to be passed on from one generation to the next. McLanahan says, "Evidence on intergenerational poverty indicates that, indeed, offspring from [single-mother] families are far more likely to be poor and to form mother-only families than are offspring who live with two parents most of their pre-adult life." Nor is the intergenerational impact of single motherhood limited to African-Americans, as many people seem to believe. Among white families, daughters of single parents are 53 percent more likely to marry as teenagers, 111 percent more likely to have children as teenagers, 164 percent more likely to have a premarital birth, and 92 percent more likely to dissolve their own marriages. All these intergenerational consequences of single motherhood increase the likelihood of chronic welfare dependency.

McLanahan cites three reasons why single-mother families are so vulnerable economically. For one thing, their earnings are low. Second, unless the mothers are widowed, they don't receive public subsidies large

enough to lift them out of poverty. And finally, they do not get much support from family members—especially the fathers of their children. In 1982 single white mothers received an average of \$1,246 in alimony and child support, black mothers an average of \$322. Such payments accounted for about 10 percent of the income of single white mothers and for about 3.5 percent of the income of single black mothers. These amounts were dramatically smaller than the income of the father in a two-parent family and also smaller than the income from a second earner in a two-parent family. Roughly 60 percent of single white mothers and 80 percent of single black mothers received no support at all.

Until the mid-1980s, when stricter standards were put in place, child-support awards were only about half to two-thirds what the current guidelines require. Accordingly, there is often a big difference in the living standards of divorced fathers and of divorced mothers with children. After divorce the average annual income of mothers and children is \$13,500 for whites and \$9,000 for nonwhites, as compared with \$25,000 for white nonresident fathers and \$13,600 for nonwhite nonresident fathers. Moreover, since child-support awards account for a smaller portion of the income of a high-earning father, the drop in living standards can be especially sharp for mothers who were married to upper-level managers and professionals.

Unwed mothers are unlikely to be awarded any child support at all, partly because the paternity of their children may not have been established. According to one recent study, only 20 percent of unmarried mothers receive child support.

Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a condition of life. Divorce brings a reduction in income and standard of living for the vast majority of single mothers. One study, for example, found that income for mothers and children declines on average about 30 percent, while fathers experience a 10 to 15 percent increase in income in the year following a separation. Things get even more difficult when fathers fail to meet their child-support obligations. As a result, many divorced mothers experience a wearing uncertainty about the family budget: whether the check will come in or not; whether new sneakers can be bought this month or not; whether the electric bill will be paid on time or not. Uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty. Mothers and children often have to move to cheaper housing after a divorce. One study shows that about 38 percent of divorced mothers and their children move during the first year after a divorce. Even several years later the rate of moves for single mothers is about a third higher than the rate for two-parent families. It is also common for a mother to change her job or increase her working hours or both following a divorce. Even the composition of the household is likely to change, with other adults, such as boyfriends or babysitters, moving in and out.



All this uncertainty can be devastating to children. Anyone who knows children knows that they are deeply conservative creatures. They like things to stay the same. So pronounced is this tendency that certain children have been known to request the same peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich for lunch for years on end. Children are particularly set in their ways when it comes to family, friends, neighborhoods, and schools. Yet when a family breaks up, all these things may change. The novelist Pat Conroy has observed that "each divorce is the death of a small civilization." No one feels this more acutely than children.

Sara McLanahan's investigation and others like it have helped to establish a broad consensus on the economic impact of family disruption on children. Most social scientists now agree that single motherhood is an important and growing cause of poverty, and that children suffer as a result. (They continue to argue, however, about the relationship between family structure and such economic factors as income inequality, the loss of jobs in the inner city, and the growth of low-wage jobs.) By the mid-1980s, however, it was clear that the problem of family disruption was not confined to the urban underclass, nor was its sole impact economic. Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirth were affecting middle- and upper-class children, and these more privileged children were suffering negative consequences as well. It appeared that the problems associated with family breakup were far deeper and far more widespread than anyone had previously imagined.

The Missing Father

JUDITH WALLERSTEIN IS ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN RESEARCH on the long-term psychological impact of family disruption on children. The California Children of Divorce Study, which she directs, remains the most enduring study of the long-term effects of divorce on children and their parents. Moreover, it represents the best-known effort to look at the impact of divorce on middle-class children. The California children entered the study without pathological family histories. Before divorce they lived in stable, protected homes. And although some of the children did experience economic insecurity as the result of divorce, they were generally free from the most severe forms of poverty associated with family breakup. Thus the study and the resulting book (which Wallerstein wrote with Sandra Blakeslee), *Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce* (1989), provide new insight into the consequences of divorce which are not associated with extreme forms of economic or emotional deprivation.

When, in 1971, Wallerstein and her colleagues set out to conduct clinical interviews with 131 children from the San Francisco area, they thought they were embarking on a short-term study. Most experts believed that divorce was like a bad cold. There was a phase of acute discomfort, and then a short recovery phase. According to the conventional wisdom, kids would be back on their feet in no time at all. Yet when Wallerstein met these children for a second interview more than a year later, she was

"The child of divorce faces many additional psychological burdens in addition to the normative tasks of growing up," she says.

Divorce not only makes it more difficult for young adults to establish new relationships. It also weakens the oldest primary relationship: that between parent and child. According to Wallerstein, "Parent-child relationships are permanently altered by divorce in ways that our society has not anticipated." Not only do children experience a loss of parental attention at the onset of divorce, but they soon find that at every stage of their development their parents are not available in the same way they once were. "In a reasonably happy intact family," Wallerstein observes, "the child gravitates first to one parent and then to the other, using skills and attributes from each in climbing the developmental ladder." In a divorced family, children find it "harder to find the needed parent at needed times." This may help explain why very young children suffer the most as the result of family disruption. Their opportunities to engage in this kind of ongoing process are the most truncated and compromised.

The father-child bond is severely, often irreparably, damaged in disrupted families. In a situation without historical precedent, an astonishing and disheartening number of American fathers are failing to provide financial support to their children. Often, more than the father's support check is missing. Increasingly, children are bereft of any contact with their fathers. According to the National Survey of Children, in disrupted families only one child in six, on average, saw his or her father as often as once a week in the past year. Close to half did not see their father at all in the past year. As time goes on, contact becomes even more infrequent. Ten years after a marriage breaks up, more than two thirds of children report not having seen their father for a year. Not surprisingly, when asked to name the "adults you look up to and admire," only 20 percent of children in single-parent families named their father, as compared with 52 percent of children in two-parent families. A favorite complaint among Baby Boom Americans is that their fathers were emotionally remote guys who worked hard, came home at night to eat supper, and didn't have much to say to or do with the kids. But the current generation has a far worse father problem: many of their fathers are vanishing entirely.

Even for fathers who maintain regular contact, the pattern of father-child relationships changes. The sociologists Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenberg, who have studied broken families, write that the fathers behave more like other relatives than like parents. Rather than helping with homework or carrying out a project with their children, nonresidential fathers are likely to take the kids shopping, to the movies, or out to dinner. Instead of providing steady advice and guidance, divorced fathers become "treat" dads.

amazed to discover that there had been no miraculous recovery. In fact, the children seemed to be doing worse.

The news that children did not "get over" divorce was not particularly welcome at the time. Wallerstein recalls, "We got angry letters from therapists, parents, and lawyers saying we were undoubtedly wrong. They said children are really much better off being released from an unhappy marriage. Divorce, they said, is a liberating experience." One of the main results of the California study was to overturn this optimistic view. In Wallerstein's cautionary words, "Divorce is deceptive. Legally it is a single event, but psychologically it is a chain—sometimes a never-ending chain—of events, relocations, and radically shifting relationships strung through time, a process that forever changes the lives of the people involved."

Five years after divorce more than a third of the children experienced moderate or severe depression. At ten years a significant number of the now young men and women appeared to be troubled, drifting, and under-achieving. At fifteen years many of the thirtyish adults were struggling to establish strong love relationships of their own. In short, far from recovering from their parents' divorce, a significant percentage of these grownups were still suffering from its effects. In fact, according to Wallerstein, the long-term effects of divorce emerge at a time when young adults are trying to make their own decisions about love, marriage, and family. Not all children in the study suffered negative consequences. But Wallerstein's research presents a sobering picture of divorce.

Apparently—and paradoxically—it is the visiting relationship itself, rather than the frequency of visits, that is the real source of the problem. According to Wallerstein, the few children in the California study who reported visiting with their fathers once or twice a week over a ten-year period still felt rejected. The need to schedule a special time to be with the child, the repeated leave-takings, and the lack of connection to the child's regular, daily schedule leaves many fathers adrift, frustrated, and confused. Wallerstein calls the visiting father a parent without portfolio.

The deterioration in father-child bonds is most severe among children who experience divorce at an early age, according to a recent study. Nearly three quarters of the respondents, now young men and women, report having poor relationships with their fathers. Close to half have received psychological help, nearly a third have dropped out of high school, and about a quarter report having experienced high levels of problem behavior or emotional distress by the time they became young adults.

therapeutic community. Young adults from disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those from intact families to receive psychological help.

Some social scientists have criticized Judith Wallerstein's research because her study is based on a small clinical sample and does not include a control group of children from intact families. However, other studies generally support and strengthen her findings. Nicholas Zill has found similar long-term effects on children of divorce, reporting that "effects of marital discord and family disruption are visible twelve to twenty-two years later in poor relationships with parents, high levels of problem behavior, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school and receiving psychological help." Moreover, Zill's research also found signs of distress in young women who seemed relatively well adjusted in middle childhood and adolescence. Girls in single-parent families are also at much greater risk for precocious sexuality, teenage marriage, teenage pregnancy, nonmarital birth, and divorce than are girls in two-parent families.

Survey after survey shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals.

Zill's research shows that family disruption strongly affects school achievement as well. Children in disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those in intact families to drop out of high school; among children who do drop out, those from disrupted families are less likely eventually to earn a diploma or a GED. Boys are at greater risk for dropping out than girls, and are also more likely to exhibit aggressive, acting-out behav-

Long-Term Effects

SINCE MOST CHILDREN LIVE WITH THEIR MOTHERS after divorce, one might expect that the mother-child bond would remain unaltered and might even be strengthened. Yet research shows that the mother-child bond is also weakened as the result of divorce. Only half of the children who were close to their mothers before a divorce remained equally close after the divorce. Boys, particularly, had difficulties with their mothers. Moreover, mother-child relationships deteriorated over time. Whereas teenagers in disrupted families were no more likely than teenagers in intact families to report poor relationships with their mothers, 30 percent of young adults from disrupted families have poor relationships with their mothers, as compared with 16 percent of young adults from intact families. Mother-daughter relationships often deteriorate as the daughter reaches young adulthood. The only group in society that derives any benefit from these weakened parent-child ties is the

Other research confirms these findings. According to a study by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, 33 percent of two-parent elementary school students are ranked as high achievers, as compared with 17 percent of single-parent students. The children in single-parent families are also more likely to be truant or late or to have disciplinary action taken against them. Even after controlling for race, income, and religion, scholars find significant differences in educational attainment between children who grow up in intact families and children who do not. In his 1992 study *America's Smallest School: The Family*, Paul Barton shows that the proportion of two-parent families varies widely from state to state and is related to variations in academic achievement. North Dakota, for example, scores highest on the math-proficiency test and second highest on the two-parent-family scale. The District of Columbia is second lowest on the math test and lowest in the nation on the two-parent-family scale.

Zill notes that "while coming from a disrupted family

significantly increases a young adult's risks of experiencing social, emotional or academic difficulties, it does not foreordain such difficulties. The majority of young people from disrupted families have successfully completed high school, do *not* currently display high levels of emotional distress or problem behavior, and enjoy reasonable relationships with their mothers." Nevertheless, a majority of these young adults do show maladjustment in their relationships with their fathers.

These findings underscore the importance of both a mother and a father in fostering the emotional well-being of children. Obviously, not all children in two-parent families are free from emotional turmoil, but few are burdened with the troubles that accompany family breakup. Moreover, as the sociologist Amitai Etzioni explains in a new book, *The Spirit of Community*, two parents in an intact family make up what might be called a mutually supportive education coalition. When both parents are present, they can play different, even contradictory, roles. One parent may goad the child to achieve,

while the other may encourage the child to take time to daydream or toss a football around. One may emphasize taking intellectual risks, while the other may insist on following the teacher's guidelines. At the same time the parents regularly exchange information about the child's school problems and achievements, and have a sense of the overall educational mission. However, Etzioni writes,

The sequence of divorce followed by a succession of boy or girlfriends, a second marriage, and frequently another divorce and another turnover of partners often means a repeatedly disrupted educational coalition. Each change in participants involves a change in the educational agenda for the child. Each new partner cannot be expected to pick up the previous one's educational post and program. . . . As a result, changes in parenting partners mean, at best, a deep disruption in a child's education, though of course several disruptions cut deeper into the effectiveness of the educational coalition than just one.

The Family and Public Policy

A NUMBER OF NEW PROPOSALS ADDRESS the problem of family disruption. Generally speaking, they have a single objective: to ensure that children have the support and commitment of both biological parents.

- The Family Support Act of 1988, which represents the culmination of a fifteen-year trend toward stricter child-support enforcement, has enabled states to impose legal child-support obligations on a greater number of absent fathers and to increase the percentage of absent fathers who actually meet their obligations.

For example, the Family Support Act contains the strongest legislation to date on paternal identification, the essential first step toward making a legally binding child-support award. In the cases of about three out of every four children born to unwed mothers, fathers have not been legally identified. Similarly, in the cases of

the great majority of mothers receiving AFDC benefits, the father is never identified or known to public agencies or officials. In the past many people reasoned that it was better to ignore the father—he was probably unable to support the child anyway, and might cause more trouble if he were around than if he remained absent. The 1988 legislation requires states to get the Social Security numbers of both parents when a birth certificate is issued. If paternity is in doubt or contested, the federal government will pay for 90 percent of the cost of genetic testing. Irwin Garfinkel, who has written a study of child support, estimates that this approach will establish paternity for half of the nation's nonmarital births by the turn of the century.

- The most comprehensive and most controversial proposal is one for a child-support-assurance program—a universal, non-means-tested entitlement plan akin to Survivors Insurance for widows. Child-support assurance would guarantee a standard level of child support—some propose \$2,500 a year for the first child in a family, and \$1,000, \$1,000, and \$500 for the second, third, and fourth children—to all single parents whose children live with them. The federal government would

serve as a collection agency for the support payments, withholding income from the nonresidential parent and mailing a monthly check to the parent with the children. In cases where the parent failed to meet the full support obligation, taxpayers would make up the difference. According to its advocates, the child-support-assurance plan would reduce the welfare burden in three ways: it would prevent some mothers from going on welfare, since they would be assured of regular support; it would reduce AFDC benefits dollar for dollar as support was collected from the father; and it would provide various incentives for mothers on welfare to get off it. For example, unlike a mother receiving AFDC, a working mother would be able to keep the full child-support benefit in addition to her working income. Consequently, child-support-assurance benefits would boost a family's income only if the mother went out and got a job. Moreover, this plan would create incentives for establishing legal paternity, since doing so would be necessary to qualify for benefits. And, the plan's advocates say, it would provide a nonstigmatizing, regularized system of guaranteed child support for all single parents. However, critics say that a plan of guaran-

The Bad News About Stepparents

PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING, AND POTENTIALLY disturbing, new research has to do with children in stepparent families. Until quite recently the optimistic assumption was that children saw their lives improve when they became part of a stepfamily. When Nicholas Zill and his colleagues began to study the effects of remarriage on children, their working hypothesis was that stepparent families would make up for the shortcomings of the single-parent family. Clearly, most children are better off economically when they are able to share in the income of two adults. When a second adult joins the household, there may be a reduction in the time and work pressures on the single parent.

The research overturns this optimistic assumption, however. In general the evidence suggests that remarriage neither reproduces nor restores the intact family structure, even when it brings more income and a second adult into the household. Quite the contrary. Indeed,

children living with stepparents appear to be even more disadvantaged than children living in a stable single-parent family. Other difficulties seem to offset the advantages of extra income and an extra pair of hands. However much our modern sympathies reject the fairy-tale portrait of stepparents, the latest research confirms that the old stories are anthropologically quite accurate. Stepfamilies disrupt established loyalties, create new uncertainties, provoke deep anxieties, and sometimes threaten a child's physical safety as well as emotional security.

Parents and children have dramatically different interests in and expectations for a new marriage. For a single parent, remarriage brings new commitments, the hope of enduring love and happiness, and relief from stress and loneliness. For a child, the same event often provokes confused feelings of sadness, anger, and rejection. Nearly half the children in Wallerstein's study said they felt left out in their stepfamilies. The National Commission on Children, a bipartisan group headed by Senator John D. Rockefeller, of West Virginia, reported that children

teed child support would do nothing to reduce nonmarital births or to reinforce the principle of ultimate parental responsibility.

- In the meantime, several states have revived stigma as part of a larger effort to improve child-support collection. Massachusetts, a state with some experience in the public shaming of criminals, has replaced stocks on the common with posters of "deadbeat dads" on the six o'clock news.

- Changes in divorce law, too, can help children. Mary Ann Glendon, a professor at Harvard Law School, has proposed a "children first" principle in divorce proceedings. Under this rule, judges in litigated divorce cases would determine the best possible package of benefits, income, and services for the children. Only then would the judge turn to other issues, such as the division of remaining marital assets.

- Policy experts offer several proposals to reduce the likelihood of divorce for parents in low-conflict situations. One is to introduce a two-tier system of divorce law. Marriages between adults without minor children would be easy to dissolve, but marriages between adults with children would not. Another idea is to reintroduce some measure of fault in divorce, or to allow no-fault

divorce but establish marital fault in awarding alimony or dividing marital property.

- Economic forces significantly affect marriage-related behavior. With the loss of high-paying jobs for high school graduates and the disappearance of good jobs from many inner-city neighborhoods, the ability of young men to provide for a family has been declining. Improving job opportunities for young men would enhance their ability and presumably their willingness to form lasting marriages. Expanding the earned-income tax credit would also strengthen many families economically. According to one recent estimate, an expanded tax credit would lift a million full-time working families out of poverty. Still other proposals include raising the personal exemption for young children in lower- and middle-income families and increasing the value of the marriage deduction in the tax code by allowing married couples to split their incomes.

- Changing the welfare system to eliminate its disincentives to marry would help reduce out-of-wedlock motherhood, many experts suggest. New Jersey, for example, has proposed a plan to encourage marriage by continuing AFDC benefits to children if

their natural parents marry and live together in the home, as long as their income does not exceed state eligibility standards. Another idea, not yet tried in any state, is to provide a large one-time bonus to any woman who marries, leaves the AFDC rolls, and stays off for an extended period. Many people, including President Clinton, have called for the imposition of strict two-year time limits for AFDC.

- At least as important as changes in the law and public policy are efforts to change the cultural climate, particularly the media's messages about divorce and nonmarital childbirth. Parents consistently cite television, with its increasing use of sex, violence, or the two combined, as one of their strongest adversaries. One way to improve television programming would be to fully implement the provisions of the 1990 Children's Television Act, including the establishment of the National Endowment for Children's Educational Television. It would also be valuable to enlist the support of leaders in the entertainment industry—particularly sports and movie stars—in conveying to children that making babies out of wedlock is as stupid as doing drugs or dropping out of school. This might, of course, await more exemplary behavior by some of those stars.

from stepfamilies were more likely to say they often felt lonely or blue than children from either single-parent or intact families. Children in stepfamilies were the most likely to report that they wanted more time with their mothers. When mothers remarry, daughters tend to have a harder time adjusting than sons. Evidently, boys often respond positively to a male presence in the household, while girls who have established close ties to their mother in a single-parent family often see the stepfather as a rival and an intruder. According to one study, boys in remarried families are less likely to drop out of school than boys in single-parent families, while the opposite is true for girls.

A large percentage of children do not even consider stepparents to be part of their families, according to the National Survey on Children. The NSC asked children, "When you think of your family, who do you include?" Only 10 percent of the children failed to mention a biological parent, but a third left out a stepparent. Even children who rarely saw their noncustodial parents almost always named them as family members. The weak sense of attachment is mutual. When parents were asked the same question, only one percent failed to mention a biological child, while 15 percent left out a stepchild. In the same study stepparents with both natural children and stepchildren said that it was harder for them to love their stepchildren than their biological children and that their children would have been better off if they had grown up with two biological parents.

One of the most severe risks associated with stepparent-child ties is the risk of sexual abuse. As Judith Wallerstein explains, "The presence of a stepfather can raise the difficult issue of a thinner incest barrier." The incest taboo is strongly reinforced, Wallerstein says, by knowledge of paternity and by the experience of caring for a child since birth. A stepfather enters the family without either credential and plays a sexual role as the mother's husband. As a result, stepfathers can pose a sexual risk to the children, especially to daughters. According to a study by the Canadian researchers Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, preschool children in stepfamilies are forty times as likely as children in intact families to suffer physical or sexual abuse. (Most of the sexual abuse was committed by a third party, such as a neighbor, a stepfather's male friend, or another nonrelative.) Stepfathers discriminate in their abuse: they are far more likely to assault nonbiological children than their own natural children.

Sexual abuse represents the most extreme threat to children's well-being. Stepfamilies also seem less likely to make the kind of ordinary investments in the children that other families do. Although it is true that the stepfamily household has a higher income than the single-parent household, it does not follow that the additional income is reliably available to the children. To begin with, children's claim on stepparents' resources is shaky. Stepparents are not legally required to support stepchild-

ren, so their financial support of these children is entirely voluntary. Moreover, since stepfamilies are far more likely to break up than intact families, particularly in the first five years, there is always the risk—far greater than the risk of unemployment in an intact family—that the second income will vanish with another divorce. The financial commitment to a child's education appears weaker in stepparent families, perhaps because the stepparent believes that the responsibility for educating the child rests with the biological parent.

Similarly, studies suggest that even though they may have the time, the parents in stepfamilies do not invest as much of it in their children as the parents in intact families or even single parents do. A 1991 survey by the National Commission on Children showed that the parents in stepfamilies were less likely to be involved in a child's school life, including involvement in extracurricular activities, than either intact-family parents or single parents. They were the least likely to report being involved in such time-consuming activities as coaching a child's team, accompanying class trips, or helping with school projects. According to McLanahan's research, children in stepparent families report lower educational aspirations on the part of their parents and lower levels of parental involvement with schoolwork. In short, it appears that family income and the number of adults in the household are not the only factors affecting children's well-being.

Diminishing Investments

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS DIMINISHED interest and investment. In the law, as in the children's eyes, stepparents are shadowy figures. According to the legal scholar David Chambers, family law has pretty much ignored stepparents. Chambers writes, "In the substantial majority of states, stepparents, even when they live with a child, have no legal obligation to contribute to the child's support; nor does a stepparent's presence in the home alter the support obligations of a noncustodial parent. The stepparent also has . . . no authority to approve emergency medical treatment or even to sign a permission slip. . . ." When a marriage breaks up, the stepparent has no continuing obligation to provide for a stepchild, no matter how long or how much he or she has been contributing to the support of the child. In short, Chambers says, stepparent relationships are based wholly on consent, subject to the inclinations of the adult and the child. The only way a stepparent can acquire the legal status of a parent is through adoption. Some researchers also point to the cultural ambiguity of the stepparent's role as a source of diminished interest, while others insist that it is the absence of a blood tie that weakens the bond between stepparent and child.

Whatever its causes, the diminished investment in children in both single-parent and stepparent families has

a significant impact on their life chances. Take parental help with college costs. The parents in intact families are far more likely to contribute to children's college costs than are those in disrupted families. Moreover, they are usually able to arrive at a shared understanding of which children will go to college, where they will go, how much the parents will contribute, and how much the children will contribute. But when families break up, these informal understandings can vanish. The issue of college tuition remains one of the most contested areas of parental support, especially for higher-income parents.

The law does not step in even when familial understandings break down. In the 1980s many states lowered the age covered by child-support agreements from twenty-one to eighteen, thus eliminating college as a cost associated with support for a minor child. Consequently, the question of college tuition is typically not addressed in child-custody agreements. Even in states where the courts do require parents to contribute to college costs, the requirement may be in jeopardy. In a recent decision

man. Terry, twenty-one, who had been tested as a gifted student, was doing blue-collar work irregularly.

Sixty-seven percent of the college-age students from disrupted families attended college, as compared with 85 percent of other students who attended the same high schools. Of those attending college, several had fathers who were financially capable of contributing to college costs but did not.

The withdrawal of support for college suggests that other customary forms of parental help-giving, too, may decline as the result of family breakup. For example, nearly a quarter of first-home purchases since 1980 have involved help from relatives, usually parents. The median amount of help is \$5,000. It is hard to imagine that parents who refuse to contribute to college costs will offer help in buying first homes, or help in buying cars or health insurance for young adult family members. And although it is too soon to tell, family disruption may affect the generational transmission of wealth. Baby Boomers will inherit their parents' estates, some substantial, accumulated over a lifetime

Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a defining condition of life. And uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty.

by parents who lived and saved together. To be sure, the postwar generation benefited from an expanding economy and a rising standard of living, but its ability to accumulate wealth also owed something to family stability. The lifetime assets, like the marriage itself, remained intact. It is unlikely that the children of disrupted families will be in so favorable a position.

in Pennsylvania the court overturned an earlier decision ordering divorced parents to contribute to college tuition. This decision is likely to inspire challenges in other states where courts have required parents to pay for college. Increasingly, help in paying for college is entirely voluntary.

Judith Wallerstein has been analyzing the educational decisions of the college-age men and women in her study. She reports that "a full 42 percent of these men and women from middle class families appeared to have ended their educations without attempting college or had left college before achieving a degree at either the two-year or the four-year level." A significant percentage of these young people have the ability to attend college. Typical of this group are Nick and Terry, sons of a college professor. They had been close to their father before the divorce, but their father remarried soon after the divorce and saw his sons only occasionally, even though he lived nearby. At age nineteen Nick had completed a few junior-college courses and was earning a living as a sales-

disrupted families may be less likely to help their aging parents. The sociologist Alice Rossi, who has studied intergenerational patterns of help-giving, says that adult obligation has its roots in early-childhood experience. Children who grow up in intact families experience higher levels of obligation to kin than children from broken families. Children's sense of obligation to a nonresidential father is particularly weak. Among adults with both parents living, those separated from their father during childhood are less likely than others to see the father regularly. Half of them see their father more than once a year, as compared with nine out of ten of those whose parents are still married. Apparently a kind of bitter justice is at work here. Fathers who do not support or see their young children may not be able to count on their adult children's support when they are old and need money, love, and attention.

In short, as Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenburg put it, "Through divorce and remarriage, individuals are related to more and more people, to each of whom they

owe less and less." Moreover, as Nicholas Zill argues, weaker parent-child attachments leave many children more strongly exposed to influences outside the family, such as peers, boyfriends or girlfriends, and the media. Although these outside forces can sometimes be helpful, common sense and research opinion argue against putting too much faith in peer groups or the media as surrogates for Mom and Dad.

Poverty, Crime, Education

FAMILY DISRUPTION WOULD BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM even if it affected only individual children and families. But its impact is far broader. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to characterize it as a central cause of many of our most vexing social problems. Consider three problems that most Americans believe rank among the nation's pressing concerns: poverty, crime, and declining school performance.

More than half of the increase in child poverty in the 1980s is attributable to changes in family structure, according to David Eggebeen and Daniel Lichter, of Pennsylvania State University. In fact, if family structure in the United States had remained relatively constant since 1960, the rate of child poverty would be a third lower than it is today. This does not bode well for the future. With more than half of today's children likely to live in single-parent families, poverty and associated welfare costs threaten to become even heavier burdens on the nation.

Crime in American cities has increased dramatically and grown more violent over recent decades. Much of this can be attributed to the rise in disrupted families. Nationally, more than 70 percent of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. A number of scholarly studies find that even after the groups of subjects are controlled for income, boys from single-mother homes are significantly more likely than others to commit crimes and to wind up in the juvenile justice, court, and penitentiary systems. One such study summarizes the relationship between crime and one-parent families in this way: "The relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature." The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family breakup as the most important source of rising rates of crime.

Terrible as poverty and crime are, they tend to be concentrated in inner cities and isolated from the everyday experience of many Americans. The same cannot be said of the problem of declining school performance. Nowhere has the impact of family breakup been more profound or widespread than in the nation's public schools. There is a strong consensus that the schools are failing in their historic mission to prepare every Ameri-

can child to be a good worker and a good citizen. And nearly everyone agrees that the schools must undergo dramatic reform in order to reach that goal. In pursuit of that goal, moreover, we have suffered no shortage of bright ideas or pilot projects or bold experiments in school reform. But there is little evidence that measures such as curricular reform, school-based management, and school choice will address, let alone solve, the biggest problem schools face: the rising number of children who come from disrupted families.

The great educational tragedy of our time is that many American children are failing in school not because they are intellectually or physically impaired but because they are emotionally incapacitated. In schools across the nation principals report a dramatic rise in the aggressive, acting-out behavior characteristic of children, especially boys, who are living in single-parent families. The discipline problems in today's suburban schools—assaults on teachers, unprovoked attacks on other students, screaming outbursts in class—outstrip the problems that were evident in the toughest city schools a generation ago. Moreover, teachers find many children emotionally distracted, so upset and preoccupied by the explosive drama of their own family lives that they are unable to concentrate on such mundane matters as multiplication tables.

In response, many schools have turned to therapeutic remediation. A growing proportion of many school budgets is devoted to counseling and other psychological services. The curriculum is becoming more therapeutic: children are taking courses in self-esteem, conflict resolution, and aggression management. Parental advisory groups are conscientiously debating alternative approaches to traditional school discipline, ranging from teacher training in mediation to the introduction of metal detectors and security guards in the schools. Schools are increasingly becoming emergency rooms of the emotions, devoted not only to developing minds but also to repairing hearts. As a result, the mission of the school, along with the culture of the classroom, is slowly changing. What we are seeing, largely as a result of the new burdens of family disruption, is the psychologization of American education.

Taken together, the research presents a powerful challenge to the prevailing view of family change as social progress. Not a single one of the assumptions underlying that view can be sustained against the empirical evidence. Single-parent families are not able to do well economically on a mother's income. In fact, most teeter on the economic brink, and many fall into poverty and welfare dependency. Growing up in a disrupted family does not enrich a child's life or expand the number of adults committed to the child's well-being. In fact, disrupted families threaten the psychological well-being of children and diminish the investment of adult time and money in them. Family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families

does not strengthen the social fabric. It dramatically weakens and undermines society, placing new burdens on schools, courts, prisons, and the welfare system. These new families are not an improvement on the nuclear family, nor are they even just as good, whether you look at outcomes for children or outcomes for society as a whole. In short, far from representing social progress, family change represents a stunning example of social regress.

The Two-Parent Advantage

ALL THIS EVIDENCE GIVES RISE TO AN OBVIOUS CONCLUSION: growing up in an intact two-parent family is an important source of advantage for American children. Though far from perfect as a social institution, the intact family offers children greater security and better outcomes than its fast-growing alternatives: single-parent and stepparent families. Not only does the intact family protect the child from

ciated with family disruption. Others, including Judith Wallerstein, caution against treating children in divorced families and children in intact families as separate populations, because doing so tends to exaggerate the differences between the two groups. "We have to take this family by family," Wallerstein says.

Some of the caution among researchers can also be attributed to ideological pressures. Privately, social scientists worry that their research may serve ideological causes that they themselves do not support, or that their work may be misinterpreted as an attempt to "tell people what to do." Some are fearful that they will be attacked by feminist colleagues, or, more generally, that their comments will be regarded as an effort to turn back the clock to the 1950s—a goal that has almost no constituency in the academy. Even more fundamental, it has become risky for anyone—scholar, politician, religious leader—to make normative statements today. This reflects not only the persistent drive toward "value neutrality" in the professions but also a deep confusion about the purposes of

public discourse. The dominant view appears to be that social criticism, like criticism of individuals, is psychologically damaging. The worst thing you can do is to make people feel guilty or bad about themselves.

When one sets aside these constraints, however, the case against the two-parent family is remarkably weak. It is true that disaggregating data can make family structure less significant as a factor, just as dis-

The debate about family structure is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is important. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values.

poverty and economic insecurity; it also provides greater noneconomic investments of parental time, attention, and emotional support over the entire life course. This does not mean that all two-parent families are better for children than all single-parent families. But in the face of the evidence it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain the proposition that all family structures produce equally good outcomes for children.

Curiously, many in the research community are hesitant to say that two-parent families generally promote better outcomes for children than single-parent families. Some argue that we need finer measures of the extent of the family-structure effect. As one scholar has noted, it is possible, by disaggregating the data in certain ways, to make family structure "go away" as an independent variable. Other researchers point to studies that show that children suffer psychological effects as a result of family conflict preceding family breakup. Consequently, they reason, it is the conflict rather than the structure of the family that is responsible for many of the problems asso-

aggregating Hurricane Andrew into wind, rain, and tides can make it disappear as a meteorological phenomenon. Nonetheless, research opinion as well as common sense suggests that the effects of changes in family structure are great enough to cause concern. Nicholas Zill argues that many of the risk factors for children are doubled or more than doubled as the result of family disruption. "In epidemiological terms," he writes, "the doubling of a hazard is a substantial increase. . . . the increase in risk that dietary cholesterol poses for cardiovascular disease, for example, is far less than double, yet millions of Americans have altered their diets because of the perceived hazard."

The argument that family conflict, rather than the breakup of parents, is the cause of children's psychological distress is persuasive on its face. Children who grow up in high-conflict families, whether the families stay together or eventually split up, are undoubtedly at great psychological risk. And surely no one would dispute that there must be societal measures available, including divorce, to remove children from families where they are in

danger. Yet only a minority of divorces grow out of pathological situations; much more common are divorces in families unscarred by physical assault. Moreover, an equally compelling hypothesis is that family breakup generates its own conflict. Certainly, many families exhibit more conflictual and even violent behavior as a consequence of divorce than they did before divorce.

Finally, it is important to note that clinical insights are different from sociological findings. Clinicians work with individual families, who cannot and should not be defined by statistical aggregates. Appropriate to a clinical approach, moreover, is a focus on the internal dynamics of family functioning and on the immense variability in human behavior. Nevertheless, there is enough empirical evidence to justify sociological statements about the causes of declining child well-being and to demonstrate that despite the plasticity of human response, there are some useful rules of thumb to guide our thinking about and policies affecting the family.

For example, Sara McLanahan says, three structural constants are commonly associated with intact families, even intact families who would not win any "Family of the Year" awards. The first is economic. In intact families, children share in the income of two adults. Indeed, as a number of analysts have pointed out, the two-parent family is becoming more rather than less necessary, because more and more families need two incomes to sustain a middle-class standard of living.

McLanahan believes that most intact families also provide a stable authority structure. Family breakup commonly upsets the established boundaries of authority in a family. Children are often required to make decisions or accept responsibilities once considered the province of parents. Moreover, children, even very young children, are often expected to behave like mature adults, so that the grown-ups in the family can be free to deal with the emotional fallout of the failed relationship. In some instances family disruption creates a complete vacuum in authority; everyone invents his or her own rules. With lines of authority disrupted or absent, children find it much more difficult to engage in the normal kinds of testing behavior, the trial and error, the failing and succeeding, that define the developmental pathway toward character and competence. McLanahan says, "Children need to be the ones to challenge the rules. The parents need to set the boundaries and let the kids push the boundaries. The children shouldn't have to walk the straight and narrow at all times."

Finally, McLanahan holds that children in intact families benefit from stability in what she neutrally terms "household personnel." Family disruption frequently brings new adults into the family, including stepparents, live-in boyfriends or girlfriends, and casual sexual partners. Like stepfathers, boyfriends can present a real threat to children's, particularly to daughters', security and well-being. But physical or sexual abuse represents

only the most extreme such threat. Even the very best of boyfriends can disrupt and undermine a child's sense of peace and security, McLanahan says. "It's not as though you're going from an unhappy marriage to peacefulness. There can be a constant changing until the mother finds a suitable partner."

McLanahan's argument helps explain why children of widows tend to do better than children of divorced or unmarried mothers. Widows differ from other single mothers in all three respects. They are economically more secure, because they receive more public assistance through Survivors Insurance, and possibly private insurance or other kinds of support from family members. Thus widows are less likely to leave the neighborhood in search of a new or better job and a cheaper house or apartment. Moreover, the death of a father is not likely to disrupt the authority structure radically. When a father dies, he is no longer physically present, but his death does not dethrone him as an authority figure in the child's life. On the contrary, his authority may be magnified through death. The mother can draw on the powerful memory of the departed father as a way of intensifying her parental authority: "Your father would have wanted it this way." Finally, since widows tend to be older than divorced mothers, their love life may be less distracting.

Regarding the two-parent family, the sociologist David Popenoe, who has devoted much of his career to the study of families, both in the United States and in Scandinavia, makes this straightforward assertion:

Social science research is almost never conclusive. There are always methodological difficulties and stones left unturned. Yet in three decades of work as a social scientist, I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue: on the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable to single-parent and stepfamilies.

The Regime Effect

THE RISE IN FAMILY DISRUPTION IS NOT UNIQUE to American society. It is evident in virtually all advanced nations, including Japan, where it is also shaped by the growing participation of women in the work force. Yet the United States has made divorce easier and quicker than in any other Western nation with the sole exception of Sweden—and the trend toward solo motherhood has also been more pronounced in America. (Sweden has an equally high rate of out-of-wedlock birth, but the majority of such births are to cohabiting couples, a long-established pattern in Swedish society.) More to the point, nowhere has family breakup been greeted by a more triumphant rhetoric of renewal than in America.

What is striking about this rhetoric is how deeply it reflects classic themes in American public life. It draws its language and imagery from the nation's founding myth.

It depicts family breakup as a drama of revolution and rebirth. The nuclear family represents the corrupt past, an institution guilty of the abuse of power and the suppression of individual freedom. Breaking up the family is like breaking away from Old World tyranny. Liberated from the bonds of the family, the individual can achieve independence and experience a new beginning, a fresh start, a new birth of freedom. In short, family breakup recapitulates the American experience.

This rhetoric is an example of what the University of Maryland political philosopher William Galston has called the "regime effect." The founding of the United States set in motion a new political order based to an unprecedented degree on individual rights, personal choice, and egalitarian relationships. Since then these values have spread beyond their original domain of political relationships to define social relationships as well. During the past twenty-five years these values have had a particularly profound impact on the family.

Increasingly, political principles of individual rights and choice shape our understanding of family commitment and solidarity. Family relationships are viewed not as permanent or binding but as voluntary and easily terminable. Moreover, under the sway of the regime effect the family loses its central importance as an institution in the civil society, accomplishing certain social goals such as raising children and caring for its members, and becomes a means to achieving greater individual happiness—a lifestyle choice. Thus, Galston says, what is happening to the American family reflects the "unfolding logic of authoritative, deeply American moral-political principles."

One benefit of the regime effect is to create greater equality in adult family relationships. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, enjoy relationships far more egalitarian than past relationships were, and most Americans prefer it that way. But the political principles of the regime effect can threaten another kind of family relationship—that between parent and child. Owing to their biological and developmental immaturity, children are needy dependents. They are not able to express their choices according to limited, easily terminable, voluntary agreements. They are not able to act as negotiators in family decisions, even those that most affect their own interests. As one writer has put it, "a newborn does not make a good 'partner.'" Correspondingly, the parental role is antithetical to the spirit of the regime. Parental investment in children involves a diminished investment in self, a willing deference to the needs and claims of the dependent child. Perhaps more than any other family relationship, the parent-child relationship—shaped as it is

by patterns of dependency and deference—can be undermined and weakened by the principles of the regime.

More than a century and a half ago Alexis de Tocqueville made the striking observation that an individualistic society depends on a communitarian institution like the family for its continued existence. The family cannot be constituted like the liberal state, nor can it be governed entirely by that state's principles. Yet the family serves as the seedbed for the virtues required by a liberal state. The family is responsible for teaching lessons of independence, self-restraint, responsibility, and right conduct, which are essential to a free, democratic society. If the family fails in these tasks, then the entire experiment in democratic self-rule is jeopardized.

To take one example: independence is basic to successful functioning in American life. We assume that most people in America will be able to work, care for themselves and their families, think for themselves, and inculcate the same traits of independence and initiative in their children. We depend on families to teach people to do these things. The erosion of the two-parent family undermines the capacity of families to impart this knowledge; children of long-term welfare-dependent single parents are far more likely than others to be dependent themselves. Similarly, the children in disrupted families have a harder time forging bonds of trust with others and giving and getting help across the generations. This, too, may lead to greater dependency on the resources of the state.

Over the past two and a half decades Americans have been conducting what is tantamount to a vast natural experiment in family life. Many would argue that this experiment was necessary, worthwhile, and long overdue. The results of the experiment are coming in, and they are clear. Adults have benefited from the changes in family life in important ways, but the same cannot be said for children. Indeed, this is the first generation in the nation's history to do worse psychologically, socially, and economically than its parents. Most poignantly, in survey after survey the children of broken families confess deep longings for an intact family.

Nonetheless, as Galston is quick to point out, the regime effect is not an irresistible undertow that will carry away the family. It is more like a swift current, against which it is possible to swim. People learn; societies can change, particularly when it becomes apparent that certain behaviors damage the social ecology, threaten the public order, and impose new burdens on core institutions. Whether Americans will act to overcome the legacy of family disruption is a crucial but as yet unanswered question. □



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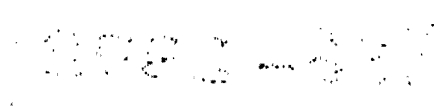
TO: Carol Rasco
Attn.: Rosalyn Kelly

ORGANIZATION: The white house

FROM: Mary Bourdette

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE: 4

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Sandra G. Scarr

Director

March 10, 1993

MEMORANDUM

TO: Carol Rasco
FR: Mary Bourdette
RE: CWLA Conference

We are very honored that you will take time from your busy schedule to speak at our National Conference next Wednesday, March 17th at 1 PM at the Grand Hyatt Hotel at 1000 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. I hope the following is of assistance to you, but please call me at 638-2952 if there is anything else you might want or need.

What: Speech to the Opening Session of CWLA's National Conference, Children '93: Charting the New Course. The session will begin at 1:00 PM and will proceed as follows until 3:00.

Welcome and Introductions: David Liederman, CWLA Executive Director
(5 minutes)

Amazing Grace - Julia Nixon (wonderful local singer)
(5 minutes)

Brief remarks - John Merchant, chair of the CWLA Board of Directors (Connecticut lawyer, member of Gov. Weicker's cabinet)
(5 minutes)

Your Speech - The President's Agenda for Children
(15-20 minutes)

Speech - Cesar A. Perales, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, NYC - "Meeting the Needs of Children in Urban America"
(15-20 minutes)

CWLA Legislative Agenda - Mary Bourdette, CWLA Director of Public Policy
(10-15 minutes)

Award Presentation for Outstanding Research in Child Welfare to David Fanshel, Columbia University
(5 minutes)

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Where: The Grant Hyatt Hotel, 1000 H Street, N.W. Independence Ballroom A, Washington, D.C. The hotel number is (202) 582-1234. We will have a staff room there, with a phone extension.

When: The session will begin at 1 PM, Wednesday, March 17th and hopefully you can be there by then so that we can seat you on the stage. We will have someone waiting for you at the H Street entrance beginning at 12:50 to bring you down to the ballroom. I'll also call Rosalyn earlier in the day to make sure all is ok.

Who: Approximately 1100 people are expected. Most will be executive directors, top staff or board members from CWLA agencies across the country. Thus, they are sophisticated, well-informed professionals who are on the front lines working daily with abused, neglected, abandoned, homeless, drug-exposed children and youth and very troubled families.

This is a great crowd and they will be going up to the Hill en masse on Thursday to lobby for (1) the Rockefeller/Matsui Family Preservation and Child Welfare bills; and (2) the President's Economic Plan. My talk at the end will go over this — and hopefully you will have sent them a positive signal about the President's commitment to the family preservation legislation and improvements in the child welfare system.

Among the Arkansas folks will be Dick Dietz who I'm sure you know, Beverly Holcomb from the Florence Crittenton Home in Little Rock, and Katherine Bullard from the Youth Home, Inc., in Little Rock. Mary Tull — also from Florence Crittenton Home Services and a number of other groups — recently joined our own Board of Directors and may be there as well.

Other: A brief outline of our proposed rural initiative is also attached for your information. We are now seeking foundation support to proceed with this.

AT&T funding to put this together.

DRAFT

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A Call to Action

"Each child represents either a potential addition to the productive capacity and enlightened citizenship of the nation or, if allowed to suffer from neglect, a potential addition to the destructive forces of a community...The interests of the nation are involved in the welfare of this army of children no less than in our great material affairs."

-President Theodore Roosevelt (1909)

President Roosevelt's words, delivered in 1909 to the 60th Congress as he launched the first White House Conference on Children, are a compelling reminder that the fate of America's children is a matter of national concern. Roosevelt was the first of many in this century to call on government to respond to the needs of at-risk children through increased supports. Today, the challenge he issued to all Americans is even more timely, particularly as President Clinton and the 103rd Congress launch a new era of positive change for America.

Millions of America's children and their families are in jeopardy. Never has the future of this great nation been so closely tied to the productivity of its future workforce, its children. And never has an American president been more challenged to take action, to focus his leadership, and to commit the power, prestige, and authority of his office to strengthen the ability of America's families to nurture, support, and protect their children.

This document is not another status report, research paper, or agenda detailing the serious national neglect of America's children. These things have been done many times and done well—we already know the problems and many ways to ameliorate them.

What we are missing is a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**.

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), whose history is intertwined with the well-being of our nation's children, calls on President Clinton and Congress to begin the new era of change with a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**. In the spirit of trust and hope in a new beginning...

We call on President Clinton to develop and launch, for the first time, a comprehensive **National Plan for Children and Their Families** and to provide

a strong and sustained commitment to its implementation over the next four years.

We call for the creation of a **National Council on Children and Their Families**, modeled after the National Economic Council recently created by the President, to develop, guide, and oversee the **National Plan**.

We offer to the President of the United States a blueprint for a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**. This blueprint will guide the formulation of a **National Plan** by providing:

- A vision for our nation's children and their families and the role government can play in their lives;
- A set of principles to guide and integrate government programs and services for children and their families; and
- An implementation strategy to assure timely, effective, and beneficial results.

CWLA is a national organization composed of nearly 700 public and voluntary nonprofit agencies whose dedicated staff are on the front lines for the most troubled and vulnerable children and their families in all 50 states. In calling for a **National Plan** and a **National Council**, we reviewed countless studies and reports; we incorporated the best thinking of our nation's leaders, child advocates, academicians, and corporate and foundation executives; and we examined and gave our support to the recommendations contained in the comprehensive agenda for children and their families developed by the National Commission on Children.

New Leadership--New Opportunities

America has a new leader, one who has consistently expressed his commitment to improving the lives of children and to strengthening the ability of families to care for their children.

"[O]ur plan [is] to put people first and fight for what Americans deserve: good jobs, world-class education, quality health care, and safe streets and neighborhoods. It's a plan to unite Americans behind the hope we all share-that we can create a better future for our children."

-Governor Bill Clinton and Senator Al Gore, Putting People First (1992)

Like no other before it, this administration has vowed to work for "America's most unprotected citizens-its children." We have a new leader who believes in "putting people first," who understands America's diverse family life, who relates to the inequities its children bear, and who recognizes that we are at a pivotal point in history. He understands that America's children are at risk because of some of the worst problems facing our nation: crime, violence, drugs, and HIV/AIDS. He knows that the lives of children are sometimes fragile, that the invisible safety net of economic security, marital status, education, and locale can be jeopardized by a single event-death, divorce, unemployment, disease. Acknowledging the needs of children throughout America, he stands poised to support pro-children and pro-family policies. For perhaps the first time in history, the nation greets a President and First Lady who enter the White House with a strong record of advocacy on behalf of children and their families, and who are ready to put away the old models, old policies and old rhetoric to launch a new child and family policy agenda.

Our Greatest Challenge

The combination of leadership and commitment in our government today presents our nation with a rare opportunity to make great strides for America's children. But it also presents our greatest challenge, coming at a time when our nation faces some of the most difficult economic dilemmas of recent years; when our national spirit is wavering and fragile; and when our government has created an immense, complex, and cumbersome system of services that fails to truly support children and their families.

President Clinton takes office facing the worst economic crisis of a generation. The nation's \$350 billion deficit and \$4 trillion debt has severely limited resources available to assist families, and the ability of society to prepare its youth. Families with children have seen their incomes steadily decline over the last decade while costs for housing, health care, transportation, and education continue to increase.

The economic crisis has particularly affected children, who are poorer than any other group in the nation. Low wage growth for the unskilled and poorly educated, inequalities for women and racial/ethnic minorities, adolescent parenting and the inadequate child support received by many children in female headed households have contributed to child poverty. The poverty that children experience is perpetuated as they become youth and do not receive the education and skills they need to create productive and fulfilling adult lives for themselves.

At a time when poverty is affecting increasing numbers of children and their families, other problems are having a growing impact: child abuse and neglect, alcohol and other drug abuse, HIV/AIDS infection, and escalating rates of crime and violence that affect our homes, our schools, and our communities. These problems cut across mainstream America, affecting millions of children and their families, but particularly impact the impoverished, hard-to-reach, the young and the undereducated. The immense challenges posed by these problems have led some to question whether there truly is a solution, whether government can truly lead the country through the complex issues and interrelationships these problems involve, and whether the national spirit is truly strong enough to meet these challenges head on.

These challenges cannot be met if we maintain a piecemeal system of underfunded, uncoordinated services that place barriers in the paths of those it should serve. The estimated 75 offices, programs, agencies, and initiatives at the federal level that address drug abuse, for example, reflect the categorical and fragmented approach that often characterizes federal programs. Programs often have their own policy, financial, programmatic, training, and/or regulatory responsibilities. Programs at the state and local level and their clients, likewise, suffer from fragmentation, frequent conflicts in administrative oversight, and a lack of adequate funding.

A **National Plan for Children and Their Families** would place the challenges posed by the economy, the critical problems of the 1990's, and our current service delivery system in perspective and find ways to address those challenges. A **National Plan** would provide the critical central focus for planning for children and their families that does not currently exist in the Executive Branch or Congress. As the National Commission on Children completes its work in 1993, a **National Plan** will provide the essential next step in ensuring that the great strides we envision for America's children are indeed made. The time is right for our children and our future.

The Essential Need for a National Plan for Children and Their Families

A **National Plan** is essential if the President is to achieve his vision, accomplish his goals, and succeed with his initiatives for children. It will enable the President to overcome the difficult obstacles and complex challenges he faces by providing an efficient, organized timeline and framework for children's initiatives, so that we can succeed for all our children.

1. A **National Plan** will provide the leadership and vision around which public and

political support will coalesce in support of beneficial children's initiatives.

The 1992 presidential campaign represents an historic benchmark in the struggle to bring the crises facing children and their families to the forefront of public debate. An important political consensus now exists, ready to rally behind the needs of children and their families.

But even as hope has built, fears and frustrations have reached new heights. America remains skeptical of the combined ability of the political and bureaucratic levels of government to take appropriate action, to sustain a commitment to positive change, and to be consistent in its policy making. We are bound by a disenchantment with the political process and with the "business as usual" attitude of the nation's lawmakers. We fear that our systems of education, government, medical care, and jobs can't meet the needs of today's America, let alone tomorrow's. We have deep and serious concerns about our nation's economy and its negative effects, and about the inheritance our nation is leaving to our children.

A National Plan for Children and Their Families will educate the public and promote confidence in our combined ability to solve problems. It will give the public an opportunity to see how government can act responsibly and plan for changing needs; enlighten the public about the importance of child development, of community support for parenting and child rearing, and of the reality of pay now or pay later; and will assure children and their families that their problems will be taken seriously.

A National Plan will offer a focal point around which various children's constituencies-child welfare, Head Start, health care, drug abuse, housing-can unite and acknowledge their many roles and responsibilities. **A National Plan** will provide an opportunity for diverse political forces to work together toward consensus building and toward common objectives and a set of common values. It will offer a big picture of the needs of children and their families, and of the direction in which initiatives can be focused, expanded, and sustained.

It is presidential leadership that can bring the political forces together to enact a cohesive and comprehensive **National Plan for Children and Their Families**. The **National Plan** provides the President with an opportunity to look at government from a new perspective and to bring order to the multitude of federal programs and policies designed to support children and families. The **National Plan** will unite lawmakers, advocates, and service providers through a comprehensive system of services and supports. The **National Plan's** vision and guiding principles will shape and guide the development of programs. The Plan's agenda will support effective strategies that provide the greatest flexibility, assure the most collaboration, and achieve far-reaching reforms.

2. The **National Plan** will bring all the pieces of a national children's agenda together in a single framework.

Our current system of service delivery for children and their families spans every level of government--federal, state, and local--and contains myriad departments, offices, and agencies that in turn regulate, fund, and provide a plethora of direct services. Funding mechanisms are equally diverse--entitlements, block grants, demonstration moneys--and are governed by many different Congressional committees. Much of this effort is duplicated at the state and local level. On the community level, services are provided by local governments, as well as by private, for profit, and nonprofit agencies, often augmented by funds from private foundations' and philanthropic programs. It is no easy feat to work successfully and cohesively amid this complex structure. Families are forced to fight their way through a bureaucratic maze and overcome countless barriers to get the services they need. Without a **National Plan**, how will the President's new initiatives for children avoid being scattered within the giant bureaucracy, fragmented among agencies, lost in the funding arena, or worse, reduced so they offer only a fractional response to the problems facing children and their families?

Absent a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**, our nation will be left without a program of organized action. We will be left to struggle with piecemeal, often expensive, "shotgun" approaches to increasingly complex and overwhelming, health and social problems. America's domestic policy for children will be left in a state of chaos.

A National Plan will fit all the pieces together, will provide the organizational and political umbrella to bring the myriad programs and services, the agencies and organizations--into a cohesive, workable framework. It will organize the separate initiatives: health care, housing, child welfare, income security, education, and integrate their efforts to effectively assist children. It will help us plan wisely and carefully how we will expend our nation's limited financial resources. A National Plan will provide leadership--from the top down--to take on the complex bureaucracy and to move us to greater success than ever before in helping children and their families.

3. A **National Plan** will foster coordination of children's initiatives with economic and budget policies.

The United States economy cannot be strong without strong families. Conversely, American families cannot be strong without a strong economy. This interdependence makes a national policy that supports children and their families essential to our economic success as a nation.

As the President's comprehensive economic plan - A Vision of Change for America - recognizes America's future requires a reversal of the distorted trends over the last decade - slow growth, stagnant family incomes, growing inequality, increasing poverty among children, soaring health care costs and rising fiscal deficits. Economic adversity has weakened families, and as debt has soared and harsh economic realities have dramatically lowered the standard of living for children and their families, the commitment to bequeath a promising future to our children has wavered. The future can hold few economic opportunities for young people who cannot read or write well, cannot speak English easily, have limited basic math skills and lack preparation for work.

Currently, ten million American workers are unemployed, six million are underemployed, and one million are so discouraged they don't look for jobs anymore. Economic distress is pervasive, affecting millions of children, including those whose parents work: two out of three low-income families with children include at least one employed person. The economic crisis has hit minority families and families headed by women especially hard, leaving them without the technical skills and education they need to compete. Within decades, minorities, immigrants, and women will be called upon to provide more than half of the labor force. Corporate America faces projected shortages of entry-level workers brought on by increasing technological advances and the competitive nature of the global economy. The least skilled families-those with a history of school failure-face changing labor force requirements that will leave them outside the economic mainstream and with little chance to get ahead.

Family stress brought on by economic crises, however, is not limited to a diminished standard of living. Such stress becomes, all too often, a precursor to child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, chronic welfare dependency, and loss of motivation to get ahead. Chronic intergenerational poverty has beset entire neighborhoods in inner cities and in small rural towns. The children of these families are left with little hope, and grow up feeling angry and hostile. Few of these children will live the American dream, unless we make a change.

A National Plan which incorporates the policies of the President's comprehensive economic plan will resolve the problems created for children by a poor economy and limited resources. It will reverse the destructive tide of economic deprivation by putting children first. It will assure that policies for children are coordinated with the viable economic policies contained in the President's plan. It will assure that children's needs are considered within the President's economic framework so that children benefit from a strong, sustained catalyst for economic growth and productivity and reduction of the federal deficit. It will assure that, consistent with the President's plan, economic policies are addressed within the context of our nation's commitment to building strong and productive children and families.

4. The **National Plan** will successfully bring help to children and their families.

"Somewhere at this very moment, another child is born in America. Let it be our cause to give that child a happy home, a healthy family, a hopeful future. Let it be our cause to see that child reach the fullest of her God-given abilities. Let it be our cause that she grow up strong and secure, braced by her challenges, but never, never struggling alone; with family and friends, and a faith that in America no one is left out; no one is left behind.

Let it be our cause that when she is able, she gives something back to her children, her community, and her country. And let it be our cause to give her a country that's coming together, and moving ahead--a country of boundless hopes and endless dreams; a country that once again lifts up its people and inspires the world."

-Governor Bill Clinton, A New Covenant, Democratic National Convention, New York City (July 16, 1992)

Our society and government have consistently failed to protect millions of children and support their families. Our failures have weighed heavily on America's families and on the vulnerabilities of our children.

A **National Plan** will reduce the suffering and misery of millions of our children and their families. Children don't want to grow up hungry and hurting. Parents don't want to watch their children die in the streets from gunshot wounds or see their children deprived of a successful, rewarding future. A **National Plan** is critical to the success of every parent and child. It will remove the obstacles imposed by our economy, our resources, our systems, and our skepticism. It will get the job of helping our children done.

A Blueprint for Change

What follows is a blueprint to frame the development and implementation of a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**. It provides the building blocks necessary to plan and organize a systematic set of government initiatives and policies designed to end the needless waste and suffering of its children.

This blueprint for a **National Plan** is organized into three sections: 1) a positive and encompassing vision to strengthen the ability of every family to care for its children;

2) guiding principles for the provision and delivery of government support for families; and 3) the six critical steps that comprise a successful implementation strategy for a **National Plan**.

The Vision

"[This] is America's opportunity to help bridge the gulf between the haves and the have nots. The question is whether America will do it. There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will."

-Martin Luther King, Jr., National Cathedral March, Washington, DC (1968)

A **National Plan for Children and Their Families** must have a clear, positive, and encompassing vision to strengthen the ability of every American family to care for its children:

- Our vision for America's children, first and foremost, is of a nation that understands that its children and youths are worthy of a **National Plan**, initiated by the President.
- Our vision includes a government that prepares for its future and that of its citizens, a government that knows where we are going, and plans a path to get us there, a government that creates policy and programs that guide and empower this nation's families and work to prevent problems before they occur.
- Our vision is one in which our President and political leaders admit to our national failures affecting the well-being of children and take immediate and appropriate action.
- Our vision is of a nation that values investment in children--in human capital, human need, and human resources. It is of a President and political leaders who acknowledge that government must treat the development of our young people with no less priority than that given to the security of the nation, for ultimately, the two are inseparable.
- Our vision is of a nation that recognizes that future generations will be shaped and influenced by what happens to today's children and of leaders who are cognizant of the relationship between productivity, a capable workforce, a stable economy, and how well our children are prepared to

face life's challenges and world competition.

- Our vision acknowledges that the health and social problems that are wreaking havoc on our children and families--crime, drugs, violence, homelessness, unintended pregnancies, and even AIDS--did not arrive there by themselves. They are an end result of neglect of our millions of children and youths and our unwillingness to protect them at their most vulnerable moments in life.
- Our vision foresees an end to infant mortality, alcohol and drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS. There are no abused or neglected children, no school dropouts, no uneducated children. There is no homelessness, no discrimination, and no poverty.
- Our vision recognizes that addressing the needs of children requires responding to the need of their families, keeping them together, and keeping them going. We envision parents who are supported and valued at all levels of society and who have the necessary means to raise their children to be healthy adults who are prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of life.

Our vision for America's children, therefore, is one that builds a nation as a carpenter builds a house--planning the foundation, the structure, and the parts until a whole is reached. In our vision, we can see that healthy children born into families that will nurture, protect and strengthen them, will, in turn, create their own healthy families, from which strong and healthy communities will result.

The Guiding Principles

A **National Plan for Children and Their Families** must be organized around a guiding set of clear, fairly applied principles for the provision and delivery of government supports. Without guiding principles, a **National Plan**--and the assistance it should provide to children and their families--will continue to lack cohesiveness, concreteness and direction.

The following principles provide an outline for an improved system of government services and supports that will build on proven methods to increase the capacity of families to nurture and protect their children.

1. The system must be **comprehensive and inclusive**.

Comprehensiveness and inclusiveness are the hallmarks of a system that effectively and compassionately meets a child's needs. Such a system does not compartmentalize and segregate health, developmental, emotional, housing, nutrition, and income support needs, nor does it allow the family to be divided and isolated into separate and distinct government systems of care and support.

2. The system must be **child centered**.

A child-centered system establishes policies and programs that place the best interests of the child first. It promotes a healthy, productive, and nurturing environment for the child. While at certain times, such an environment may be different from the child's family, child-centered policies work to support and preserve the family as the most appropriate and desirable place in which the child should be raised.

3. The system must be **family focused**.

A family-focused system respects family strengths and diversity, builds on family resources, and seeks to preserve the family as a cohesive and successful unit. It recognizes that children need their families-families are the place in which children thrive and are loved, educated, and taught important family values. A family-focused system works to keep families together and prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families. It views family members as collaborative partners in service delivery and offers interventions that are designed to strengthen their ability to care for their children and to enable family members to achieve family connectedness.

4. The system must be **preventive**.

A preventive system allows us to invest in children early in their lives, before serious health, economic, and social problems overwhelm them and their families. Prevention is therefore proactive-strategies can be applied at any point that we come in contact with a child. Prevention is a philosophy of resource allocation and program planning that promotes health and well-being, builds self-esteem and self-worth, and offers basic family supports before problems occur or worsen. Combined with early intervention strategies that focus on more extensive involvement in the lives of at-risk children and their families, prevention initiatives can eradicate many of the problems facing children and families today.

5. The system must be **outcome oriented and accountable**.

An accountable, outcome-oriented system expects positive results and measures success in both qualitative and quantitative terms to evaluate the

impact of the services on the client. Without accountability to link to expectations and results, programs tend to lack direction, clarity of purpose, and success.

6. The system must be **coordinated**.

Our current convoluted system of services for children and their families affects resource allocation, and service delivery at every level of the government and private sector. Many different programs often impact on the same problem, each under a different funding or legislative umbrella. The need to negotiate this maze of services and programs often has a negative impact on the very children and their families which the programs were designed to help. Collaboration across disciplines and programs, service integration to the degree possible, are integral to the success of the family.

7. The system must be **flexible**.

Flexibility in government is one of the most needed improvements in the government system, second to service integration. Government resources and programming must be adaptable to the changing needs of children and their families without complex and restrictive interpretations of law and regulations.

8. The system must respect **human dignity**.

A system that respects the individual inspires a sense of belonging and of contribution to society. It promotes independence in lieu of dependency, and success in lieu of failure.

9. The system must be **empowering**.

Empowerment sets a standard for programs to build on the strengths of the child and the family. It supports the development of self-esteem and confidence in one's own ability to solve problems and take control of one's life. It promotes the self-reliance and self-determination that enables families to gain the skills and knowledge they need to improve their lives.

10. The system must be **culturally sensitive**.

Cultural sensitivity is the need to be responsive to the many diverse cultures and ethnic groups that make up America. A culturally sensitive system recognizes the barriers created by the many faces, languages, and experiences of multicultural diversity and sets a standard of openness and respect for people from all backgrounds.

The Implementation Strategy

The implementation of a **National Plan for Children and Their Families** requires an aggressive, organized approach in order to realize the most effective, timely, and beneficial results for children.

The implementation strategy must set in motion certain strategically placed initiatives that then set the stage for significant and fundamental changes in the existing system of service delivery in this country. It must determine a rational schedule for the generation and allocation of new resources, and allow the funding of critical programs that are of strategic importance to full implementation of a **National Plan**. It must include methods to lead, energize, and unify numerous constituencies and organizations concerned with children and their families, in both the public and private sectors.

The following steps are critical in the development of a successful implementation strategy; some of these steps are precursors to developing an effective strategy, others are components of such a strategy.

1. Establish a governance structure to assure the development and implementation of a **National Plan**.

We must establish a **National Council on Children and Their Families** modeled after the National Security Council and the National Economic Council recently created by President Clinton and predicated on the belief that the children and families of this nation are as important to our country as the international security of our boundaries and our economic well being. The National Commission on Children strongly recommended that the President designate an entity within the White House to assess the well-being of children, set policy priorities, appraise the federal programs and policies serving children, and coordinate executive branch policies toward children. Consistent with that recommendation the **National Council** must be located in the White House under the mantle of Presidential authority. Just as a strong system of coordination and collaboration has been developed to facilitate the work of Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet officials, an equally strong system coordinated by the White House is necessary to ensure that a **National Plan** is developed and implemented. Without a strong focal point in the White House in the form of a **National Council**, it will be difficult, if not impossible to create and maintain a process of setting priorities, fostering collaboration among the many federal departments and agencies that work with children and their families, and monitoring implementation of the **National Plan**. A **National Council** will provide the President with the critical organizational capability he needs to develop the **National Plan** and work with Congress and non-governmental organizations to move the plan forward.

The development of the **National Council** would not require new legislation; reauthorization of a revised and strengthened Young Americans Act would automatically establish a federal council on children, youths, and families. Just as the Older Americans Act of 1965 served to upgrade both policies and programs for older adults implementation of a revised Act, in concert with a **National Plan**, would build the infrastructure needed to plan, coordinate, and implement effective programs for children.

The executive branch **Council** should include the Cabinet level officials responsible for programs and services affecting children and their families, including the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Agriculture, Justice; the Head of the Domestic Policy Council; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and Members of Congress. The Council will carry out the mandate of the President by institutionalizing the **National Plan**. To that end, its principle purposes will be to:

- a) design, develop, and present the **National Plan** to the President and to Congress;
- b) advise the President on national child and family policy and the implementation of a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**;
- c) coordinate the activities of agencies involved in the implementation of a **National Plan**;
- d) oversee the policies, expenditures, investments, and actions of federal, state, and local governments within the framework of a **National Plan**, to establish an impact analysis; and
- e) analyze child and family-related data, including the degree to which outcomes of the **National Plan** have been met.

Numerous options and alternatives have been considered before-a cabinet level agency for children and their families, a Federal Council, an Office of Children's Affairs, and others. A thorough discussion of these models could help us derive the most strategically placed and efficient governmental structure to implement the stated purpose of a **National Plan** and assure the cabinet-level involvement described herein.

2. Prepare the agenda for a **National Plan**.

The agenda for a **National Plan** will bring together the pieces of the puzzle-reforms in health care, child welfare, income support, and education; initiatives in child care, housing, substance abuse, and crime and violence

prevention-to form a comprehensive, integrated approach to child and family problems. Through the structure it provides, we can enact sensible, straightforward legislation explicitly geared to meeting the important needs of children; design new government services and expand and improve existing ones; and dedicate adequate resources to strengthening the ability of families to provide for their children.

Agendas resulting from the work of national/state and local groups across the nation can guide the development of the agenda for a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**. The membership of these groups comprises many of the nation's leading experts, advocates, policy makers, and elected officials at every level of government, as well as foundation funders, researchers, and consumers working together toward shared goals. State and local reports have much to offer in understanding how national policies are carried out on a community level, as well as how innovative and successful programs work to help children and their families.

- In 1991, the National Commission on Children submitted its final report, *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*. Implementation Guides for each recommendation of that report will soon be available to offer approaches to planning and the development of initiatives. Already available as part of that series is *Next Steps for Children and Families: Making Programs and Policies Work*. The National Commission's work offers valuable information and directions for a Children's Agenda that can be carried out by parents, employers, communities, states, and the federal government.
- In 1992, the *Blueprint for a Better Tomorrow: A Plan for Federal Investment in Education* was developed by the Committee for Education Funding, a national coalition of education associations, institutions, and organizations whose interests range from preschool to post-graduate education in both public and private systems. It lays the groundwork for initiatives that will lead us to the achievement of the National Education Goals by the end of the decade.
- Also completed in 1992, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*, is a report of the Carnegie Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs, which represents the best thinking of many youth development experts and leaders throughout the country. It submits recommendations and a call to action for aggressive and creative initiatives in behalf of young adolescents.
- The 1993 *CWLA Legislative Agenda for Children and Families* lays out in

great detail the full range of legislative initiatives and appropriations required to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children, youth and families.

Taken together, this material assesses the problems, debates the solutions, and presents the strategies that can guide the development of a national agenda for children and their families.

3. Designate adequate new federal resources to support the needed improvements and enhancements.

An investment of significant new federal dollars is essential. The cost of new investments in children and their families is modest when compared to the true cost to society of continued inaction—rising emergency room and intensive care costs, soaring prison populations, and dramatic increases in child abuse and neglect. The cost of new investments pales when compared to the cost of lost productivity of future generations of children who are incapable of self-support and contribution to society.

Many sources expertly detail appropriations, assess resource needs, determine specific ways in which to garner resources, and consider application of funds. They include the work of the National Commission on Children, the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, the American Public Welfare Association and others. *Beyond Rhetoric* deals extensively with estimates of new federal costs and options for financing, including taxation strategies and recapturing funds from other areas of the federal budget. Other equally important bodies of work by individuals and groups outline resource allocations dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families. In particular, recent recommendations on the urban crisis from the U.S. Conference on Mayors, Urban Institute, and several national foundations—Ford, Rockefeller, Robert Wood Johnson, W.K. Kellogg, and Charles S. Mott—have much to offer.

Helping families with children is a matter of understanding when and how to intervene, responsively, and how to target resources where they will do the most good. It involves institutionalizing the things we know will benefit children and their families. The three-prong approach detailed below is a guideline to effectively serve children and their families.

- a) **Provide basic supports for all families with children.** All families need quality education for their children; assurance that their jobs will pay adequately to maintain a decent standard of living; employers who support their roles as parents; access to quality, affordable health care; safe schools and neighborhoods free of violence and drugs; and opportunities for their

children to obtain higher education and productive jobs when they reach adulthood. Funding these programs is an essential ingredient of this country's taxation policies.

- b) **Provide prevention and early intervention.** Families who are at-risk of serious problems, especially young ones, those headed by single parents, and parents with poor education and training, need more government assistance. They need a "jumpstart" on life-early interventions and supportive programs provided early in their role as parents, like Head Start, subsidized child care, or WIC; or access to prenatal care and immunizations for their children. These basic supports can save millions of children from greater suffering and neglect, and they cost significantly less than a delayed response.
 - c) **Provide intensive, remediative interventions.** Other children, whose lives have become caught in a cycle of deprivation, lack of education, severe poverty, abuse, violence, addiction and disease, will need more intensive- and costly-interventions. These are children for whom we should act immediately and decisively, with full funding of extensive remediative services and treatment. We can save most of these children; their lives can be restored with appropriate, timely interventions. Quick passage of the comprehensive child welfare and family preservation legislation would be a good beginning.
4. Create an integrated services' system to achieve positive outcomes for children and their families at the local level.

The service delivery system in this country must undergo certain fundamental changes and enhancements in order to actualize a **National Plan for Children and Their Families**. These changes encompass a broad spectrum of issues, emphasizing the disorganized, cumbersome, and often costly nature of serving children and their families.

The task of service integration, collaboration, and coordination is complex and challenging. It is laden with issues of costs, barriers, accountability, training, and evaluation, and requires new ways of thinking about gathering services together for children and their families in the most effective manner possible. Federal leadership by the President and Congress and at the Department level will serve to remove obstacles such as program categorization, increase flexibility and simplification, and create structures in the executive as well as Congressional branch to facilitate coordination. We must develop effective strategies to provide the greatest flexibility, assure the most collaboration, and achieve the farthest reaching reforms if we are to overcome the

problems implicit in separate, categorical programs, and the complex delivery system. Hand in hand with state and local governments, national foundations, and state and local organizations, the federal government must take the lead to get on with the task of service integration.

For content and direction, we refer you to the many leaders in research and discussion of services integration, including the National Commission on Children (*Next Steps for Children and Families: Making Programs and Policies Work*); the Education and Human Services Consortium, funded by the William T. Grant Foundation; the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Lily Endowment; the Children's Initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts; and the Family Impact Seminar of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

5. Enhance public and private partnership to allow maximum investment in children and their families.

The intrinsic value in having a community invest in itself is monumental—such a community works to assure the most effective response to social problems. The opportunity for public-private partnerships must be formally and concretely built into every government initiative in a manner that is proficient and productive.

Large private sector investments are found in programs for children and their families funded by the nation's private foundations and corporate philanthropies. Public-private partnerships can help increase the quantity of resources available to implement a **National Plan for Children and Their Families** as well as broaden local commitment and community involvement in solving serious social problems.

6. Utilize vital community-based organizations in the delivery of services and supports to children and their families.

Neighborhood-based groups have demonstrated success in solving local problems. Often indigenous to their own communities, these groups offer a direct link to the families in their neighborhood; they know the children in trouble and what the families need.

These groups are key to maximizing local community commitment, energy, and resources. They are creative and vital agents of change who stabilize neighborhoods, create jobs, and keep vital dollars within the community. They demonstrate the critical difference that can result when people at the local level take part in the revitalization of their community.

The model of community-based organizations offering a direct link to the families in their neighborhoods is not new. Older models--reminiscent of the Model Cities effort of the 1960s, or the Office of Economic Opportunity's Community Action Programs--offer one-stop shopping and comprehensive integrated health, education, and social services that are community-based and available onsite or through referral.

Newer models also stress neighborhood involvement and networking, as exemplified in the work of the Pew Charitable Trust's Children's Initiative. This new 11-year effort represents a "profound shift in how society supports families with children" by creating neighborhood-based family centers as the hub of a new system of inclusionary services for children and their families. An important component of this system is family support and development work intended to improve family functioning and child health and development through intensive partnerships with families. We must dedicate resources to build the infrastructure and capacity of these and other important neighborhood groups.

In Closing

A National Plan for Children and Their Families can make great strides towards assuring all children in America receive the protection, nurturing, and support they need.

Sadly, we have had this opportunity many times before and we have failed. The time has come to act and to change the way children and their families live, work, and succeed in America. We are a hopeful and optimistic nation; we know how to save our children. We need leadership to show us the path out of the despair that we, ourselves, have created.

We urge the President to take the historic first step of establishing a **National Plan for Children and Their Families** and to lead the nation and its children into a future filled with opportunity, security, and success.

When another leader committed to equality and dignity, presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, made a speech to youths at the University of California in Berkeley in 1966, Bill Clinton was a college student himself. Today, nearly 30 years later, we urge President Clinton and our nation's political leaders to yet again hear Robert Kennedy's challenge.

"[This is] one of the rarest moments in history--a time when all around us the old order of things is crumbling and a new world society is painfully struggling to take shape. If you shrink from this struggle, and these many difficulties, you will betray

the trust which your own position forces upon you. You live in the most privileged nation on earth. You are the most privileged citizens of that privileged nation;...You can use your enormous privilege and opportunity to seek purely private pleasure and gain. But history will judge you, and, as the years pass, you will ultimately judge yourself, on the extent to which you have used your gifts to lighten and enrich the lives of your fellow man. In your hands...is the future of your world and the fulfillment of the best qualities of your own spirit."

-Robert F. Kennedy, University of California, Berkeley, California (October 22, 1966)

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Wildfowl '93!

Charting the New Course



Julia & David

① Osmosis

The Pres. Agenda for Children

Stim ③ Family / Med Leave
Head Start
Chap I
WIC

② Health Care

Priorities will affect the stim invest / def redcut
Preventive / Primary Care

Immunizations
Summer Youth Employ.

Invest ④ Housing
Housing
Crime
Head Start
WIC
Ed reform
Nat Service
EITC
Welf Reform

Quality / Coord / Collab.

What about Family Pres. / Child Welfare

YES!

Rockefeller / Matsui

"Charming
a New
Center"

~~David~~ Delighted you will be on Hill

The real storm of the century

Hallmark of Dem. Policy: Faces of Hope - ALL FACES

David
Teacher & can't read

Ark → 1st lobbying > Foster Care pre-BC

→ Elem. counselor > The long drives
→ Gov Office > Prisons

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 16, 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Carol H. Rasco

SUBJECT: Children/Families Initiatives

You asked that a piece on Children and Families be put together to determine just where we are with this initiative. Please see the attached written by Bill Galston. Seems to me that his recommendations are sound and implies that we not publish something extensive at this time like the Technology Paper, but rather we target a summer announcement of some type of Children's Council. At that time, we would highlight accomplishments to date and outline actions for the future.

Please advise.

March 15, 1993

TO: Carol Rasco
FROM: Bill Galston
SUBJ: Children, Youth, and Family Initiatives/draft 2

The following memorandum is in response to your request for an inventory of Administration budget proposals and other initiatives concerning children, youth, and families. It is divided into four sections. The first enumerates what has been accomplished or proposed to date; the second compares that list to the President's principal campaign promises; the third compares that list to the principal recommendations of the National Commission on Children; the fourth offers an analysis of some trouble spots and recommendations for addressing them.

1. Accomplished or proposed to date

Legislation

o Family and Medical Leave Act--passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President

Stimulus Package

o Head Start Summer Program--a new Head Start summer program, which would eventually serve up to 350,000 disadvantaged children

o Chapter 1 Summer School Program--new, one-time supplemental funding of \$500 million to expand summer school programs for educationally disadvantaged children

o Chapter 1 Census Supplemental--\$235 million in 1993 to mitigate (but not eliminate) the effects on distribution of Chapter 1 funds caused by changes in the location of poor children that occurred between the 1980 and 1990 census

o WIC--added 1993 funding of \$75 million, which will permit the program to serve 300,000 additional participants, most of whom will be children ages 1-4

o Child and Adult Care Food Program--an increase of \$56 million to pay for meals and snacks at Head Start centers to serve children in the proposed Summer Head Start program

o Childhood Immunizations--\$300 million to support a community based effort to finance vaccine purchases and education and outreach campaigns, with the goal of immunizing 1 million children during the summer of 1993

o **Summer Youth Employment and Training Program**--an additional \$1 billion for the summer of 1993, which will finance almost 700,000 additional summer jobs for disadvantaged youth ages 14-21

o **Summer of Service**--\$15 million for the summer of 1993 promoting service to meet the needs of at-risk children and to train more than 1000 young people as service leaders

o **HOME investment partnership**--accelerated spendout of \$2.5 billion in previously released affordable housing funds

o **Public housing modernization**--accelerated spendout of HUD's backlog of unspent modernization funds

o **Supportive Housing Program**--accelerated investment of \$423 million in the Program, which offers shelter and a wide range of services to homeless persons

o **Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loans**--an additional \$235 million in single family guaranteed loan authority, serving principally rural and small town family needs

Investment Package

o **Housing subsidies**--double HOME funds to the authorized level of \$2.2 billion; increase housing vouchers from 40,000 annually in 1993 to 100,000 in 1998

o **Supportive Housing Program**--a \$138 million increase for 1997, a doubling of the program, which addresses homelessness and its causes

o **Public Housing Operating Subsidies**--an additional \$121 million in 1997

o **Preserving and renovating low-income housing**--\$384 million in 1997, and \$858 million over the next four years

o **Crime in public housing**--\$138 million for an Urban Partnership Against Crime Initiative to address the increase in gang- and drug-related crime activity in many public housing developments

o **Restore dilapidated public housing**--an additional \$138 million in 1997 to rehabilitate severely run-down public housing projects that cannot now be inhabited

o **Full funding of Head Start**--an increase of \$3.2 billion in 1997, \$8 billion over four years, achieving full funding for 1.4 million eligible children by 1999

- o **Head Start-related child care feeding**--an additional \$237 million in 1997 to pay for additional meals for participants added by the Administration's Head Start initiative
- o **Head Start-related Medicaid**--\$116 million in 1997 to fund new entrants in the Medicaid program resulting from Head Start expansion
- o **Full funding of WIC**--an additional \$1 billion in 1997 to serve all eligible children ages 1 to 4, including some 2 million who were not served in 1992
- o **Parenting and family support**--\$500 million for FY 1997
- o **Education reforms and initiatives**--\$2.7 billion in 1997, \$6.2 billion over four years, to support systemic educational reform, improvements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a new Safe Schools Program, student loan program improvements, and support of Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- o **National Service**--new investment of \$7.4 billion over the next four years to increase education and training opportunities for young people while addressing a range of unmet national needs
- o **Summer youth employment and training program**--an increase of \$625 million in 1997 and \$2 billion over the next four years, financing about 2 million additional summer jobs
- o **Youth apprenticeship**--\$500 million in 1997, \$1.2 billion over four years, to finance a nationwide system of school- and work-based learning programs for high school youth who do not plan to attend college
- o **Earned Income Tax Credit**--an EITC increase of \$6.7 billion in 1997, \$19.9 billion over four years, to assure that families headed by full-time workers will no longer live in poverty
- o **Welfare reform**--a forthcoming comprehensive plan to end welfare as a permanent way of life through increased training, parenting, and family support for moving people from welfare to work, coupled with tougher enforcement of parental responsibilities

2. Comparison with principal campaign promises

<u>Promise</u>	<u>Action</u>
Family and Medical Leave	Enacted and signed
Fully fund Head Start	Proposed

Fully fund WIC	Proposed
National standards and testing	To be proposed in fast-track education reform bill
Youth apprenticeship program	Proposed, with partial funding
Public school choice	No action; pending
Use Chapter 1 to "level the playing field"	Partially addressed in the stimulus package; to be addressed in the ESEA reauthorization later this year; partial funding provided in the Investment Budget
Increase flexibility in local use of federal education funds	To be addressed in fast-track bill and ESEA reauthorization
Parenting programs	Proposed
Require federal contractors to offer jobs for disadvantaged youth	Pending
School safety and security	Proposed
Bilingual education reform	Pending; to be addressed in ESEA reauthorization
Tougher child support enforcement	Pending; to be addressed in the context of welfare reform
National child care network	No action
Tougher standards for child care facilities	No action
Welfare reform	Pending
\$300 child tax credit	No action
Increase EITC to eliminate working poverty	Proposed
Expand the HOME program	Proposed
Increase funding to maintain public housing	Proposed

3. Comparison with key National Commission recommendations

<u>Commission recommendation</u>	<u>Administration action</u>
\$1000/child refundable tax credit	No action
EITC expansion	Proposed
Child support assurance	No action; possible in the context of welfare reform
Transitional assistance for welfare recipients	Pending
Fundamental health care reform	Pending
Full funding for Head Start	Proposed
Systemic school reform	Pending; to be addressed in "fast-track" reform bill
Equitable school finance	Addressed in stimulus package; pending in ESEA reauthorization
Public school choice	No action/pending
Increased effort to combat dropouts, teen pregnancies	Pending (for summer announcement)
Youth employment/apprenticeship	Proposed
Family and medical leave	Legislation enacted
Employer-based flex-time and career sequencing	No action; requires DoL jawboning
Improve availability, affordability, and quality of child care	Minimal action
Expand/improve preventive services for vulnerable children and their families	Proposed
Greater coordination of child and family policies across the executive branch	Pending

Decategorization of selected federal programs to bring greater cohesion and flexibility	Pending (in context of welfare reform)
Incentives to encourage state/local coordination on child/family programs	No action
Increase salaries and training opportunities for teachers and early childhood/child welfare practitioners	Pending (in context of family preservation)
Enhance recording industry efforts to avoid distribution of inappropriate materials to children	No action
Enhance efforts by television producers to improve content of programming for children	No White House action; some preliminary steps by the FCC (see attached article)
Increase opportunities for national and local community service	Pending

4. Brief analysis and recommendations

As you can see from the above, we have numerous areas of strength in the children, youth, and family arena, particularly in Head Start, WIC, Family and Medical Leave, education, and public housing. As you have pointed out, adequate funding is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sound public policy; we also need to ensure that our proposals in programs such as Head Start and Chapter 1 embody genuine reform, not just mindless expansion of the status quo. (Recent and proposed meetings with HHS and OMB represent good first steps toward this objective.)

Beyond the bright spots, we have some very conspicuous weaknesses. Let me enumerate a few current or potential problems.

- o The Administration budget does very little for child care, although some non-budgetary regulatory changes affecting quality and flexibility are of course possible.

- o While the budget does use the EITC aggressively to address the problems of the working poor, its failure to include a broader child tax credit leaves most middle-income families out in the cold. (This is obviously a problem to be addressed in the medium to long term.)

o The Education Department's draft of the fast-track reform bill includes no more than a passing mention of public school choice. The President will now have to decide whether he wishes to push ahead farther and skirmish with the anti-choice education establishment.

o The Family and Medical Leave Act is a terrific first step, but it does not address all of the multiple tensions between work and family. I believe we need systematic consultation with the Department of Labor to determine how employers can best be encouraged to move forward on issues such as flex-time and job-sharing.

o Much is riding on the welfare reform process, but as you know so well, it is not clear how far comprehensive reform can go in the absence of serious funding. Our current strategy--breaking out specific issues such as tougher child support enforcement--represents a sensible first step and is probably the best we can do for now.

o It is important to keep focused on discussions leading to a major anti-teen pregnancy announcement this summer.

o More broadly: the National Commission emphasizes family structure as one of the principal determinants of child well-being. I think they are dead right about this and that we ought to work their analysis into our policies and public statements. We can and should collaborate with Sen. Moynihan in this effort, which could include such efforts as

- * a declaratory policy in favor of family integrity and against families headed by unwed teenagers
- * a mandatory annual report from HHS on the state of US families utilizing key indicators of family strength
- * the mobilization of the best current research on the relation between family structure and child well-being

o We should think about giving highly audible visible White House support to the creation (and where appropriate, enforcement) of standards for the content of recordings and television oriented to children and youth. It might make sense to initiate conversations with Mrs. Gore's staff to explore their current thinking on this matter.

o As of now, we are weak in the area of policy coordination (at both the federal and state/local level), which the National Commission rightly emphasizes. We should continue working toward a late summer announcement of an inter-agency, White House-driven working group on children, youth, and families, along the lines of the community development operation.

Conclusion

On the basis of this review, I am not convinced that we are yet ready to go with a systematic children, youth, and families statement along the lines of the President's science and technology paper. Instead, I believe that we should use the process initiated by this memorandum to move forward on our areas of vulnerability, with the aim of producing such a document by late summer or early fall.

A choice by the President to speak at the National Commission summit could serve as a very useful action-forcing event. But even if he declines to do so (perhaps because of its proximity to the crucial April 4 meeting with Yeltsin), we should decide on a course of action and pursue it aggressively in conjunction with Education, Labor, HHS, and anyone else you deem appropriate.

'Flintstones' and Programs Like It Aren't 'Educational,' F.C.C. Says

By EDMUND L. ANDREWS

3/4/93

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 3 — Federal regulators are putting television stations on notice: contrary to the past practice of many broadcasters, cartoons like "The Jetsons" and "The Flintstones" can no longer count as "educational and informational" programming.

The announcement, issued on Tuesday by the Federal Communications Commission, may not come as news to parents, whose households are inundated with cartoon turtles, rabbits and robots.

But it could prove upsetting to broadcasters, who are required by a law enacted in 1990 to demonstrate their commitment to the educational needs of children as a condition of renewing

their lucrative licenses every five years.

Providing further evidence of a new approach, the agency has in recent weeks delayed renewing the licenses of seven stations, demanding that they provide better evidence that they were meeting their educational responsibilities in children's programming. The stations are WDCI in Cleveland; WTLW in Lima, Ohio; WRGT in Dayton, Ohio; WYTV in Youngstown, Ohio; WAQP in Saginaw, Mich., and WGPR and WADL, both in Detroit.

A Tough New Line

Taken together, the actions are a sharp departure from the commission's reluctance during the Bush Administration to impose strict regulation. Under Alfred C. Sikes, who resigned as chairman of the F.C.C. the day before President Clinton took office, agency officials had argued that the law is so vague that stations were well within their rights to say that shows like "Leave It To Beaver" were educational.

The 1990 law, known as the Children's Television Act, is notoriously vague, and some television stations have tried to fill the bill by citing the educational value of "G.I. Joe," "Su-

Continued on Page A9, Column 3

'Flintstones' and the Like Are Not 'Educational,' F.C.C. Says

Continued From Page A1

perboy" and reruns of old favorites like "Leave It To Beaver."

Now, one week before a Congressional committee is to hold an hearing on whether broadcasters are trying to skirt the educational requirements, the commission is taking a tough new line. The F.C.C. has the authority under the 1990 law to impose the new rules on its own. The final form of the rules will probably emerge in about a year, after the F.C.C. receives public comment.

In a notice proposing stricter rules, the agency said there has been "little change" in the amount of children's programming since the law was passed, and it criticized attempts to label "G.I. Joe" and "The Flintstones" as educational.

"We do not believe that this level of performance is, in the long term, consistent with the objectives" of the law, the agency said. The commission also said that television stations should only be able to cite programs that were primarily meant for education, rather than entertainment shows that happen to include a pleasant social theme. And it asked for comment on whether it should decide how much educational programming constitutes a bare minimum for satisfying the law.

Willing to Regulate

The new stance on children's television reflects the increased willingness of Democrats to regulate business, an attitude that could show up in other issues on the commission's agenda, including regulation of cable television charges. Although President Clinton has not named a successor to Mr. Sikes, the acting chairman of the F.C.C. is a long-time Democrat on the commission, James H. Quello.

"There's no doubt that Congress and the activist groups are very interested in seeing this law enforced," Mr. Quello said today. "If I were a broadcaster, to be on the safe side I'd have a show that was specifically meant to be educational."

But it remains unclear whether children's television will become noticeably different. The law explicitly gives broadcasters great latitude in how they



Worldvision Enterprises

"The Jetsons" and other television cartoons like it can no longer count as "educational and informational" programming, according to a notice issued on Tuesday by the Federal Communications Commission.

fulfill their responsibilities, and even ardent advocates of stricter rules for children's television have had a hard time defining the legal difference between "educational" shows like "Sesame Street" and "entertainment" like "Yogi Bear."

The Cable Factor

If the F.C.C. ultimately imposes extremely strict rules, over-the-air broadcasters could lose more ground to cable television systems, which are not subject to relicensing and not under any responsibility to provide educational programming. Strict rules could also put pressure on the major television networks, which might be obliged to produce more programming that has limited commercial and profit-making potential.

The toughened stance comes amid growing criticism from Congress about lax enforcement of the Children's Television Act. The House Telecommunica-

tion, and her sock puppet, Lamb Chop. "My feeling is the F.C.C. and the broadcasters have been winking at each other for the past few years," said Representative Edward J. Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts and chairman of the subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "I think the F.C.C. has the bully pulpit and the daily regulatory clout to insist upon higher standards."

But he added that the F.C.C. faces a difficult challenge setting specific guidelines about the amount or kind of educational programming necessary to qualify a television station. Mr. Quello noted that the law was deliberately left vague because of widespread concern about violating broadcasters' rights to free speech, and that the law explicitly approved of some entertainment shows like "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids" or "Winnie, the Pooh," that are seen as offering thoughtful comment on important social or personal issues.

Advocates for stricter requirements in support of children's programming said the F.C.C.'s notice marks a potentially important change. "I think it's a good sign," said Kathryn Montgomery, co-director of the Center for Media Education, a not-for-profit organization in Washington that has called for tougher enforcement. "Broadcasters thought they could just pepper in pro-social moments in their regular cartoons, but that's not going to work anymore."

tions Subcommittee has scheduled a hearing on the issue for next Wednesday, featuring advocates of tougher regulation as well as Shari Lewis, host of a children's show on public televi-



CHILD WELFARE
LEAGUE OF AMERICA

guarding
children's
rights
serving
children's
needs

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CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

March 8, 1993

MEMORANDUM

TO: Carol Rasco

FR: Mary Bourdette

RE: Family Preservation and Child Welfare Legislation

Comprehensive family preservation and child protection reform legislation will be introduced within the next few days by Senator Rockefeller (D-WV) and Representative Matsui (D-CA). Considered to be the most important legislation for abused and neglected children in over a decade, it will be virtually identical to the child welfare and family preservation measure approved by Congress in 1992, but included in the omnibus urban aid and tax bill vetoed by President Bush.

Responding to the child abuse crisis that has overwhelmed child welfare systems all over the country, the legislation seeks to help abused and neglected children, and support and preserve at-risk families by investing approximately \$2.5 billion over the next five years in comprehensive family support services and substance abuse treatment programs. It will also take additional steps to improve foster care and adoption assistance, and other aspects of the child welfare system.

The legislation has widespread and bipartisan support in Congress and throughout the country. It is vitally important to the states which are struggling to serve a growing number of seriously troubled children and families with minimal resources. All the major national organizations concerned with children and families have also endorsed this vital legislation.

The position of the Clinton Administration is absolutely key to the success of the family preservation legislation. Especially important is the inclusion of this measure in the President's FY 94 Budget, and the FY 94 Congressional Budget Resolution.

Attached are additional materials which may be of assistance to you. Please let David Liederman or me know if you would like anything further.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

March 3, 1993

FAMILY PRESERVATION & CHILD PROTECTION REFORM (CPR)

Dear Colleague,

Child abuse and neglect is a national emergency of dangerous and costly proportions. Growing poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and substance abuse and its attendant violence are ravaging families and communities while victimizing our children. In 1991, a child was reported abused or neglected every 12 seconds in our country.

To respond to this emergency, we urge you to join in cosponsoring the most significant child abuse reform effort in over a decade. This proposal calls for positive and cost-effective investments in the lives and future of vulnerable children and troubled families. It focuses on prevention to preserve families in a way that promotes state and local flexibility, coordination, and efficiency. The Family Preservation and Child Protection Reform bill would:

- Fund preventive services found effective in strengthening families and helping them overcome the serious crises that often cause child abuse and neglect.
- Target the growing parental abuse of crack cocaine, alcohol and other dangerous drugs that has become a major factor in escalating abuse, neglect and abandonment of children.
- Improve foster care and adoption assistance available for children in need, and numerous other aspects of the child welfare system.
- Seek to save the lives of young children and enhance family stability.

Many members may be familiar with this proposal because it was passed with bipartisan support last year as part of H.R. 11, The Revenue Act of 1992. It would dedicate \$2.2 billion over five years to strengthen child welfare services with the majority of funding invested in family preservation. This approach will pay off not only in human terms by aiding vulnerable children and strengthening families, it will save taxpayers dollars by avoiding expensive placements in foster care.

Dear Colleague/Child Protection Reform
March 3, 1993

To meet legitimate concerns about the federal deficit, we are committed that all new spending will be offset in accordance with the requirements of the Budget Enforcement Act before we seek consideration of the legislation in the Senate.

The proposal has been widely endorsed by groups across the country who work with abused and neglected children and troubled families, including state elected and appointed officials, foster and adoptive parents, and academicians. It is also consistent with the unanimous recommendations of the bipartisan National Commission on Children.

We hope you will join us by cosponsoring this major legislative initiative. If you have any questions about the package, please contact Barbara Pryor (Senator Rockefeller's office 4-2578) or Leanne Jerome (Senator Bond's office 4-5721).

Family Preservation and Child Protection Reform (CPR) is a serious approach to the problems of vulnerable children and troubled families. Stories of abuse and neglect are tragic, but family preservation offers real hope. Your support will be crucial to move this legislation forward and convert its promise into action for children and families.



Christopher S. Bond

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

State	Number Children	Child Poverty Rate	Number Children Reported Abused/Neglected	State Rank Abuse/Neglect	Fatalities Abuse/Neglect	Out-of-Home Care
Alabama	1,200,000	24.9%	40,794	26	NA	4,383
Alaska	196,000	10.9%	7,716	31	NA	1,942
Arizona	1,115,000	21.7%	39,207	13	18	3,618
Arkansas	698,000	25.0%	23,739	24	7	1,326
California	9,010,000	17.8%	553,782	48	109	
Colorado	975,000	15.0%	61,096	47	28	5,519
Connecticut	847,000	10.4%	19,831	7	5	4,202
Delaware	187,000	11.7%	7,395	32	1	655
DC	137,000	25.0%	8,501	49	NA	51
Florida	3,326,000	18.3%	182,527	46	48	
Georgia	1,980,000	19.8%	86,594	38	13	15,500
Hawaii	321,000	11.1%	3,421	2	1	1,600
Idaho	351,000	15.8%	13,748	30	6	877
Illinois	3,328,000	16.8%	104,449	20	87	
Indiana	1,636,000	13.9%	50,812	19	48	8,126
Iowa	803,000	14.0%	35,298	35	9	4,609
Kansas	741,000	13.9%		35 NA	NA	7,112
Kentucky	1,074,000	24.5%	48,645	39	18	6,422
Louisiana	1,366,000	31.2%	43,997	22	26	5,799
Maine	346,000	13.2%	9,273	10	NA	1,814
Maryland	1,329,000	10.9%	47,146	28	39	4,859
Massachusetts	1,538,000	12.9%	57,983	29	NA	13,232
Michigan	2,763,000	18.2%	116,151	34	NA	11,282
Minnesota	1,307,000	12.4%	23,620	4	NA	7,898
Mississippi	841,000	33.5%	16,279	6	24	2,830
Missouri	1,485,000	17.4%	73,399	40	31	7,143
Montana	246,000	19.9%	11,029	36	8	1,494
Nebraska	480,000	13.5%	15,609	23	4	2,660
Nevada	353,000	12.8%	23,220	50	NA	1,563
New Hampshire	310,000	7.0%	9,509	16	NA	2,095
New Jersey	2,044,000	11.0%	54,366	11	NA	8,451
New Mexico	505,000	27.5%	15,023	15	6	2,304
New York	4,857,000	18.8%	212,767	37	179	65,171
North Carolina	1,849,000	16.9%	74,222	33	22	9,619
North Dakota	192,000	16.9%	6,054	18	0	695
Ohio	3,135,000	17.6%	107,271	25	67	17,298
Oklahoma	940,000	21.4%	47,386	42	38	3,803
Oregon	824,000	15.2%	41,685	44	9	3,996
Pennsylvania	3,157,000	15.4%	24,357	1	NA	17,508
Rhode Island	258,000	13.5%	12,989	45	7	3,311
South Carolina	1,053,000	20.8%	28,615	14	22	3,698
South Dakota	221,000	20.1%	11,267	43	1	613
Tennessee	1,378,000	20.7%	33,382	8	NA	5,217
Texas	5,502,000	24.0%	134,295	9	97	7,200
Utah	704,000	12.2%	24,224	27	12	1,405
Vermont	162,000	11.5%	2,697	3	2	1,088
Virginia	1,725,000	13.0%	51,548	17	34	6,590
Washington	1,447,000	14.0%	27,092	5	NA	13,956
West Virginia	494,000	25.9%	24,865	41	3	1,997
Wisconsin	1,448,000	14.6%	38,842	11	NA	6,403
Wyoming	150,000	14.1%	4,815	21	4	605
Total	65,918,000		2,712,917		1,033	429,000
	(1991)	(1990)	(1990)	(1990)	(1991)	(FY 1991)

GUARDING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS • SERVING CHILDREN'S NEEDS

COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY PRESERVATION AND CHILD PROTECTION REFORM (CPR)

The most important and comprehensive legislation in over a decade to address the nation's grave child abuse crisis will be considered by the 103rd Congress. It targets substantial new investments in cost effective programs to help abused and neglected children and strengthen troubled families. Developed after careful review of the nature and extent of child abuse and neglect, it would:

- **Target investments to strengthen families and prevent child abuse.**

Substantial new resources would be invested in the federal Child Welfare Services program (Title IV-B of the Social Security Act) for the in-home family support, family preservation, reunification and respite services that strengthen families and help them to overcome problems and care for their children. The new funds would be guaranteed to the states through a capped entitlement component to the IV-B program.

- **Target investments in substance abuse prevention and treatment services.**

Growing parental substance abuse is increasingly contributing to family disintegration and to child abuse, neglect, and abandonment, yet virtually no substance abuse treatment services are available for pregnant women and mothers. Additional Title IV-B capped entitlement funds would be provided for comprehensive substance abuse prevention and treatment programs for pregnant women, mothers and their children. Funds would also support the child care, transportation, home visiting, nutrition, and counseling services essential for effective treatment.

- **Improve foster care and adoption services for abused and neglected children.**

An increasing number of children who have been severely abused, neglected, abandoned or orphaned are in need of the support and treatment that family foster care, kinship care, group care, residential services, or adoption can provide. Yet while over 400,000 children now live in out-of-home care, only about half are eligible for federal support or assistance, and little help is provided to caregivers. The legislation would make numerous improvements in the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance (and Independent Living) program to assure additional support for children, and provide respite care and other assistance to foster and adoptive parents.

- **Improve child welfare training, coordination, data collection, and research efforts.**

The child welfare system has been overwhelmed and seriously damaged by skyrocketing caseloads and meager federal support. The legislation would support efforts to strengthen child welfare training; demonstrate innovative services; improve research, evaluation, and data collection; and improve the overall coordination and delivery of child welfare services.

- **Promote state and local flexibility and public-private partnerships.**

The legislation would provide states with broad flexibility in the use of increased federal support and assistance, while assuring overall accountability. In addition, the legislation fully supports a strong partnership between public agencies and private non-profit providers.

Estimated Allotments to States in FY 1994 and FY 1997
Under Family Preservation and Child Protection Reform (CPR)
(\$s in thousands)
(Calculations provided by CRS)

	Innovative Services		Substance Abuse		Respite Care	
	FY 1994	FY 1997	FY 1994	FY 1997	FY 1994	FY 1997
Alabama	\$4,747	\$7,879	\$1,939	\$2,695	\$137	\$390
Alaska	291	483	119	165	45	129
Arizona	3,581	5,944	1,462	2,033	152	434
Arkansas	2,302	3,820	940	1,307	71	201
California	26,156	43,415	10,682	14,848	6,238	17,773
Colorado	2,394	3,974	978	1,359	337	960
Connecticut	1,596	2,650	652	906	302	860
Delaware	376	625	154	214	29	83
District of Columbia	711	1,179	290	403	62	178
Florida	8,441	14,011	3,447	4,792	594	1,692
Georgia	5,733	9,517	2,342	3,255	435	1,239
Hawaii	809	1,342	330	459	13	36
Idaho	618	1,026	252	351	24	68
Illinois	10,466	17,372	4,274	5,941	1,550	4,417
Indiana	3,322	5,515	1,357	1,886	285	812
Iowa	1,718	2,852	702	975	174	497
Kansas	1,414	2,347	577	803	181	514
Kentucky	4,289	7,119	1,752	2,435	238	678
Louisiana	7,578	12,578	3,095	4,302	385	1,097
Maine	907	1,506	370	515	125	357
Maryland	2,888	4,794	1,180	1,640	248	706
Massachusetts	3,575	5,934	1,460	2,029	667	1,901
Michigan	9,557	15,863	3,903	5,425	1,272	3,624
Minnesota	2,579	4,280	1,053	1,464	351	1,001
Mississippi	4,778	7,930	1,951	2,712	115	329
Missouri	4,332	7,190	1,769	2,459	472	1,346
Montana	553	919	226	314	67	190
Nebraska	953	1,582	389	541	164	467
Nevada	517	858	211	293	72	206
New Hampshire	287	477	117	163	66	188
New Jersey	4,419	7,335	1,805	2,509	398	1,133
New Mexico	1,671	2,774	683	949	108	308
New York	16,195	26,881	6,614	9,194	6,877	19,591
North Carolina	4,201	6,973	1,716	2,385	463	1,318
North Dakota	412	684	168	234	53	151
Ohio	11,039	18,323	4,508	6,267	825	2,351
Oklahoma	2,700	4,482	1,103	1,533	181	514
Oregon	1,977	3,281	807	1,122	299	853
Pennsylvania	9,439	15,667	3,855	5,358	1,813	5,166
Rhode Island	709	1,177	290	403	83	236
South Carolina	3,154	5,234	1,288	1,790	194	552
South Dakota	544	903	222	309	29	83
Tennessee	5,129	8,513	2,095	2,912	353	1,005
Texas	20,198	33,525	8,249	11,466	589	1,677
Utah	1,168	1,939	477	663	65	186
Vermont	346	574	141	196	123	349
Virginia	3,470	5,760	1,417	1,970	310	882
Washington	3,610	5,992	1,474	2,049	391	1,114
West Virginia	2,278	3,782	930	1,293	156	444
Wisconsin	3,477	5,772	1,420	1,974	761	2,169
Wyoming	305	506	124	173	13	38
	\$220,000	\$365,000	\$90,000	\$125,000	\$30,000	\$85,000

February 19, 1992

Dear Senator/Representative:

In every state, an increasing number of infants, children and families face crises of unparalleled dimensions, while the child welfare system designed to help them is collapsing under burgeoning and complex caseloads. Comprehensive child welfare legislation is urgently needed to protect the safety and development of our children and preserve and strengthen our families.

The following organizations strongly endorse two comprehensive child welfare bills now pending in Congress -- S. 4, the Child Welfare and Preventive Services Act, sponsored by Senator Lloyd Bentsen; and H.R. 3603, the Family Preservation Act, sponsored by Representative Thomas Downey. While not identical, both bills recognize the crises facing our most vulnerable children and families and take essential steps to strengthen the ability of child welfare systems to help them.

We urge you to co-sponsor S. 4 or H.R. 3603, and actively support final enactment in 1992 of comprehensive child welfare legislation that most appropriately meets the needs of children and families.

Sincerely,

Adoption Exchange Association
Adoptive Parent Support Organization
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Children's Residential Centers*
American Association of Psychiatric Services for Children
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Humane Association
American Jewish Committee
American Psychological Association
American Public Welfare Association
American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry
American Youth Work Center
Association of Junior Leagues International
Behavioral Sciences Institute
Black Administrators in Child Welfare
Catholic Charities USA
Child Welfare League of America

Children Awaiting Parents
Children's Defense Fund
Council of Jewish Federations
County Welfare Directors Association of California
Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C.
Family Resource Coalition
Family Service America
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Girl Scouts of the USA
Hunter College Center for the Study of Family Policy
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Juvenile Justice Trainers Association
Mental Health Law Project
National Association for Family Based Services
National Association of Community Mental Health Centers
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Counties*
National Association of Foster Care Reviewers
National Association of Homes and Services for Children
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Child Development Institute
National Center for Clinical Infant Programs
National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse
National Council of Community Mental Health Centers*
National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association*
National Exchange Club Foundation for Prevention of Child Abuse
National Foster Parent Association
National Mental Health Association
National Network of Runaway and Youth Services
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center*
New Jersey Foster Parents Association
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Parsons Child and Family Center
Service Employees International Union
Society for Behavioral Pediatrics

* Support added after letter sent on February 19, 1992.

January 25, 1993

Secretary Donna E. Shalala
Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

Your firm commitment to our nation's children and families is one equally shared by the American Public Welfare Association, the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, and the National Association of Social Workers, and we look forward to an effective partnership on their behalf. We are writing today to urge you to make early enactment of comprehensive child welfare and family preservation legislation a priority of your Department.

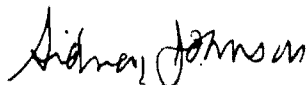
Our four organizations have worked in close collaboration over the last four years along with dozens of other national groups to enact comprehensive child welfare and family preservation legislation designed to address the virtual explosion in child abuse, neglect and family disruption that has seriously harmed millions of children and torn countless families apart. After a decade of national neglect, strong federal leadership and expanded federal resources are urgently needed to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen and preserve families.

Congress recognized this urgency by overwhelmingly passing major child welfare and family preservation legislation in late 1992 sponsored by Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and former Representative Thomas Downey. Unfortunately, the Urban Aid bill to which this measure was attached was pocket-vetoed by President Bush for reasons unrelated to child welfare. The enactment of similar child welfare and family preservation legislation early in 1993 is a key priority we all share.

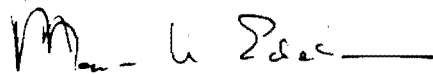
Your leadership and support for early enactment of this bipartisan measure is obviously critical. As you review the many steps which must be taken to ensure the development of strong and healthy children, families, and communities, we urge you to make comprehensive child welfare and family preservation legislation a fundamental priority. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this legislation with you at greater length.

Thank you very much for your strong commitment to children and families.

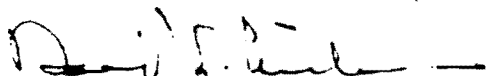
Sincerely,



A. Sidney Johnson, III
Executive Director
American Public Welfare Association



Marian Wright Edelman
President
Children's Defense Fund



David S. Liederman
Executive Director
Child Welfare League of America



Sheldon Goldstein
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers

CRS Report for Congress

Child Welfare and Foster Care Reform in the 102nd Congress

Karen Spar
Specialist in Social Legislation
Education and Public Welfare Division

December 18, 1992



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CHILD WELFARE AND FOSTER CARE REFORM IN THE 102ND CONGRESS

SUMMARY

A perception of crisis in the child welfare system prompted the 102nd Congress to look at Federal child welfare and foster care programs, and pass legislation to increase Federal support for services to preserve and strengthen vulnerable families.

This legislation was developed in response to recent and dramatic increases in child abuse and neglect reports, drug abuse among parents of young children, and numbers of children entering foster care. However, the child welfare legislation that was finally passed by the 102nd Congress was folded into an omnibus urban aid and tax package, H.R. 11, that was pocket-vetoed by President Bush on November 5, 1992, for reasons unrelated to child welfare.

A primary goal of the child welfare provisions of H.R. 11 was to increase the level of resources available to States for preventive and supportive services, to reduce the need for foster care. The bill would have created three new "capped entitlements" to States, in addition to the existing authorization for child welfare services under title IV-B of the Social Security Act. These new entitlements would have been for innovative family preservation and family support services, substance abuse-related services, and respite care.

H.R. 11 contained a grant program to State courts, to help them improve their child welfare procedures, and would have authorized coordination and flexible funding demonstrations. The legislation also contained amendments to the foster care and adoption assistance programs under title IV-E of the Social Security Act. Several of these amendments were intended to address concerns about the length of time children remain in foster care.

The child welfare provisions in H.R. 11 would have permanently extended the independent living program under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, and would have created a new integrated Federal review system for all child welfare programs. The legislation contained provisions designed to improve data collection and information reporting in child welfare, and would have authorized research, evaluation and demonstration initiatives. H.R. 11 also contained a provision designed to reverse a recent Supreme Court decision regarding the enforceability of Federal child welfare law, *Artist M. v. Suter*.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the child welfare provisions in H.R. 11 would have cost almost \$2.2 billion over the 5-year period from fiscal year 1993 to fiscal year 1997, if enacted. The bulk of this spending--almost \$1.9 billion--would have been for the three new capped entitlements for preventive and supportive child welfare services.

Child welfare reform will likely be an issue again in the 103rd Congress. In addition to provisions contained in H.R. 11, continuing child welfare issues include the rapid growth rate in uncapped entitlement spending for foster care-related services and administration, and eligibility requirements for Federal foster care and adoption subsidies.

AIDS and other forms of substance abuse, the crack epidemic became a final straw affecting many vulnerable children and families.

Reports of child abuse and neglect increased by 42 percent between 1985 and 1991, and the number of children entering foster care grew by 47 percent from 1985 until 1990. Abandoned children, "boarder" babies, drug-exposed infants and children with AIDS all became clients of the child welfare system during the 1980s. Child welfare administrators described the current population of foster children as being increasingly difficult to serve, with multiple and complex problems.

While describing these increased demands on the child welfare system, witnesses also testified that the number of foster family homes has decreased in recent years, turnover in child welfare agencies has been high, and related services--especially substance abuse treatment--have been in short supply in many parts of the country.

As the population entering foster care has grown, so too has State and local spending for child welfare and related services. State administrators asked for additional Federal resources, and also for greater flexibility in the use of existing Federal funds. Program operators said State and local efforts to design comprehensive programs for children and families are often handicapped by categorical requirements attached to Federal dollars.

The most acute need, according to many witnesses, is for preventive and supportive services to maintain families, with emphasis on families affected by substance abuse. Intensive family preservation services, which have been pioneered in many States and local areas with little Federal financial support, were described as a potentially cost-effective way to keep certain families together and reduce the need for foster care placement. Witnesses also testified about the need for reunification services and followup to families reunited after foster care.

Most child welfare officials agree that preventive and supportive services will never eliminate the need for quality foster care and adoption assistance. A variety of issues were raised at congressional hearings about the existing Federal programs which support foster care and adoption, including a concern that certain children are continuing to remain in foster care longer than necessary.

A recurring theme throughout the child welfare hearings in the 102nd Congress was concern about the lack of national data and information about child welfare activities, beneficiaries and expenditures. Witnesses expressed a need to expand the general level of knowledge about child welfare through improved data collection and research activities, and to provide improved training and support for child welfare personnel, including family foster care providers.

DESCRIPTION OF PROVISIONS IN H.R. 11

The following describes child welfare provisions contained in the conference agreement on H.R. 11, as passed by Congress and pocket-vetoed by President Bush. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), these provisions would have cost almost \$2.2 billion over the 5-year period from fiscal year 1993 to fiscal year 1997, if enacted. Of this total, almost \$1.9 billion would have been for preventive and supportive child welfare services, described below.

Child Welfare Services

Under Federal legislation enacted in 1980 (P.L. 96-272), States are encouraged to use child welfare services funds under title IV-B for preventive services to avoid the need for foster care. However, child welfare services are funded through a limited authorization under title IV-B, while foster care is financed through an open-ended entitlement to States under title IV-E. Between 1981 and 1993, Federal funding for child welfare services increased from \$164 million to \$295 million, while Federal spending for foster care has grown from \$309 million to \$2.6 billion.

As described above, concern about the rising number of child abuse reports and children entering foster care has renewed interest in the extent to which resources are adequate to support preventive services for families, including foster and adoptive families, and families reunited after their children have been in foster care. The impact on families of substance abuse was of particular concern in the 102nd Congress.

H.R. 11 would have expanded resources available for preventive and supportive services by adding three new "capped entitlements" to the existing authorization for child welfare services under title IV-B. States would have been entitled to their share of appropriated funds under each of these three new programs, subject to a nationwide ceiling. The new title IV-B entitlements would have been for innovative family preservation and family support services, substance abuse-related services, and respite care.

Innovative Services. The entitlement for innovative services would have been used by States for a variety of preventive and supportive services, including: reunification services for families whose children have been placed in foster care; adoptive placement or other permanency planning services for children if reunification with their families is not feasible; preplacement preventive services including intensive family preservation services; followup services for reunited families; and family support services such as parenting skills training, respite care and adult mentoring services.

To receive their innovative services allotment for a particular year, States would have been required to develop an amendment to their title IV-B plan containing the following information: a strategy for improving coordination of services in the State for families with children in or at risk of foster care placement; an assurance that new entitlement funds would not be used to

supplant other Federal, State or local funds used for similar purposes; and a description of service programs to be provided, the goals of such programs, and a description of target populations to be served, which would include families with children in foster care, reunited from foster care, or at risk of foster care placement. This plan amendment would have been submitted for approval to the Secretary of HHS.

In addition, each State receiving innovative services funds would have been required to submit to the Secretary a one-time statement of goals the State expected to achieve during the 5-year period from fiscal year 1993 through fiscal year 1997.

The entitlement ceiling would have been set at the following levels: \$95 million in fiscal year 1993, \$220 million in fiscal year 1994, \$300 million in fiscal year 1995, \$320 million in fiscal year 1996, and \$365 million in fiscal year 1997. In subsequent years, the ceiling would have been indexed to increases in inflation.¹

Innovative services funds would have been allocated to States according to a formula based on each State's average number of children receiving food stamp benefits, and a 25 percent State match would have been required. States would have had up to 2 years in which to spend their entitlement funds, and any unused funds could have been reallocated to other States after the 2-year period.

Substance Abuse Services. H.R. 11 would have created a second capped entitlement within title IV-B for substance abuse services for low-income pregnant women and caretaker parents. This program would have supported nonmedical expenses and services for pregnant women and caretaker parents, as components of a comprehensive drug treatment program.

Specifically, States could have used funds under this entitlement for such services as: home visitation services, nutrition services, child care and parenting education; substance abuse treatment, prevention and followup to the extent that such services are not available through Medicaid; and any other services considered necessary to support an individual's participation in substance abuse treatment, including room and board at a residential treatment facility for the individual and if necessary, the individual's child.

Eligible participants would have been pregnant women or caretaker parents eligible for Medicaid; at State option, any other pregnant women or caretaker

¹These amounts are specified in statutory language. However, the statement of managers accompanying H.R. 11 states that the following amounts would have been authorized: \$95 million in fiscal year 1993, \$235 million in fiscal year 1994, \$320 million in fiscal year 1995, \$340 million in fiscal year 1996, and \$385 million in fiscal year 1997. It was the intention of conferees that the higher amounts be authorized to make room for an earmarked grant to State courts, although this was not reflected in the statutory language.

parents with incomes below a level set by the State; and where appropriate, children of eligible participants. Unlike the innovative services and respite care entitlements, which would have been administered by the State child welfare agency, the substance abuse entitlement would have been administered by an agency designated by the Governor. Individuals referred by the State child welfare agency would have received priority for services under the substance abuse program.

States receiving funds under the substance abuse entitlement would have been required to submit a report to the Secretary containing, at a minimum, the number of individuals participating in the program, any limits imposed by the State on the number of individuals who may enroll in the program, and the number of individuals on waiting lists for participation in the program.

The entitlement ceiling for substance abuse services would have been set as follows: \$40 million in fiscal year 1993, \$90 million in fiscal year 1994, \$110 million in fiscal year 1995, \$115 million in fiscal year 1996, and \$125 million in fiscal year 1997. After fiscal year 1997, the ceiling would have been indexed to increases in inflation.

As under the innovative services entitlement, funds would have been allocated to States according to their average number of children receiving food stamp benefits, and would have required a 25 percent State match. Again, States would have had up to 2 years to spend their allotments, and any unused funds could have been reallocated. States would have been required to provide written assurances to the Secretary each year that they would not reduce their previous year's level of spending from nonfederal sources for similar services.

Respite Care. The third capped entitlement which would have been created by H.R. 11 would have been used by States for respite care services for foster parents caring for special needs children. Eligible respite care services would have had to meet applicable State and local standards and be provided in the least restrictive setting consistent with the child's special needs.

Respite care funds would have been authorized beginning for fiscal year 1994, at the following entitlement levels: \$30 million in fiscal year 1994, \$55 million in fiscal year 1995, \$65 million in fiscal year 1996, and \$85 million in fiscal year 1997. After fiscal year 1997, the ceiling would have been indexed to inflation. Funds would have been allocated to States according to a formula based on the number of title IV-E foster children in each State, and would have required a 25 percent State match. States would have had up to 2 years to spend their allotments, and unused funds could have been reallocated.

Grants to Courts. During fiscal years 1994 through 1997, a portion of the new innovative services entitlement would have been set aside for a grant program to the highest State courts. Funds would have been used to assess the courts' performance in carrying out requirements contained in titles IV-B and IV-E, and to implement recommendations based on these assessments, including any changes in State law, regulation, procedure, judicial manpower, judicial case

assignments, judicial caseloads, judicial data collection, judicial education, and requirements for court-appointed legal representatives for parents and children.

The court set-aside would have equalled \$15 million in fiscal year 1994, and \$20 million in each of the subsequent 3 fiscal years.² After an initial allocation to each State of \$150,000 in fiscal year 1994, and \$170,000 in each of the subsequent 3 years, funds would have been allocated among States according to their under-age-21 population. The Federal matching rate would have been 100 percent in fiscal year 1994, and 75 percent in subsequent years. The Secretary would have been required to report to Congress on the impact of the court grant program by September 30, 1988.

State Directory of Services. H.R. 11 would have required States, at least every 2 years, to compile a directory of child welfare service programs available in the State which would be arranged geographically and made available to the Secretary, judges, judicial administrators and all State agencies involved in child protection, foster care and adoption cases.

Service programs to be described in the directory would have included preplacement preventive programs designed to help children at risk of foster care remain with their families, programs designed to reunify families or place children for adoption or in another permanent arrangement, and followup programs for families reunited after foster care. The directory would have indicated which programs provide specialized services to families affected by substance abuse, and would have included names, addresses, program descriptions, the program's capacity level, and eligibility criteria.

Protections for Foster Children. Current law contains a series of protections for foster children which States must comply with to receive full funding under title IV-B. H.R. 11 would have eliminated this incentive funding mechanism, and instead made compliance with these provisions a mandatory component of the State title IV-B plan. These provisions include a statewide information system on children in foster care, a case review system for foster children, reunification services, and preplacement preventive services.

As an additional State plan component under title IV-B, H.R. 11 would have required States to review their laws, administrative and judicial procedures with respect to abandoned children and to implement whatever laws or procedures are necessary to expedite permanent decisions on behalf of such children.

Indian Child Welfare Services. H.R. 11 would have required States, under title IV-B, to consult with Indian tribal organizations within the State and to describe in their title IV-B plans the specific measures taken by the State to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

²These amounts equal the difference between the authorization levels specified in statutory language for the new innovative services entitlement, and the amounts specified in the statement of managers (see footnote #1).

Development of State Plans. In developing their title IV-B plans, States would have been required by H.R. 11 to provide for the involvement of nonprofit organizations, relevant experts in service delivery to children and families, and consumers.

Coordination and Flexible Funding

Concerns have been raised that child welfare services are not adequately coordinated with related activities, and that Federal funding sources restrict flexibility at the State and local level. H.R. 11 would have authorized two demonstrations intended to address these concerns.

Comprehensive Service Projects. H.R. 11 would have authorized, under a new title IV-C of the Social Security Act, comprehensive service projects that would have allowed up to three States to combine their title IV-B and projected title IV-E foster care allotments and modify requirements of both programs, with the goal of increasing flexibility and allowing States to develop comprehensive and coordinated services.

Specifically, grants to States would have equalled the State's title IV-B allotment, plus a 10 percent bonus, and the amount the State would have claimed for title IV-E (excluding costs associated with adoption assistance) for the fiscal year in which the project is operating. HHS would have estimated the amount the State would have otherwise claimed for title IV-E, based on the amount the State received the preceding fiscal year, adjusted by a variety of factors. If a State chose to operate the project only in a substate area, the grant amount would have been reduced proportionately.

To participate, States would have submitted applications to HHS containing a plan for assessing: the extent to which child welfare policies in the State provide for coordination of services, and specific barriers to coordination; service needs of families in the child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health systems with children in or at risk of out-of-home placement; service programs available to such families; and the extent of coordination between the child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health systems.

Participating States would have developed a plan for implementing: coordinated procedures within the child welfare agency; a comprehensive service program designed to strengthen and preserve families or to place children for adoption or other permanent arrangements; a common assessment tool for families served in the program; joint training for child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health staff; a single point of entry and unified case management approach for families in the program; an information system to track families in the program; and a means to ensure that relevant information on children and families in the program is shared with other agencies when appropriate.

States would have been required to establish outcomes they expect to achieve in the project, which would have included an increase in the well-being of children, reduced placements and expenditures for foster care over what

would have otherwise occurred, increase in preventive services, and increased coordination among the child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems.

The State child welfare agency would have had lead responsibility for the comprehensive services project, and the Governor would have been required to certify that activities would be coordinated between child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, and other appropriate State agencies.

States could have modified normal title IV-B and IV-E rules, except they could not have waived provisions related to protection of foster children, or certain other title IV-E provisions related to confidentiality, reporting of abuse or neglect, fair hearings, audits, standards for foster homes, reasonable efforts to avoid foster care or reunite families, and case plans for foster children.

Coordination Demonstrations. H.R. 11 also would have authorized demonstrations in up to three States of coordination between child welfare and other programs affecting families. States would have applied to HHS, indicating how they would coordinate child welfare services with some or all of the following programs and activities: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); child support enforcement; work and training for AFDC recipients under the JOBS program; nutrition services for low-income women, infants and children (WIC); maternal and child health services; Medicaid; substance abuse treatment; mental health; juvenile justice; programs for the developmentally disabled; and other activities necessary to meet family needs.

Demonstrations would have lasted no longer than 3 years, and participating States would have been required to evaluate the demonstration's effectiveness. The Federal Government would have matched 50 percent of costs, up to a total of \$3 million in Federal expenditures per year per State.

Review of Federal Policies and Regulations. To further coordination at the Federal level, H.R. 11 would have required the Secretaries of HHS, Agriculture and Education, and the Attorney General, to review administrative policies and regulations within their agencies and to recommend, by July 1, 1993, statutory and administrative changes that would improve coordination of programs for children and families.

Foster Care and Adoption Assistance

H.R. 11 contained a series of amendments designed to improve and strengthen the existing foster care and adoption assistance programs under title IV-E.

Dissolved Adoptions. H.R. 11 would have allowed States to make foster care and adoption assistance payments under title IV-E on behalf of otherwise eligible children who previously had been eligible for title IV-E foster care, but who had been adopted and whose adoptions had been set aside by a court.

Currently, such children are not eligible for Federal subsidies unless their adoptive parents are AFDC-eligible.

Definition of "Special Needs." Under current law, federally subsidized adoption assistance payments are available to families that adopt special needs children. H.R. 11 would have expanded the definition of special needs to situations where there is information available and known about a child's genetic or social history indicating a high risk of medical conditions, or emotional, physical or mental handicaps, which would make it reasonable to conclude that the child could not be placed for adoption without adoption assistance.

Further, H.R. 11 would have expanded the definition of special needs to include children who had been under the custody of the State or a nonprofit agency prior to being adopted, if a handicap existed prior to the adoption but was not diagnosed until after the adoption, or if the child had a handicap that manifested itself after the adoption but was congenital or caused prior to the adoption.

"Reasonable Efforts" Evaluation. H.R. 11 would have established an Advisory Commission on Foster Care Placement to study the requirement in current law that States make "reasonable efforts" to prevent the need for foster care or to reunify families as quickly as feasible after placement. Under current law, the term "reasonable efforts" is not defined and has been interpreted differently in various jurisdictions. In addition, a recent Supreme Court decision, *Artist M. v. Suter*, has raised questions about whether this provision is too vague to be enforced in Federal court.

The advisory commission would have been required to report and make recommendations to the Secretary and Congress no later than April 1, 1994. The commission was to have no fewer than nine members and would have consisted of representatives of private nonprofit groups with an interest in child welfare, State and local child welfare agencies, and State and local judicial bodies.

Periodic Reevaluation of Maintenance Rates. H.R. 11 would have required States to review their foster care and adoption assistance payment rates at least every 3 years, and to report the results of these reviews to the Secretary and the public. Reports would have been required to state how payment levels are established, including how they compare to the actual cost of care. Reports also would have provided information on the basic foster care payment level, whether payment levels include a clothing allowance, and whether they vary by type of care or special needs or age of the child. States that did not make payments at a different rate for children with special needs who are HIV-positive, have AIDS, are addicted to drugs or show complications from drug or alcohol exposure, would have had to indicate their reasons for not making payments for these children at a different rate.

Dispositional Hearing. Current law requires States to provide for a dispositional hearing, by a court or administrative body approved by a court, no later than 18 months after a child is placed in foster care. H.R. 11 would have required this hearing to occur no later than 15 months after placement.

Documentation of Adoption Efforts. In the case of foster children whose permanency goal is adoption, H.R. 11 would have required that case reviews determine and document the measures needed to enhance the likelihood of freeing the child for adoption and finding an adoptive family for the child. In the case of children who already are legally free for adoption, H.R. 11 would have required that case reviews determine and document the specific measures which had been and need to be taken to place the child for adoption, or document a finding that adoptive placement for the child is not appropriate.

"Most Appropriate" Setting. H.R. 11 would have added "most appropriate" to the current law requirement that foster children be placed in the "least restrictive" or "most family-like" setting.

Citizen Volunteer Input. Citizen volunteers would have been allowed to participate in making recommendations during case reviews and dispositional hearings on individual foster children, to the extent considered appropriate by the State, under H.R. 11.

Health Care Plans for Foster Children. H.R. 11 would have required foster children's case plans to document that foster care providers were informed of the child's eligibility for early and periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment services (EPSDT) under Medicaid.

Out-of-State Placements. H.R. 11 would have amended current law by establishing additional case plan requirements for title IV-E-eligible children placed in out-of-State foster care facilities. Specifically, the case plan would have had to indicate that efforts were made to place the child within the State, that the child needs services not available in the State, that the placement is in the least restrictive setting available, and that the placement has been approved by a court or a committee established by the State to review out-of-State placements. H.R. 11 would have required that the status of children placed out-of-State be reviewed by a court at least annually with the child present, unless the court determined for some reason that the presence of the child would be detrimental to the child or otherwise not useful.

H.R. 11 also would have required States to ensure that out-of-State facilities used for foster care had certified that they meet the originating State's applicable standards, or meet recommended national standards. Further, the national foster care and adoption assistance data collection system authorized under current law would have been required to collect information on the number of children placed in out-of-State foster care. Finally, States would have been required to conduct a study of the number of children placed out-of-State and the common characteristics of such children, and the reasons they were not placed in foster care within the State.

Repeal of Foster Care Ceilings. H.R. 11 would have repealed provisions in current law which provide for voluntary and mandatory "ceilings" on foster care and allow for transfer of certain title IV-E foster care funds to the title IV-B child welfare services program. These provisions expired on September 30, 1992.

Independent Living

Permanent Extension of Authorization. Unlike foster care and adoption assistance, which are permanently authorized under title IV-E, the independent living program for older foster children is temporarily authorized under title IV-E. The current authorization expired on September 30, 1992, although Congress nonetheless appropriated funds for independent living in fiscal year 1993. H.R. 11 would have amended title IV-E to authorize independent living permanently, at an entitlement ceiling level of \$70 million.

Treatment of Assets. Older foster children participating in the independent living program would have been allowed to accumulate assets, up to a level determined appropriate by the State to establish a household, without losing eligibility for AFDC or Medicaid, under H.R. 11.

Young Adults Demonstration. H.R. 11 would have authorized one State to conduct, and arrange for evaluation of, a 3-year demonstration which would provide community-based services to former foster children aged 21-24. Services could include self-help groups, counseling, treatment for survivors of abuse, mentoring, alumni groups, and coordination of and referral to community services.

Child Welfare Training

Training Regulations. H.R. 11 would have required the Secretary of HHS to issue final regulations establishing detailed guidelines to help State and local child welfare agencies use Federal matching funds available for staff training, and to develop and publish a model staff training program for use by State and local child welfare agencies.

In developing these guidelines, the Secretary would have been required to consult with an advisory committee, consisting of representatives of private nonprofit groups with an interest in child welfare (including organizations that train child welfare workers), and State and local child welfare agencies. H.R. 11 would have required the advisory committee to be established within 180 days of enactment of this provision, and final regulations to be published within 15 months of enactment.

Federal Reimbursement Rate for Training. H.R. 11 would have permanently extended a provision, which expired at the end of fiscal year 1992, authorizing matching payments to States at a 75 percent Federal rate for certain training expenses under title IV-E. Eligible expenses are for training State and local child welfare personnel, foster and adoptive parents, and staff of child care

institutions serving foster or adopted children. Without this provision, these expenses are matched at the 50 percent administrative cost rate.

Child Welfare Traineeships. H.R. 11 would have amended the existing section 426(a) authorization of appropriations for training activities, and would have required that students receiving child welfare traineeships with stipends agree to participate in onsite training in public or private child welfare agencies, and agree to work in a child welfare agency after completing their education for a period equivalent to the length of the traineeship.

Institutions of higher education receiving grants for child welfare training would have been required to provide appropriate support and supervision for students, have agreements with child welfare agencies for onsite training opportunities, use a curriculum that reflects recent information on best practices in child welfare service delivery, and allow existing child welfare staff to apply for traineeships.

Child Welfare Review

New Federal Review System. H.R. 11 would have required the Secretary to establish a new integrated child welfare review system that would apply to all activities under titles IV-B and IV-E. This system would have assessed child welfare activities to identify areas where requirements are not being met and the extent to which they are not being met; imposed financial penalties on States that are out of compliance, unless successful corrective action is taken; and provided technical assistance to States to help achieve compliance. The Secretary would have been required to complete a review of each State's child welfare system once every 3 years.

Moratorium on Collection of Penalties. H.R. 11 also would have prohibited the Secretary, until October 1, 1993, from collecting financial penalties resulting from the current system of title IV-B reviews, title IV-E financial reviews or Inspector General audits.

Prompt Payment of Claims. H.R. 11 would have required the Secretary to pay any State claim for reimbursement of expenditures under title IV-E within 90 days of its receipt, unless the Secretary deferred or disallowed the claim within 90 days.

Data Collection and Reporting

State Reports on Services and Expenditures. Under H.R. 11, States would have been required to prepare annual expenditure reports, to be submitted to the Secretary and available to the public, describing services provided with their title IV-B funds. To assist States in developing these reports, the Secretary would have been required to establish uniform definitions of services, taking into consideration the uniform definitions developed for the Social Services Block Grant under title XX of the Social Security Act.

In addition, H.R. 11 would have required States, as part of their annual title IV-B plans, to prepare comparative financial contribution reports, which would show aggregate amounts spent by State and local agencies for child welfare services, broken down to indicate whether such spending was from Federal, State, or local sources. A summary of this information would have been compiled by the Secretary and submitted to Congress.

Publication of National Program Data. By January 31 of each year, the Secretary would have been required to publish and make available to Congress certain basic information about child welfare programs, such as Federal and State spending, program participation, reviews and financial penalties, foster care maintenance payment rates, an analysis of child welfare services provided, and research, training and demonstration activities.

Enhanced Match for Automated Data Systems. Current law mandates HHS to develop a national foster care and adoption assistance data collection system to be used in all States. State expenditures for developing and operating such a system are reimbursable as administrative costs at a 50 percent matching rate.

H.R. 11 would have increased this match for a 3-year period to 90 percent, specifically for the costs of planning, designing, developing, or installing an automated data collection system as required by the Secretary of HHS. To be eligible for the enhanced match, State systems would have been required to be capable of interacting with State child abuse and neglect data collection systems and AFDC eligibility determination systems, if practicable.

H.R. 11 also would have specified that data collection expenses would be reimbursable regardless of whether the collection system is used with respect to children who are not eligible for title IV-E subsidies. Further, the Secretary would have been required to establish a work group to advise on the planning and implementation of automated data collection systems.

Evaluations

H.R. 11 would have required the Secretary to evaluate, either directly or through contracts, State activities under the innovative services entitlement that would have been added to title IV-B.³ The Secretary would have been required to develop evaluation criteria in consultation with child welfare administrators, nonprofit groups with an interest in child welfare, and other individuals or groups with expertise in evaluation. H.R. 11 would have required evaluations to be designed to allow comparisons of outcome measures for children and families receiving services and those not receiving services.

³The statement of managers accompanying H.R. 11 indicates that \$8 million was to be authorized annually for 5 years for the Secretary's evaluation activities. However, this provision was inadvertently deleted from the statutory language.

The Secretary would have been required to submit an annual report on the status and findings of evaluations, including evaluations conducted by the States. In addition, by December 1, 1995, the Secretary would have been required to submit recommendations for legislation, based on evaluation findings, designed to improve child and family services, reduce the number of cases where foster care is necessary, promote family reunification, and promote permanent living arrangements for children, including adoption, where appropriate.

In addition, the following research initiatives would have been authorized under the existing section 426(b) authorization of appropriations:

Alternative Foster Care. The Secretary would have been required to arrange for an evaluation of the effects of alternative foster care arrangements and services on the well-being of children who are unlikely to return to their families or be adopted and require specialized services or care.

Longitudinal Data Bases. H.R. 11 would have required the Secretary to establish up to four longitudinal data bases on children and families in the child welfare system. Using information from these data bases, the Secretary would have arranged for various studies, including a study of the extent to which a lack of affordable housing contributes to the placement of children in foster care.

H.R. 11 also would have permitted the Secretary to use this information to conduct studies of: the dynamics of the child welfare population; characteristics of children in the system for a short time compared with those who remain longer; type, intensity and effectiveness of services offered to families; the frequency of contact between foster children, their parents and caseworkers; factors associated with repeated episodes of child abuse or neglect; and the condition of children in the system with respect to such areas as educational performance, health and personal and social adjustment.

Safety Risks to Foster Care Workers. The Secretary would have been authorized to study safety risks to child welfare workers, and to gather relevant data.

National Workload Study. Under contract with an organization with experience in workload measurement, the Secretary would have been authorized to develop and validate methodologies to measure the workloads of child welfare and community mental health service providers.

Foster Parent Recruitment, Training, and Retention. H.R. 11 would have authorized the Secretary to evaluate and identify successful strategies for foster parent recruitment, training, and retention and to recommend steps which could be taken at the Federal, State, or local level to improve foster parent recruitment, training, and retention.

Child Separation Guidelines. H.R. 11 also would have authorized the Secretary to conduct a study to identify the criteria and tools used by States for removing children from their homes and assessing risk; to determine what guidelines should be used in these areas; and to determine what training is necessary to ensure consistent application of such guidelines.

Demonstrations

H.R. 11 would have authorized up to \$15 million for each of fiscal years 1994 through 1997 for the Secretary to conduct several demonstrations. The Secretary would have been required to make at least one grant under each of the following three demonstrations; the subsequent two would have had no cost to the Federal Government.

Expeditious Permanent Placement. The Secretary would have been authorized to make grants to up to three States or localities to conduct this demonstration, designed to promote expeditious permanent placement of children, particularly those abandoned at or shortly after birth.

Grantees would have been required to review State laws and procedures regarding determinations of abandonment of children, termination of parental rights, and permanent placement of children; assess barriers to expeditious decisionmaking on behalf of such children; assess various strategies to expedite decisionmaking; and implement new procedures or improvements to expedite permanent placements. These improvements could have included additional personnel if necessary to pursue or process cases involving termination of parental rights or permanent placement, expanding the standing of foster parents and others to bring actions involving termination of parental rights or permanent placement, or requiring that certain children be placed in foster homes which are likely to become their permanent adoptive home.

Culturally Sensitive and Special Needs Training. Under this demonstration, the Secretary could have made up to three grants to train individuals to deliver culturally sensitive and bilingual child welfare services in the region of the United States that constitutes the border with Mexico. The Secretary could have made up to an additional three grants to train individuals to deliver culturally sensitive and bilingual child welfare services in urban centers which have a high proportion of historically unserved or underserved populations.

Joint Training. The Secretary could have made up to three grants to State or local agencies to test the effect of joint training programs for the staff of child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice agencies, and for judicial personnel and judges.

Elimination of Title IV-E Means Test. The Secretary would have been authorized to conduct demonstrations in up to 5 States, for a period of 6 years, testing the feasibility of eliminating the means test in title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance. Under current law, Federal reimbursement is available to

States for foster care and adoption assistance expenses made on behalf of children whose biological families are eligible for AFDC. States participating in this demonstration could have received Federal reimbursement for all otherwise eligible children, without the need to determine and document family income. Participating States also would have been required to negotiate a new Federal matching rate so that the demonstration would have had no net Federal cost.

Home Rebuilders. H.R. 11 would have authorized the Secretary to enter into an agreement with New York State to conduct a "Home Rebuilders" demonstration, to test ways to enhance practices and procedures to expedite the discharge of children from foster care, including appropriate reunification of children with their families or adoption of children by suitable adoptive homes.

Judicial Enforcement of Child Welfare Law

The enforceability in Federal court of titles IV-B and IV-E provisions, as enacted by the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (P.L. 96-272), was challenged by a Supreme Court decision in March 1992. In *Artist M. v. Suter*, the Court found that while the Act requires States to have foster care plans under title IV-E, no private right of action exists to enforce the provisions in the State plans through Federal court.

H.R. 11 contained language designed to reverse the *Suter* decision and ensure that Federal child welfare and foster care law is enforceable through Federal court to the same extent as before the March 1992 decision. (For a detailed discussion of the Supreme Court decision, its implications and the legislative remedy, see U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Judicial Enforcement of Federal-State Child Welfare Programs*. CRS Report for Congress No. 92-717 A, by Gina M. Stevens. Washington, Sept. 21, 1992.)

Adoption Tax Credit

H.R. 11 would have amended the tax code to allow adoptive parents of special needs children to deduct up to \$3,000 of expenses related to the adoption of their special needs child.

CONTINUING ISSUES

Although the child welfare provisions contained in H.R. 11 reflected a compromise between the House and Senate in the 102nd Congress, they were negotiated as part of the overall urban aid and tax package. If child welfare legislation is considered in the 103rd Congress, many of the provisions described above could be reevaluated. In addition, legislative proposals were offered in the 102nd Congress that were not included in the final conference agreement on H.R. 11. The following discusses some of these additional issues that may again be considered in the 103rd Congress.

Capped Entitlement for Services Under Foster Care

Although there was general consensus among child welfare administrators and observers that additional resources are needed by public child welfare agencies, it was not necessarily agreed that new Federal dollars are the best way to provide these additional resources, particularly in light of Federal budget deficits and spending constraints.

Proponents of increased Federal spending for preventive services argue that efforts to maintain families will eventually reduce the numbers of children who must be placed in foster care and, therefore, could reduce overall public spending. Others maintain that the current level of Federal spending for child welfare might be adequate to meet the need, if strings are removed to allow States greater flexibility in spending these Federal funds.

Opponents of additional Federal spending also have been concerned about the dramatic rate of growth during the last decade for child placement services and administrative costs under title IV-E. Under current law, these expenses are matched on an open-ended entitlement basis at a 50 percent Federal rate. According to HHS, State claims for these costs have grown from \$30 million in fiscal year 1981 to approximately \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 1993. Much of this spending is not for traditional administrative costs, such as overhead, but for social and support services related to the placement of children in care which are mandated by Federal law.

The Bush Administration submitted legislation to the 102nd Congress that would have changed the current financing of foster care and adoption assistance under title IV-E, to provide States greater flexibility in providing child welfare services at no additional Federal cost.

Specifically, the Bush Administration proposed to change the existing open-ended entitlement under title IV-E for child placement costs, administration and training into a capped entitlement for "comprehensive" child welfare services, to be used for a wide range of child welfare services considered important to individual States, including preventive and supportive services to maintain families. At the same time, the open-ended entitlement for placement services, administration, and training would have been eliminated, so that expenditures for those activities also would have been made from the proposed new capped entitlement. (Federal matching for maintenance costs of foster children would still have been provided on an open-ended entitlement basis.) The net effect would be no additional Federal spending above amounts estimated to be needed under current law.

Under the Bush proposal, States would no longer have had to claim reimbursement for expenditures for child placement services, administration or training, and would no longer have been required to document those claims. Instead, funds would have been received as a grant, according to a formula, and could be used more flexibly than under current law, in response to State complaints that Federal child welfare funds are excessively categorical.

The Administration's proposals were introduced in the 102nd Congress as H.R. 5530. Similar legislation was offered by Representative Nancy Johnson and Senator Hatch (H.R. 5316 and S. 1908). The Johnson/Hatch proposal would have created a child welfare entitlement under a new title IV-C of the Social Security Act. As under the Bush proposal, the current law entitlement for child placement services, administration and training under title IV-E would have been repealed, and the new entitlement would have been capped at levels projected by the Office of Management and Budget as the estimated spending levels for child placement services, administration and training over a 5-year period.

Under the Johnson/Hatch proposal, funds could have been used for services to preserve and strengthen families, reunification services, adoption services, and other services to ensure the well-being of children referred for suspected abuse or neglect. Grants would have been allocated to States under the capped entitlement according to a formula based on each State's relative share of total Federal expenditures for child placement services, administration, and training under title IV-E in fiscal year 1991. In addition, States which experienced more than a 15 percent increase in their foster care caseload could apply for a supplemental payment under the Johnson/Hatch proposal.

When the child welfare legislation discussed in this report was brought before the full House for a vote in August 1992, an effort was made to return the bill to the Ways and Means Committee with instructions to substitute an alternative measure, proposed by Representatives Nancy Johnson and Weldon, similar to the Bush Administration and Johnson/Hatch proposals described above. This effort was defeated by a vote of 191-230.

Eligibility Requirements for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance

A number of issues were raised during the 102nd Congress with respect to eligibility criteria for children on whose behalf States may receive Federal foster care and adoption assistance subsidies. Several provisions were considered but not included in the final conference agreement on H.R. 11.

Income Eligibility Requirements. One of the most significant provisions related to eligibility criteria was dropped from the House version of child welfare legislation at the House subcommittee level, and replaced with a five-State demonstration which remained in the final conference agreement.

The original provision would have eliminated entirely the current requirement that restricts Federal reimbursement for foster care and adoption assistance only to AFDC-eligible children, or SSI in the case of adoption assistance. In other words, the legislation would have allowed all States to claim Federal reimbursement for eligible foster care or adoption assistance expenditures on behalf of children without regard to their family income.

This provision potentially could have reduced the amount of time spent by caseworkers conducting eligibility determinations since financial status of the

child's family would no longer have been relevant. Further, abandoned children for whom eligible foster care or adoption assistance payments were made would have automatically been eligible for Federal reimbursement. Likewise, children in dissolved adoptions who were returned to an eligible foster care placement also would have been eligible for Federal reimbursement, regardless of their adoptive family's income.

Currently, about 40 percent of foster children nationwide are documented as meeting the income eligibility criteria under title IV-E. Because of the potential expense of expanding Federal foster care and adoption assistance eligibility to a greater number of children, the provision also would have reduced Federal matching rates to States. Under the proposal, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments, currently matched at the Medicaid rate which varies by State but averages about 57 percent nationwide, would have been matched at 40 percent. Administrative and child placement costs, currently matched at 50 percent, would have received a 25 percent Federal match, and training would have received a 50 percent match instead of 75 percent.

This provision would have had varying impacts on States. State matching rates for foster care maintenance payments and adoption assistance vary because of the use of the Medicaid match; therefore, the effect of instituting a flat Federal matching rate of 40 percent would be different in each State, depending on the State's Medicaid rate. Further, the proportion of each State's foster care and adoption assistance population which is currently claimed as eligible for title IV-E reimbursement also varies by State; therefore, the effect of expanding the eligible population would be different in each State.

Currently, little information is available on the overall size of each State's foster care population and the percentage of that total being claimed as eligible for title IV-E. Thus, it is difficult to gauge the impact on each State of this proposal. As described earlier, H.R. 11 did not contain this provision but instead would have authorized a demonstration to allow 5 States to test the concept for up to a 6-year period.

Abandoned Children. Under the current income eligibility criteria for title IV-E, States are generally unable to claim Federal reimbursement for children who have been abandoned, because information is not available to determine the eligibility of the child's family for AFDC.

The House bill included a provision that would have made eligible, under title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance, expenditures on behalf of children determined abandoned by a court, who were under the custody of the State, and for whom the State could not determine the financial circumstances of the parents despite diligent efforts. This provision was not included in the final conference agreement.

Physical Removal from Home. As already stated, current law bases title IV-E eligibility on the income and assets of a child's family, from whom the child has been removed. Under HHS' interpretation of current law, to be eligible for

Federal reimbursement, children must have been physically removed from the home of their AFDC-eligible family. Particularly in light of the growing use of relatives as foster parents, this interpretation--that the removal must be physical, rather than a change in legal custody--has created concern.

For example, Federal reimbursement currently would not be available for a grandmother caring for a grandchild whose mother was AFDC-eligible, if the child came to stay at the grandmother's home before legal custody was transferred to the State and the child was formally placed with the grandmother for foster care. Similarly, if a child lived with his or her AFDC-eligible mother, and the grandmother also shared the home, Federal reimbursement would not be available to the grandmother if the mother abandoned the home and the State subsequently assumed legal custody of the child. Even if the State then placed the child with the grandmother for foster care, no physical removal had occurred; and, therefore, the case would be ineligible for Federal reimbursement.

As passed by the House, the child welfare legislation would have specified that title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance reimbursement would have been available on behalf of otherwise eligible children who have not been physically removed from the home of their caretaker, but of whom the State had assumed legal custody. This provision was not included in the conference agreement.

This particular provision is related to the larger issue of "kinship" care, in which relatives are used as foster parents. Kinship care is a growing form of foster care and raises a number of issues, including appropriate licensing standards, maintenance payment rates, and reasonable efforts to reunite children with their parents when they may be living with other relatives.

Voluntary Placements. Under current law, States may not be reimbursed for foster care payments made on behalf of a child removed from home as a result of a voluntary placement agreement with the child's parents if the child has remained in the placement for more than 180 days, unless a court finds within the first 180 days that the placement is in the child's best interests. If the judicial determination is not reached within the 180-day deadline, the case is permanently disqualified from receiving Federal funds.

Some State and local child welfare agencies have expressed concern that they have no control over court calendars, and that once the 180-day deadline is passed, there is no incentive to pursue the judicial determination since the case will never qualify for Federal funds. Thus, the House passed language to provide that if the judicial determination is not reached within the first 180 days of a voluntary placement, Federal reimbursement would be suspended for the period beginning 180 days after placement, but could be resumed 180 days after the judicial determination is finally obtained. This provision was not included in the final agreement.

APPENDIX A: LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The following is a chronology of the child welfare provisions which were passed as part of H.R. 11 in the 102nd Congress, and pocket-vetoed by President Bush:

House Action

Representative Downey, then-chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, introduced the Family Preservation Act, H.R. 2571, on June 6, 1991. That legislation was revised, approved by the subcommittee, and re-introduced on October 22, 1991, as H.R. 3603.

The Ways and Means Committee approved H.R. 3603 on July 2, 1992, along with a 10 percent surtax on millionaire income to provide the needed revenues (H. Rpt. 102-624, Part I). The House Education and Labor Committee was granted sequential jurisdiction on selected issues and reported amendments on July 31, 1992 (H. Rpt. 102-624, Part II).

On July 9, 1992, Representatives Downey and Panetta introduced the Children's Initiative (H.R. 5600), which contained the Family Preservation Act as reported, the millionaire surtax, and a series of childhood hunger provisions.

On August 5, 1992, the House Rules Committee reported a resolution, allowing the House to consider H.R. 3603, with the text of H.R. 5600 substituted for the version approved by the Ways and Means and Education and Labor Committees. In other words, when H.R. 3603 was considered by the full House, it contained the child welfare provisions, the childhood hunger provisions, and the millionaire surtax.

The bill was passed on August 6, 1992, by a vote of 256-163. The House defeated an effort, by a vote of 191-230, to return the bill to Committee with instructions to substitute an alternative measure, proposed by Representatives Nancy Johnson and Weldon. The Johnson/Weldon substitute was similar to legislation introduced earlier by Representative Johnson and Senator Hatch (H.R. 5316 and S. 2809) and by Representative Weldon on behalf of the Administration (H.R. 5530).

Senate Action

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Bentsen introduced S. 4, the Child Welfare and Preventive Services Act, on January 14, 1991. The Finance Committee on July 29, 1992, incorporated S. 4, with minor revisions, into the Committee's version of H.R. 11, the Revenue Act of 1992. No written report was filed. The full Senate passed H.R. 11 on September 29, 1992. The House had already passed its version of H.R. 11 on July 2, 1992.

Conference Committee and Final Action

When House-Senate conferees met to resolve differences in the two versions of H.R. 11, it was agreed that the child welfare provisions in H.R. 3603 would be considered within the scope of the conference. The conference agreement was passed by the House on October 6, 1992 (by a vote of 208 to 202) and by the Senate on October 8, 1992 (by a vote of 67 to 22).

President Bush pocket-vetoed H.R. 11 on November 5, 1992, after the 102nd Congress had already adjourned.

**APPENDIX B: CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST
ESTIMATE**

The following is derived from a table prepared by Congressional Budget Office (CBO) staff on October 20, 1992, of child welfare provisions in the conference agreement on H.R. 11. Only provisions with estimated annual costs of at least \$1 million are included. All amounts are direct spending, or entitlement spending, unless otherwise noted. "BA" indicates budget authority, "O" indicates estimated outlays, and * indicates amounts less than \$500,000.

CBO Cost Estimate of Child Welfare Provisions in H.R. 11
(by fiscal year, in millions of dollars)

	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		5-year	
	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O
Child welfare services:												
Innovative services ^a	95	70	205	180	280	260	300	295	345	335	1,225	1,140
Substance abuse-related services	40	30	90	75	110	105	115	115	125	125	480	450
Respite care	0	0	30	25	55	50	65	60	85	80	235	215
Grants to State Courts ^a	0	0	15	10	20	20	20	20	20	20	75	70
Coordination of services:												
Comprehensive service projects	0	0	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	17	17
Coordination demonstrations	*	*	5	4	6	6	6	6	1	2	18	18
Foster care and adoption assistance:												
Dissolved adoptions	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	22	22
Expanded definition of special needs--adoption assistance	0	0	2	1	5	5	10	10	20	20	37	36
Expanded definition of special needs--Medicaid	0	0	*	*	1	1	2	2	5	5	8	8

See notes at end of table.

CBO Cost Estimate of Child Welfare Provisions in H.R. 11--Continued
(by fiscal year, in millions of dollars)

	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		5-year	
	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O
Adoption tax credit ^b (revenues)		-1		-11		-11		-11		-11		-45
Independent living: Permanent extension of capped entitlement ^c	-2	*	-5	-2	-7	-5	-10	-7	-12	-10	-36	-24
Disregard of assets-- foster care	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	25	25
Disregard of assets-- Medicaid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5
Independent living demonstration (authorization, subject to appropriations)	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	*	3	3
Child welfare training: Extension of 75 percent matching rate	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	25	24
1-year moratorium on title IV-E collections	110	110	-55	-55	-35	-35	-20	-20	0	0	0	0
1-year moratorium on title IV-B collections	15	15	-15	-15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Data collection: Enhanced matching rate for data collection	10	10	45	40	40	40	20	25	10	10	125	125

CBO Cost Estimate of Child Welfare Provisions in H.R. 11--Continued
(by fiscal year, in millions of dollars)

	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		5-year	
	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O	BA	O
Evaluations:												
Innovative family services entitlement evaluation ^d (authorization, subject to appropriations)	8	2	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	40	33
Foster care and child welfare evaluations (authorization, subject to appropriations)	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	*	*	5	5
Federal matching for longitudinal data base development	0	0	5	5	7	7	7	7	1	1	20	20
Child welfare demonstrations (authorization, subject to appropriations)	0	0	15	3	15	15	15	15	15	15	60	48
Total, direct spending	281	247	340	286	503	475	536	534	621	609	2,281	2,151
Total, authorizations subject to appropriations	9	3	26	13	25	25	25	25	23	23	108	89
Total, revenues		-1		-11		-11		-11		-11		-45

^dStatutory language in H.R. 11 would authorize \$1,300 million over 5 years for innovative family services, with \$75 million earmarked for grants to courts and a net of \$1,225 million for innovative family services. This table follows the

statutory language, although the statement of managers indicates that conferees intended to authorize a total of \$1,375 million for innovative family services, with \$75 million earmarked for grants to courts and a net of \$1,300 million for innovative family services.

^bEstimate of revenue loss prepared by Joint Committee on Taxation.

^cThis section would have permanently authorized the independent living program, at an annual entitlement ceiling level of \$70 million. The CBO baseline assumed extension of independent living at a level that would have adjusted the 1992 level of \$70 million for inflation. This table shows savings in the bill from the inflation-adjusted levels in the CBO baseline.

^dAlthough no specific authorization is contained in the statutory language, the statement of managers indicates \$8 million annually for a period of 5 years would be authorized for the Secretary's evaluation of activities under the innovative services entitlement. The table follows the statement of managers.

CWLA news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 18, 1993

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CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE SUPPORTS PRESIDENT CLINTON'S ECONOMIC PLAN

Washington, DC--One of the country's leading child advocacy groups that represents more than 700 child welfare agencies and organizations emphasized its support for President Clinton's economic plan to strengthen the nation. The Executive Director of the Child Welfare League of America, David S. Liederman, issued the following statement:

"The Child Welfare League of America represents more than two million children and families, most of whom have suffered greatly from the devastating effects of abuse and neglect, alcohol and drugs, housing shortages and unemployment. Many live in foster care, many are waiting to be adopted, and they have been left out and ignored for too long.

"The needs of children and families, especially those who are vulnerable, must be a top priority in this country. We applaud the President's proposal for full funding of the WIC program, Head Start and immunizations for all. Affordable housing and job training, additional funds for substance abuse treatment and HIV/AIDS as well as parenting and family support services are important parts of the President's proposal. This is a most encouraging time for America's children.

"We know that everyone must participate if President Clinton's plan is to work. There will be shared sacrifice. We will work with President Clinton and his administration to help make the American dream a reality especially for the neediest among us, for in so doing we support our children, strengthen our families and build a stronger nation."

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