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Abortion and Democratic Platform

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MEMORANDUM

TO: GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

FROM: ANN LEWIS

RE: ABORTION and DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

DATE: JUNE 26, 1996

To: Friends
From: Ann Lewis
Date: 6/25/96

Answering Questions about abortion and the Democratic platform

Strategic Principles:

We will not use language which says or implies that the current language is untouchable. To do so would allow the press to criticize us as less “tolerant” than Bob Dole. Nor do we want to start negotiating language, or suggest that we are retreating from our pro-choice position.

The abortion issue is a serious problem for Republicans, not for us. We don’t want to get into debates which could justify “they both have problems with the issue” stories.

That means **process now is as important as language later**; we must keep our friends informed . (So if you get calls, please let me know.)

If you get questions, remember:

- The essence of the pro-choice position is **respect for the moral authority of individuals**. Other words to describe our position are **inclusion and diversity** --that’s what being pro-choice means. (See Bob Casey, below)
- The real difference between the two party platforms is that the Republican platform will still call for criminalizing abortion through a constitutional amendment; while the Democratic platform will advocate policies that can reduce the number of abortions through prevention, education, family planning., etc. (See ‘92 platform, attached)

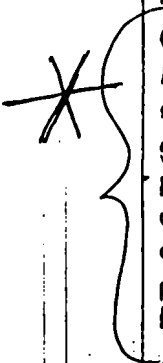
We can’t say it too often:

- This is a serious problem for Republicans because the extremism of their position will be unacceptable to mainstream voters, especially suburban and independent women. (For example, the Texas Republican convention banned abortion even to save the life of the mother, and birth control to people under the age of 17!)
- Last month Bob Dole said that tolerance language in the abortion plank was “non-negotiable” He has now backed away from that position, and has been negotiating ever since --that’s a cave to the extremist right wing of his party.

NOTE: If you hear “Bob Casey was not allowed to speak at the Convention in ‘92..” remember that 8 pro-life speakers addressed the Democratic convention, including Ray Flynn. Bob Casey did not speak because he refused to endorse Bill Clinton, our nominee.

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tion from welfare to work, and require people who can work to go to work within two years in available jobs either in the private sector or in community service to meet unmet needs. This will restore the covenant that welfare was meant to be: a promise of temporary help for people who have fallen on hard times.

 **Choice.** Democrats stand behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, regardless of ability to pay, and support a national law to protect that right. It is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans — not government — can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. The goal of our nation must be to make abortion less necessary, not more difficult or more dangerous. We pledge to support contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education, and policies that support healthy childbearing and enable parents to care most effectively for their children.

Making Schools Work. Education is a cooperative enterprise that can only succeed if everyone accepts and exercises personal responsibility. Students must stay in school and do their best; parents must get involved in their children's education; teachers must attain, maintain, and demonstrate classroom competency; school administrators must enforce discipline and high standards of educational attainment; governments must end the inequalities that create educational ghettos among school districts and provide equal educational opportunity for all; and ensure that teachers' pay measures up to their decisive role in children's lives; and the American people should recognize education as the core of our economy, democracy and society.

Labor-Management Responsibilities. The private sector is the engine of our economy and the main source of national wealth. But it is not enough for those in the private sector just to make as much money as they can. The most irresponsible people in all the 1980s were those at the top of the ladder: the inside traders, quick buck artists, and S&L kingpins who looked out for themselves and not for the country. America's corporate leaders have a responsibility to invest in their country. CEOs, who pay themselves 100 times what they pay the average worker, shouldn't get big raises unrelated to performance. If a company wants to overpay its executives and underinvest in the future or transfer jobs to foreign countries, it shouldn't get special treatment and tax breaks from the Treasury. Managers must work with employees to make the workplace safer, more satisfying and more efficient.

Workers must also accept added responsibilities in the new economy. In return for an increased voice and a greater stake in the success of their enterprises, workers should be prepared to join in cooperative efforts to increase productivity, flexibility and quality. Government's neutrality between labor and management cannot mean neutrality about the collective bargaining process, which has been purposely crippled by Republican administrations. Our economic growth depends on processes, including collective bargaining, that permit labor and management to work together on their common interests, even as they work out their conflicts.

Responsibility for the Environment. For ourselves and future generations, we must protect our environment. We will protect our old growth forests, preserve critical habitats, provide a genuine "no net loss" policy on wetlands, reduce our dependence on toxic chemicals, conserve the critical resources of soil, water and air, oppose new offshore oil drilling and mineral exploration and production in our nation's many environmentally critical areas, and address ocean pollution by reducing oil and toxic waste spills at sea. We believe America's youth can serve its country well through a