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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Speechwriting, White House Office of
Series: Grant, Mary Kate, Files
Subseries: Subject File, 1988-1991

OA/ID Number: 13877
Folder ID Number: 13877-003

Folder Title:
Adopted Children Event, 1/25/90

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

January 25, 1990

For Immediate Release

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTED CHILDREN

The East Room

2:39 P.M. EST

RICHARD MIDDLETON: Good evening, boys and girls, and mothers and fathers. My name is Richard Middleton. I'm 11 years old. I adopted my father -- (laughter) -- at least a year ago. I love my father. And I'm very glad that the President and Mrs. Bush are helping more children like me to find parents to love. That's why it's such a great honor for me to introduce to you, boys and girls, moms and dads, the President of the United States. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Richard, good job. (Applause.)

Well, good afternoon. And thank you, Richard, a wonderful introduction. You only had to use your cards for one sentence and I have to use it for the whole speech here, see. (Laughter.) But you did a great job.

And to Secretary Sullivan, thank you, sir. It's always a pleasure to be with you. And thank you, everyone, for traveling here today -- especially the Orsi family, who drove all the way from Connecticut with their 21 children -- 19 of whom are adopted. And I'm glad all of you could join me here in the White House. You know, in fact, this has got to be the most unique event ever held in the White House I think. It's like a fish pond, moving around. It's very good. And I'm glad to have you all here.

You know, this time last year, when Barbara and I became the official caretakers of the White House for four years, the first thing we did was invite all of our children and our grandchildren to spend our first night here "together" upstairs as a family.

And my family is very, very important to me and I feel lucky to have been blessed with a wonderful wife and children and, of course, now 12 grandchildren. But all of you here today are just as lucky because you, too, are part of a family of your own -- to grow with you, share with you and, most of all, to love you.

Each of your moms and dads know just how special you are when they picked you out to go home with them. And now you've got some of the greatest parents around. And they have so much love to give you and they feel the warmth and joy of your own love in return.

The kids who are still waiting to be adopted don't have parents yet, but they're not alone. They have many friends -- people who have spent their lives helping children just like you find families -- just like you all helping them find families of their own.

Let me tell you about some of them here with us today. First, there are business leaders -- corporate leaders who have committed to helping children like you find loving homes. For example, how many of you watch cartoons? Quite a few. Do you know the Jetsons? Or the Flintstones? Or Yogi Bear? Well, the people who work at Hanna Barberra created those cartoons. And now they're creating a new character who will encourage families to adopt

MORE

children.

And some of you may be aware of a TV program in which children who want to be adopted go on television in cities across America -- it's called "Wednesday's Child." And it is very successful. Almost three-quarters of all the kids who appear on this show find families. And so NBC network is going to work with us to get more kids on TV and more stations to show "Wednesday's Child" so more families will see these children.

There's a man here today who is very committed to helping other children just like you. He's a friend of mine for a long time, and his name is Dave Thomas, and he was an adopted child. And he grew up to be a successful businessman with a family of his own. Now he's the head of Wendy's Hamburgers -- and by the way, he really does have his own daughter named Wendy. Now, where is Dave? He was -- here he is, right over here. And he's going to make information available to help put loving parents together with special needs children in Wendy's all across the country.

And now I'd like to tell you about another man whom I've just met -- and what an inspiring man he is. Taurean Blacque is a noted actor with an impressive list of credits. But he deserves even more credit for what he does in real life. He has adopted 10 special needs children, 10 children.

You know, single people and older Americans can be great adoptive parents. And Taurean's not married. He says that having 10 kids will probably keep him too busy to get married for a long time. (Laughter.) I don't know if he qualifies as an older American yet -- (laughter) -- but I hear that his hair started going gray the minute he got all these kids. (Laughter.) But he says he wouldn't change it for the world. He proves that love is something you do every day; love is something that takes hard work and commitment -- because he had to fight to get every one of those children.

Taurean asked me to do a head count and make sure nobody got left behind in the Green Room. Are all 10 of you here? (Laughter.) Okay, I can't take a count here; I'm too busy here. (Laughter.) No, all 10 are, I'm sure. And you've got a very special dad.

You know, people like Taurean, who open up not just their homes, but their hearts are amazing people. And I know that we have a number of adoptive parents among us today as well. And you're a breed apart because while so many people shout about how to make the world a better place, you quietly lead by example, changing the world in a very special way -- one child at a time. Truly, yours is a gift of limitless love.

This guy's got to go real bad here. (Laughter.) That's okay, we're used to that around here. That's okay, big guy.

Okay, where were we? (Laughter.) No, but seriously, not all children are as lucky as the ones here today. There are thousands of kids in America who still need a home and a family to care about them. This year, an estimated 30,000 children available for adoption spent their Christmas holidays waiting for a permanent home. And most of these kids -- about 60 percent -- are special needs children. To find families for these kids, our administration has sent to Congress our Special Needs Adoptive Assistance Act to help individuals meet the financial commitment involved in adopting special needs children. We've also taken steps to encourage federal employees wanting to give loving home to these children, who often wait for years to be adopted.

Every children in America deserves a loving home and a family, and they deserve something else -- the chance to succeed in school and in life. Government cannot substitute for a supportive home. But some children do need extra help to prepare them for the challenge of learning.

MORE

At the education summit, the governors and I agreed that through the Head Start program we are making real progress towards preparing disadvantaged children for school. And I am pleased to announce that my 1991 budget will propose the largest increase ever -- half a billion additional dollars for Head Start. This new funding will increase the Head Start enrollment to 667,000 children, and bring us to the point where we can reach 70 percent of this nation's disadvantaged four-year-olds through Head Start. I urge the Congress to fund our Head Start proposal in full, because every American child with special needs, whether physical, emotional, or material, deserves the opportunity for a full and happy life.

Our children are precious. And you're the reason all of us came together here today -- to tell you how special you are to us and how glad we are that you are in the family. You know, our son Marvin and his wife Margaret just adopted their second child, a little grandson, our grandson, Walker. And if I do say so myself -- this guy is really something. And so is his sister, Marshall, who's also adopted. And they're an important part of our family, and we love them.

Through my wonderful experiences with adoption in the Bush family, I've learned something. I've learned this: Adoption is good for our country, and for the children who need a loving home, and for the birth parents who want the best for their children. And for the adoptive parents, by giving them the joy of raising and loving a child.

See the sign behind me -- "Adoption Works -- for Everyone." And that is true. Adoption works because each one of you is so special. And because you adopted very special parents. And it works because everyone in this room loves you very much.

From my family to yours, Barbara and I say thank you and God bless you.

And now, Barbara I understand we're going to invite this whole gang into the State Dining Room for cookies and lemonade. So why don't we go on in there -- and thank you all for coming to the White House. Glad to have you. (Applause.)

END

2:49 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL 2:30 P.M. EST
FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 1990

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT CELEBRATION OF CHILDREN CEREMONY

The East Room

January 26, 1990

You know, this time last year, when Barbara and I became the official caretakers of the White House for four years, the first thing we did was invite all our children and grandchildren to spend our first night here "together" as a family.

My family is very, very important to me and I feel lucky to have been blessed with a wonderful wife and children, and, of course, now 12 grandchildren. But all of you here today are just as lucky because now you, too, are part of a family of your own -- to grow with you, share with you and most of all to love you.

Each of your moms and dads knew just how special you are when they picked you out to go home with them. And now you've got some of the greatest parents around. They have so much love to give you and they feel the warmth and joy of your love in return.

The kids who are still waiting to be adopted don't have parents yet, but they are not alone. They have many friends -- people who have spent their lives helping children just like you find families of their own. Let me tell you about some of them here with us today.

First, there are corporate leaders who have committed to helping children like you find loving homes. For example, how many of you watch cartoons? Do you know the Jetsons? Or the Flintstones? Or Yogi Bear? Well, the people who work at Hanna Barberra created those cartoons. And now they're creating a new character who will encourage families to adopt children.

And some of you may be aware of a TV program in which children who want to be adopted go on television in cities across America -- it's called "Wednesday's Child." And it's very successful. Almost three-quarters of all the kids who appear on this show find families. And so NBC network is going to work with us to get more kids on TV and more stations to show "Wednesday's Child" so more families will see these children.

There's a man here today who is very committed to helping other children just like you. His name is Dave Thomas, and he was an adopted child. He grew up to be a successful businessman with a family of his own. Now he's the head of Wendy's Hamburgers -- by the way, he really does have a daughter named Wendy -- and he's going to make information available to help put loving parents together with special needs children in Wendy's all across the country.

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You know, single people and older Americans can be great adoptive parents, and Taurean's not married. He says that having ten kids will probably keep him too busy to get married for a long time. And I don't know if he qualifies as an older American yet, but I heard his hair started going gray the minute he got all these kids.

But Taurean says he wouldn't change it for the world. He proves that love is something you do every day. Love is something that takes hard work and commitment, because he had to fight to get every one of those children. Taurean asked me to do a headcount and make sure nobody got left behind in the Green Room. Are all ten of you here? You've got a very special dad.

People like Taurean who open not just their homes but their hearts are amazing people. And I know that we have a number of adoptive parents among us today as well. You are a breed apart, because while so many people shout about how to make the world a better place, you quietly lead by example, changing the world in a special way, one child at a time. Truly, yours is a gift of limitless love.

But not all children are as lucky as the ones here today. Sadly, there are thousands of children in America who still need a home and a family to care about them. This year, an estimated 30,000 children, available for adoption, spent their Christmas holidays waiting for a permanent home. Most of these kids -- about 60 percent -- are special needs children.

To help find families for these kids, our Administration has sent to Congress the Special Needs Adoption Assistance Act to help individuals meet the financial commitment involved in adopting special needs children. We've also taken steps to encourage Federal employees wanting to give loving homes to these children, who often wait for years to be adopted.

Every child in America deserves a loving home and family. And they deserve something else -- the chance to succeed in school and in life. Government cannot substitute for a supportive home, but some children do need extra help to prepare them for the challenge of learning. At the Education Summit, the Governors and I agreed that through the Head Start program we are making real progress towards preparing disadvantaged children for school.

I am pleased to announce that my 1991 budget will propose the largest increase ever -- half a billion additional dollars -- for Head Start. This new funding will increase Head Start enrollment to 667,000 children and bring us to the point where we can reach seventy percent of this Nation's disadvantaged four-year-olds through Head Start.

I urge the Congress to fund our Head Start proposal in full, because every American child with special needs -- whether physical, emotional, or material, deserves the opportunity for a full and happy life.

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Through my wonderful experiences with adoption in the Bush family, I've learned this: Adoption is good for America, for the children who need a loving home, for the birth parents who want the best for their children, and for the adoptive parents by giving them the joy of raising and loving a child. See the sign behind me? "Adoption Works -- for Everyone." It's true.

Adoption works because each one of you is so special and because you adopted very special parents. And it works because everyone in this room loves you very much.

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SPECIAL CRD

**SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTED CHILDREN / THE EAST ROOM
JANUARY 26, 1990**

GOOD AFTERNOON. THANK YOU, RICHARD, FOR THAT GREAT INTRODUCTION. SECRETARY SULLIVAN, IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU. AND THANK YOU, EVERYONE, FOR TRAVELING HERE TODAY -- ESPECIALLY THE ORSI FAMILY, WHO DROVE ALL THE WAY FROM CONNECTICUT WITH THEIR 21 CHILDREN -- 19 OF WHOM ARE ADOPTED. I'M GLAD ALL OF YOU COULD JOIN ME HERE IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

YOU KNOW, THIS TIME LAST YEAR, WHEN BARBARA AND I BECAME THE OFFICIAL CARETAKERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE FOR FOUR YEARS, THE FIRST THING WE DID WAS INVITE ALL OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN TO SPEND OUR FIRST NIGHT HERE "TOGETHER" AS A FAMILY.

MY FAMILY IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT TO ME AND I FEEL LUCKY TO HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH A WONDERFUL WIFE AND CHILDREN, AND, OF COURSE, NOW 12 GRANDCHILDREN. BUT ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY ARE JUST AS LUCKY BECAUSE NOW YOU, TOO, ARE PART OF A FAMILY OF YOUR OWN -- TO GROW WITH YOU, SHARE WITH YOU AND MOST OF ALL ... TO LOVE YOU.

EACH OF YOUR MOMS AND DADS KNEW JUST HOW SPECIAL YOU ARE WHEN THEY PICKED YOU OUT TO GO HOME WITH

THEM. AND NOW YOU'VE GOT SOME OF THE GREATEST PARENTS AROUND. THEY HAVE SO MUCH LOVE TO GIVE YOU AND THEY FEEL THE WARMTH AND JOY OF YOUR LOVE IN RETURN.

THE KIDS WHO ARE STILL WAITING TO BE ADOPTED DON'T HAVE PARENTS YET, BUT THEY ARE NOT ALONE. THEY HAVE MANY FRIENDS -- PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPENT THEIR LIVES HELPING CHILDREN JUST LIKE YOU FIND FAMILIES OF THEIR OWN. LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT SOME OF THEM HERE WITH US TODAY.

FIRST, THERE ARE CORPORATE LEADERS WHO HAVE COMMITTED TO HELPING CHILDREN LIKE YOU FIND LOVING HOMES. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW MANY OF YOU WATCH CARTOONS? DO YOU KNOW THE JETSONS? OR THE FLINTSTONES? OR YOGI BEAR? WELL, THE PEOPLE WHO WORK AT HANNA BARBERA CREATED THOSE CARTOONS. AND NOW THEY'RE CREATING A NEW CHARACTER WHO WILL ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO ADOPT CHILDREN.

AND SOME OF YOU MAY BE AWARE OF A TV PROGRAM IN WHICH CHILDREN WHO WANT TO BE ADOPTED GO ON TELEVISION IN CITIES ACROSS AMERICA -- IT'S CALLED "WEDNESDAY'S CHILD." AND IT'S VERY SUCCESSFUL. ALMOST THREE-QUARTERS OF ALL THE KIDS WHO APPEAR ON THIS SHOW FIND FAMILIES. AND SO NBC NETWORK IS

GOING TO WORK WITH US TO GET MORE KIDS ON TV AND MORE STATIONS TO SHOW "WEDNESDAY'S CHILD" SO MORE FAMILIES WILL SEE THESE CHILDREN.

THERE'S A MAN HERE TODAY WHO IS VERY COMMITTED TO HELPING OTHER CHILDREN JUST LIKE YOU. HIS NAME IS DAVE THOMAS, AND HE WAS AN ADOPTED CHILD. HE GREW UP TO BE A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN WITH A FAMILY OF HIS OWN. NOW HE'S THE HEAD OF WENDY'S HAMBURGERS -- BY THE WAY, HE REALLY DOES HAVE A DAUGHTER NAMED WENDY -- AND HE'S GOING TO MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO HELP PUT LOVING PARENTS TOGETHER WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN IN WENDY'S ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

AND NOW I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT ANOTHER MAN WHOM I JUST MET, AND WHAT AN INSPIRING MAN HE IS. TAUREAN BLACQUE [TORY-EN BLACK] IS A NOTED ACTOR WITH AN IMPRESSIVE LIST OF CREDITS. BUT HE DESERVES EVEN MORE CREDIT FOR WHAT HE DOES IN REAL LIFE: HE HAS ADOPTED TEN SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN -- TEN CHILDREN. YOU KNOW, SINGLE PEOPLE AND OLDER AMERICANS CAN BE GREAT ADOPTIVE PARENTS, AND TAUREAN'S NOT MARRIED. HE SAYS THAT HAVING TEN KIDS WILL PROBABLY KEEP HIM TOO BUSY TO GET MARRIED FOR A LONG TIME. AND I DON'T KNOW IF HE QUALIFIES AS AN

OLDER AMERICAN YET, BUT I HEARD HIS HAIR STARTED GOING GRAY THE MINUTE HE GOT ALL THESE KIDS.

BUT TAUREAN SAYS HE WOULDN'T CHANGE IT FOR THE WORLD. HE PROVES THAT LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO EVERY DAY. LOVE IS SOMETHING THAT TAKES HARD WORK AND COMMITMENT, BECAUSE HE HAD TO FIGHT TO GET EVERY ONE OF THOSE CHILDREN. TAUREAN ASKED ME TO DO A HEADCOUNT AND MAKE SURE NOBODY GOT LEFT BEHIND IN THE GREEN ROOM. ARE ALL TEN OF YOU HERE? YOU'VE GOT A VERY SPECIAL DAD.

PEOPLE LIKE TAUREAN WHO OPEN NOT JUST THEIR HOMES BUT THEIR HEARTS ARE AMAZING PEOPLE. AND I KNOW THAT WE HAVE A NUMBER OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS AMONG US TODAY AS WELL. YOU ARE A BREED APART, BECAUSE WHILE SO MANY PEOPLE SHOUT ABOUT HOW TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, YOU QUIETLY LEAD BY EXAMPLE, CHANGING THE WORLD IN A SPECIAL WAY, ONE CHILD AT A TIME. TRULY, YOURS IS A GIFT OF LIMITLESS LOVE.

BUT NOT ALL CHILDREN ARE AS LUCKY AS THE ONES HERE TODAY. SADLY, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN AMERICA WHO STILL NEED A HOME AND A FAMILY TO CARE ABOUT THEM. THIS YEAR, AN ESTIMATED 30,000 CHILDREN, AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION, SPENT THEIR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS WAITING FOR A PERMANENT HOME.

MOST OF THESE KIDS -- ABOUT 60 PERCENT -- ARE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN.

TO HELP FIND FAMILIES FOR THESE KIDS, ^{our} THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS SENT TO CONGRESS THE SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ACT TO HELP INDIVIDUALS MEET THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENT INVOLVED IN ADOPTING SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN. WE'VE ALSO TAKEN STEPS TO ENCOURAGE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WANTING TO GIVE LOVING HOMES TO THESE CHILDREN, WHO OFTEN WAIT FOR YEARS TO BE ADOPTED.

EVERY CHILD IN AMERICA DESERVES A LOVING HOME AND FAMILY. AND THEY DESERVE SOMETHING ELSE -- THE CHANCE TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE. ^{do} SOME CHILDREN ^{government cannot substitute for a supportive home, etc, but} NEED EXTRA HELP TO PREPARE THEM FOR THE CHALLENGE OF LEARNING. AT THE EDUCATION SUMMIT, THE GOVERNORS AND I AGREED THAT THROUGH THE HEAD START PROGRAM WE ARE MAKING REAL PROGRESS TOWARDS PREPARING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL.

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY 1991 BUDGET WILL PROPOSE THE LARGEST INCREASE EVER -- HALF A BILLION ADDITIONAL DOLLARS -- FOR HEAD START. THIS NEW FUNDING WILL INCREASE HEAD START ENROLLMENT TO 668,000 ^{children} AND BRING US TO THE POINT WHERE WE ^{can} WILL

reach
ENROLL SEVENTY PERCENT OF ^{*this nation's*} DISADVANTAGED FOUR-YEAR-
OLDS ^{*through*} IN HEAD START.

I URGE THE CONGRESS TO FUND OUR HEAD START PROPOSAL IN FULL, BECAUSE EVERY AMERICAN CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS -- WHETHER PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, OR MATERIAL, DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY ^{*for a full and happy*} ~~WE SEEK TO~~ ^{*life*} CREATE.

OUR CHILDREN ARE PRECIOUS. YOU'RE THE REASON ALL OF US CAME TOGETHER TODAY -- TO TELL YOU HOW SPECIAL YOU ARE TO US, AND HOW GLAD WE ARE THAT YOU ARE IN THE FAMILY. YOU KNOW, MY SON MARVIN AND HIS WIFE MARGARET JUST ADOPTED THEIR SECOND CHILD, OUR GRANDSON, WALKER. AND IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF -- HE'S REALLY SOMETHING. AND SO IS HIS SISTER MARSHALL, WHO IS ALSO ADOPTED. THEY'RE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR FAMILY, AND WE LOVE THEM VERY MUCH.

THROUGH MY WONDERFUL EXPERIENCES WITH ADOPTION IN THE BUSH FAMILY, I'VE LEARNED THIS: ADOPTION IS GOOD FOR AMERICA. FOR THE CHILDREN WHO NEED A LOVING HOME. FOR THE BIRTH PARENTS WHO WANT THE BEST FOR THEIR CHILDREN. AND FOR THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS BY GIVING THEM THE JOY OF RAISING AND LOVING A CHILD. SEE THE SIGN BEHIND ME? "ADOPTION WORKS - - FOR EVERYONE." IT'S TRUE.

**ADOPTION WORKS BECAUSE EACH ONE OF YOU IS SO
SPECIAL ... AND BECAUSE YOU ADOPTED VERY SPECIAL
PARENTS. AND IT WORKS BECAUSE EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM
LOVES YOU VERY MUCH.**

**FROM MY FAMILY TO YOURS, THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS
YOU. GOD BLESS AMERICA.**

**[AND NOW, BARBARA AND I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE
EVERYONE TO THE STATE DINING ROOM FOR COOKIES AND
LEMONADE.]**

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Miss Cleared by JC

INSERT ON HEAD START.

he'll call you w/any substantive change from OMB

Insert on page 3, after first full paragraph (following "Truly, yours is a gift with love.")

[There is another issue which involves parents that is important to me. At the Education Summit Conference last September the Governors stressed, and I agree with, the need for all children to start school ready to learn.]

AD

Some children need extra help to prepare them for the challenge of learning
[Parents are the most important influence on their children's ability to begin learning when they enter school. Children who

are disadvantaged may need extra help. They are at special risk of being behind when they start school.] *At the Ed Summit,*

I agreed that through the Head Start program we are making real progress towards *preparing* assisting disadvantaged children to become

~~prepared for school.~~ I am pleased to announce that my 1991 budget will propose the largest increase ever -- half a billion additional dollars -- for Head Start. This new funding will enable Head Start enrollment to go up to 668,000 and bring us to the point where we will enroll 70% of poor four year olds in Head Start. [With the cooperation of other programs that help prepare children for school, we will be within reach of our goal of offering all disadvantaged children a head start before they start school.]

Congress did not give us all we asked for last year for Head Start, but this year I am hopeful the Congress will agree with the wisdom of our proposal. I wish every member of Congress

could be here today to see how loving parents who struggle for their children can create opportunities for success in school and in life. Every American child with special needs -- whether physical, emotional, or material -- deserves the opportunity we seek to create.

HHS

INSERT ON HEAD START.

Insert on page 3, after first full paragraph (following "Truly, yours is a gift with love.")

There is another issue which involves parents that is important to me. ^{that is the need to provide all income - eligible children w/ the advantages of at least one year of Head Start.} At the Education Summit Conference last September the Governors stressed, ~~and I agree~~ with the need for all children to start school ready to learn.

Parents are the most important influence on their children's ability to begin learning when they enter school. Children who are disadvantaged may need extra help. They are at special risk of being behind when they start school. The Governors and I agree that through the Head Start program we are making real progress towards assisting disadvantaged children to become prepared for school. I am pleased to announce that my 1991 budget will propose the largest increase ever -- half a billion additional dollars -- for Head Start. This new funding will enable Head Start enrollment to go up to 668,000 and bring us to the point where we will enroll (70%) of poor four year olds in Head Start. With the cooperation of other programs that help prepare children for school, we will be within reach of our goal of offering all disadvantaged children a head start ^{experience} before they start school.

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INSERT ON HEAD START.

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Insert on page 3, after first full paragraph (following "Truly, yours is a gift with love.")

critical *involving children*

There is another issue which ~~involves parents~~ that is important to me. At the Education Summit Conference last September the Governors stressed, and I agree with, the need for all children to start school ready to learn.

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CA
Central to the President's program is a very large new resource commitment -- \$500 million additional dollars in FY 1991 -- 36% more than FY 1990. This will allow up to 180,000 additional children to enroll in Head Start. With the cooperation of state early childhood programs, additional state-financed Head Start enrollment will make the Head Start experience available to all eligible children in many states.

Background on Head Start

Head Start is a comprehensive child development program serving pre-school low-income children, usually in the year just before entering public school. The program emphasizes parental involvement and control of the program's direction. It operates through a network of local grantees that include local non-profit organizations, school districts, and local governments.

From its inception in 1965, twenty five years ago, Head Start has emphasized comprehensive, developmentally appropriate services and programs. Children enrolled in Head Start receive immunizations, medical care, dental care, and speech, hearing, and psychological screening. Each program also provides each enrollee with at least one meal. Head Start programs emphasize the acquisition of social and behavioral skills necessary to success in school.

Elements of the President's Head Start Program

- o Funding is proposed to increase from \$1,386 million in FY 90 to \$1,886 million in FY 91. Enrollment would rise from 450,000 this year to 667,000, providing 70% of the estimated number of children in the Head Start target group with a year of Head Start before they start school.

- o Head Start will coordinate its additional funds with state-funded child development programs. 25 states and the District of Columbia provided \$225 million for child development programs in 1988. Where a state provides funds to a Head Start grantee, additional federal dollars will flow to the Head Start grantee proportional to the state's contribution.
- o Head Start will fund Head Start advocates to work in state governments to improve the transition from Head Start to the schools. This activity will begin with ten states in 1990.
 - While Head Start graduates enter school with a higher level of school readiness than low-income children who had no Head Start experience, these gains are often lost in the early school years. These staff will work with states to make reforms to keep these children from losing ground gained in Head Start.
- o Head Start will seek to build working relationships with other programs that emphasize parental involvement. The first partnership will be with Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. will seek to sign up Head Start graduates as Daisy scouts and their mothers as group leaders.
- o Through a new program, Family Service Centers, Head Start will expand its contact with the most troubled of the families with children in Head Start.
 - The Family Service Centers will focus on Head Start families whose members use illegal drugs. In some Head Start centers more than half the children live in such families. The Family Service Center will seek to use the positive relationship with the family built by the Head Start program to bring substance abusing family members into treatment.
 - The Family Service Centers will also seek to make Head Start families families of readers. Research results show that children who are read to at home and have access to books are more likely to succeed in school than those who do not.
- o Head Start will seek to increase the role of volunteers in the program. This activity will emphasize volunteer services by psychologists, psychiatrists, speech and language therapists, and other professionals whose services will benefit the school readiness of Head Start children.

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January 26, 1990

You know, this time last year, when Barbara and I became the official caretakers of the White House for four years, the first thing we did was invite all our children and grandchildren to spend our first night here "together" as a family.

My family is very, very important to me and I feel lucky to have been blessed with a wonderful wife and children, and, of course, now 12 grandchildren. But all of you here today are just as lucky because now you, too, are part of a family of your own -- to grow with you, share with you and most of all to love you.

Each of your moms and dads knew just how special you are when they picked you out to go home with them. And now you've got some of the greatest parents around. They have so much love to give you and they feel the warmth and joy of your love in return.

The kids who are still waiting to be adopted don't have parents yet, but they are not alone. They have many friends -- people who have spent their lives helping children just like you find families of their own. Let me tell you about some of them here with us today.

First, there are corporate leaders who have committed to helping children like you find loving homes. For example, how many of you watch cartoons? Do you know the Jetsons? Or the Flintstones? Or Yogi Bear? Well, the people who work at Hanna Barberra created those cartoons. And now they're creating a new character who will encourage families to adopt children.

And some of you may be aware of a TV program in which children who want to be adopted go on television in cities across America -- it's called "Wednesday's Child." And it's very successful. Almost three-quarters of all the kids who appear on this show find families. And so NBC network is going to work with us to get more kids on TV and more stations to show "Wednesday's Child" so more families will see these children.

There's a man here today who is very committed to helping other children just like you. His name is Dave Thomas, and he was an adopted child. He grew up to be a successful businessman with a family of his own. Now he's the head of Wendy's Hamburgers -- by the way, he really does have a daughter named Wendy -- and he's going to make information available to help put loving parents together with special needs children in Wendy's all across the country.

And now I'd like to tell you about another man whom I just met, and what an inspiring man he is. Taurean Blacque is a noted actor with an impressive list of credits. But he deserves even more credit for what he does in real life: He has adopted ten special needs children -- ten children.

You know, single people and older Americans can be great adoptive parents, and Taurean's not married. He says that having ten kids will probably keep him too busy to get married for a long time. And I don't know if he qualifies as an older American yet, but I heard his hair started going gray the minute he got all these kids.

But Taurean says he wouldn't change it for the world. He proves that love is something you do every day. Love is something that takes hard work and commitment, because he had to fight to get every one of those children. Taurean asked me to do a headcount and make sure nobody got left behind in the Green Room. Are all ten of you here? You've got a very special dad.

People like Taurean who open not just their homes but their hearts are amazing people. And I know that we have a number of adoptive parents among us today as well. You are a breed apart, because while so many people shout about how to make the world a better place, you quietly lead by example, changing the world in a special way, one child at a time. Truly, yours is a gift of limitless love.

But not all children are as lucky as the ones here today. Sadly, there are thousands of children in America who still need a home and a family to care about them. This year, an estimated 30,000 children, available for adoption, spent their Christmas holidays waiting for a permanent home. Most of these kids -- about 60 percent -- are special needs children.

To help find families for these kids, our Administration has sent to Congress the Special Needs Adoption Assistance Act to help individuals meet the financial commitment involved in adopting special needs children. We've also taken steps to encourage Federal employees wanting to give loving homes to these children, who often wait for years to be adopted.

Every child in America deserves a loving home and family. And they deserve something else -- the chance to succeed in school and in life. Government cannot substitute for a supportive home, but some children do need extra help to prepare them for the challenge of learning. At the Education Summit, the Governors and I agreed that through the Head Start program we are making real progress towards preparing disadvantaged children for school.

I am pleased to announce that my 1991 budget will propose the largest increase ever -- half a billion additional dollars -- for Head Start. This new funding will increase Head Start enrollment to 667,000 children and bring us to the point where we can reach seventy percent of this Nation's disadvantaged four-year-olds through Head Start.

I urge the Congress to fund our Head Start proposal in full, because every American child with special needs -- whether physical, emotional, or material, deserves the opportunity for a full and happy life.

Our children are precious. You're the reason all of us came together today -- to tell you how special you are to us, and how glad we are that you are in the family. You know, my son Marvin and his wife Margaret just adopted their second child, our grandson, Walker. And if I do say so myself -- he's really something. And so is his sister Marshall, who is also adopted. They're an important part of our family, and we love them very much.

Through my wonderful experiences with adoption in the Bush family, I've learned this: Adoption is good for America, for the children who need a loving home, for the birth parents who want the best for their children, and for the adoptive parents by giving them the joy of raising and loving a child. See the sign behind me? "Adoption Works -- for Everyone." It's true.

Adoption works because each one of you is so special and because you adopted very special parents. And it works because everyone in this room loves you very much.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 24, 1989

July 24, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Administration Support for the Adoption Option

The foundation of our nation is the American family, protector of our most valuable yet vulnerable resource -- our children. Sadly, thousands of American children do not have a family to call their own. They are children who may have been abandoned, neglected or abused, who have seen their childhood unfairly snatched away. We can give them back their childhood, simply by finding them a permanent adoptive family. This, I believe, is an effort worthy of our greatest commitment.

Everyone wins in adoption. It is time for the leaders of the Federal workforce to ensure that our government is pro-adoption. Adoption works -- for children who need homes, for people hoping to become parents, and for women facing a crisis pregnancy.

As the leaders of the Federal civilian and military labor force, we have the opportunity to positively affect the lives of Federal employees and to provide leadership for our entire nation. I am directing you and your staff to consider ways to provide such leadership to advance the adoption alternative.

Adoption can help to address some of our most pressing issues: teenage pregnancy, foster care, infertility, and welfare dependency. Most importantly, adoption provides a home and love to children who may have neither.

Consider just a few facts:

- o An estimated 15 percent of American couples of reproductive age are infertile.
- o About 60,000 children are adopted every year in this country. Of these, 10,000 come from foreign countries.
- o Right now, nearly 30,000 American children are legally available for adoption. Some of them are school-age, some are physically or emotionally handicapped, some are members of sibling groups that need to be placed in the same home, and some are minority children.
- o Each year nearly 25,000 American babies are given life and the chance to be loved when their mothers choose adoption over abortion or unwanted parenthood, yet the opportunity to consider adoption is often denied to pregnant women. I am told that as much as 40 percent of pregnancy counseling does not even mention adoption.

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I have instructed my Domestic Policy Council to develop a Presidential adoption initiative, and that process is well under way. To complement this effort, I am asking you to develop methods for supporting the adoption plans and needs of your employees and for promoting adoption among your workforce. Here are just a few ideas:

- o Use agency resources for employees who are considering adopting, who have adopted children, or who have a family member facing a crisis pregnancy. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) may be the most appropriate resource.
- o Begin planning now for agency-wide celebration and observance of National Adoption Week (Thanksgiving Week). Your agency's focus could be upon local children in need of adoptive homes.
- o Ensure that all employee supervisors are as flexible as possible regarding the adoption-related leave needs of employees. This might include incremental (hourly) leave needed to meet with adoption agency personnel or longer periods of leave to care for a newly adopted child.
- o Feature adoption articles in agency newsletters. These might include stories about employees who have adopted special needs children, infants, or children from other countries, as well as a regular column picturing a local waiting child.

I have instructed both the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Personnel Management to work with you in implementing these and other ideas.

A commitment to adoption is one we can all share. With just a small effort, we can help our own employees and, just as importantly, we can provide national leadership in support of adoption. Finding loving homes for waiting children is reward enough.

GEORGE BUSH

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