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Budget Amplification Press Strategy

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0001

July 28, 1995

TO: Erskine Bowles  
George Stephanopoulos  
Kitty Higgins  
Gene Sperling

FROM: Bruce Katz, Chief of Staff *Bruce Katz*  
Jean Nolan, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs *Jean Nolan*

RE: Budget Amplification Press Strategy

As you know, HUD and other agencies have been participating in an urban working group of the Budget Amplification effort. Following is a proposed press plan to raise awareness of the impact on our cities and their citizens. Secretary Cisneros hopes to meet with you to discuss this plan.

In a speech on July 24 to Boys Nation, President Clinton described his vision in the following way:

*I want this country to be a high-opportunity, smart-work country with good jobs and safe streets, with a clean environment and excellent education and health care; a country in which diverse people live and work together, in which communities and families can solve their own problems, and in which people are given the chance as individuals to live up to the fullest of their God-given potential in a world that is steadily moving toward more peace and freedom.*

Our proposed plan supports the President's priorities in the following ways. It:

- shows "the right way versus the wrong way" of the President's 10-year plan versus the 7-year plan; and
- presents an opportunity to build a redefined "base" of poor, working poor, middle class and moderate-thinking Americans and energize them around the President's approach.

The message would benefit by the President's support, although it does not need his participation for the long haul. In fact, the Cabinet members and their agencies simply need a clear and strong statement from the President that they can use in their efforts over the coming weeks. Without a Presidential endorsement, this message will not be given the weight it deserves nor will it energize mayors and other local officials who want the commitment of the White House on these issues.

## **BUDGET AMPLIFICATION/OUTREACH STRATEGY FOR METROPOLITAN-ORIENTED FEDERAL AGENCIES**

### **The Message**

The Congressional Republicans' budget cuts and seven-year balanced budget plan are harsh and unnecessary. These cuts create a cumulative effect that will hurt poor and hard-working people who live in our nation's metropolitan areas as well as the communities themselves -- and thus threaten our country's future.

President Clinton has a better plan -- one that provides opportunity and stability for families, that opens the way to a better life for all Americans and that invests in our communities. The Clinton plan calls for steady and sensible spending reduction; it would get us to a balanced budget in 10 years, but avoid the economic and social damage of the Republican plan.

### **Goal**

To persuade Congress and the public -- not just in this budget battle, but into next year -- of this message.

### **The Strategy**

To use news-making and educational events nationwide and in some 50 targeted markets to highlight the differences between the Clinton and Republican plans.

### **Key Participants**

- The Secretaries of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Transportation, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The Assistant Secretaries and other principal officials of these departments and agencies.
- Mayors, County Executives and other important leaders of metropolitan American communities that will be hurt by the ill-advised Republican budget cuts. These local leaders should include in their efforts other constituents, such as advocates for children, low-income people, housing, etc.; business leaders; educators; and others.
- Leading national figures and urban experts, such as Hugh Price, Peter Goldmark, Frank Thomas, Jim Rouse, Marian Wright Edelman and Eugene Lang.

## Plan

- **Kick-off: Presidential Support**

The budget amplification plan would begin the week of July 31 with Presidential involvement. The President would meet with the above seven Cabinet members to discuss the cumulative impact on people and communities of appropriations actions either just completed or on the verge of completion. The Cabinet members would describe the devastating effect of congressional action. The President would articulate his opposition to these harsh actions and express his strong commitment to poor and hard-working Americans and their communities. He would note how his 10-year budget and recently released urban policy report illustrate his priorities. The President would order an analysis of impact on specific cities and on individuals.

This meeting would be covered by pooled press. Following the meeting, the White House would release a statement by the President and the Cabinet members would brief the White House press corp on the meeting.

- **Release Information on Impact on Communities**

Chief of Staff Leon Panetta could release as early as the following week to the White House press corp numbers describing the cumulative impact of cuts on specific cities and their surrounding suburbs. Such information will be available on 6 to 60 such communities.

- **Recess Strategy**

Localize the Message: During the congressional recess in August, the impact on communities would be distributed to mayors and others and used as the basis of events and media opportunities for local leaders, Cabinet members and sub-Cabinet representatives.

In key markets, teams of Cabinet and sub-Cabinet members would join together to participate in events and editorial board briefings. For example, Secretaries Shalala, Riley and Cisneros could forward a compelling message on the combined impact of cuts on individuals in such markets as New York and Los Angeles.

Target the Message: To continue the momentum, specific issues would be highlighted on set days to focus attention on the impact on: education, training, the environment, summer jobs, housing, transportation, etc.

- **Distributional Impact**

OMB is compiling information on the impact of the congressional budget cuts on prototypical people and families (i.e., how the seven-year approach will hurt a typical middle class family, an elderly individual, a young couple just starting out, a low-income family, etc.) OMB will also analyze the effects on income classes; it is expected the information will show that all but the nation's wealthiest individuals will suffer substantially under proposed Republican cuts. The analysis will be available in mid-August. Its release should be carefully orchestrated.

- **U.S. Conference of Mayors with Seattle**

U.S. Conference of Mayors leadership is holding a meeting in late August in Seattle. The seven Cabinet members should plan to participate in person or by satellite.

- **Budget Day**

Mayors are interesting in having a "budget day" in late August or early September, perhaps on Labor Day, to raise awareness of the impact of combined budget cuts, similar to crime day events and others hosted by the Administration in the past. Cabinet members and key White House officials should participate.

- **Cities Summit**

On Secretary 20-21 Secretary Cisneros is hosting a conference in Washington to discuss the fate of our cities. This should be considered as a key opportunity for the President, Vice President and Cabinet members.