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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 27, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR LEON PANETTA
 ERSKINE BOWLES
 HAROLD ICKES
 GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

FROM: MICHAEL WALDMAN *MW*

SUBJECT: POLITICAL REFORM -- NEXT STEPS

It is my understanding that there is interest in continuing and pushing our lobby reform and political reform agenda. These are the next steps -- some of which require Presidential time or statements -- that I plan to take, and that I propose we take.

1. John Gardner and Doris Kearns Goodwin. I have been in touch with both our "emissaries to Newt." We will have a conference call (including White House Legislative Affairs) today to talk through the next steps. My current assumption is:

- a. Letter from them to Gingrich, Dole, Daschle, Gephardt, requesting meeting.
- b. A visit to DC next week, including a meeting with the President and an opportunity to talk to the press. (NOTE: If we do this Thursday, we can have them in the audience of the press conference.)
- c. If Gingrich stiff-arms them, possibly some sort of public activity on the sixth week since the handshake (Sunday, August 6).

2. Gift ban legislation. We are sending up a SAP today on the gift ban bill, calling for the strongest possible bill. It now looks like there will be a deal, maybe later today, maybe tomorrow. If so, there should be a written presidential statement.

3. "Unilateral lobby reform" proposal. We will work with the Counsel's Office, DOJ, and Jack Quinn (and others who have substantive concern) to craft an executive order that would require lobbyists who want to contact the executive branch to register and disclose as anticipated by the legislation. (This proposal was discussed last month.)

4. Foreign lobbyist legislative proposal. Later, we will consider proposing that our executive order barring senior officials from becoming foreign lobbyists be applied to former federal officials. This would avoid the "blow up in our face" problem, and would enable us to pick a fight with specific GOP lobbyists and interests. The lobby bill that passed the Senate already codifies the executive order prospectively.

December 29, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR LEON PANETTA
HAROLD ICKES
GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
CAROL RASCO
PAT GRIFFIN

FROM: MICHAEL WALDMAN *MW*

SUBJECT: OUR PLANS FOR "REFORM WEEK"

As I discussed with George and Harold this week, we have laid some plans to focus on reform during the first week of the congressional session (see attached). The goals: 1) to identify the President as a reformer during the week when reform is front and center. If we get in the game early, we can continue to critique the GOP as favoring special interests over the middle class; and 2) to define real reform as a change in Washington's money culture (viz., a gift ban, lobby reform, and campaign reform), not merely the GOP's worthy but ultimately minimalist steps. We shouldn't let them fire a bunch of staff and successfully say that -- prestol -- they've cleaned up Congress.

The main open questions for the "reform week" are:

* What day do we want to release the campaign finance reform proposal (free TV)? My instinct is that we want Wednesday to be focused on the gift ban, rather than trying to make new news on a free TV proposal. The Hill Democrats and reform groups will be focusing on the gift ban, and unveiling a new proposal would only muddle the message. I would suggest holding it until Friday (when Gore, Panetta or even the President could announce it), or Saturday, for the radio address. The counter-argument is that we should hit our reform message as hard as possible that first day -- no one will be listening by the weekend. Also, the Senate Democrats will drop their CFR bill in the first day . . . and there's a decent chance that Dole will counter with his "base closing commission" proposal on Thursday and preempt our substantive proposal.

* Do we -- either on the first day, in the meeting with the bipartisan leadership, or over the weekend -- put forth a deadline or other action-forcing/bar-raising device? We didn't do this last Congress, but maybe the rules have changed.

* Do we want to preview any of these thing this week (e.g., to Newsweek's Periscope)? So far, nothing has leaked, which may mean the press will be unprepared. At the very least, next week we should be prepared to talk to the *New York Times* editorial board, which is rabid on this subject -- they should like what we're doing.

I'm reachable through the WH switchboard; I'll be back on Sun. and likely in on Mon.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR FIRST WEEK OF CONGRESS

* Wednesday, January 4 (the day the House comes into session; it is scheduled to vote on the Congressional Accountability Act and other reforms)

- the President will send a Message to Congress, to be read to the full House by Minority Leader Gephardt or other appropriate figure. (NOTE: If we can't swing a reading, we should consider making it a letter, with promotion at the WH). See attached draft.

- [OPTION: Release of "our" reform agenda, including the free TV campaign finance reform proposal]

* Thursday, January 5 (leadership meeting)

- at leadership meeting, the President could make a pitch and propose a deadline. (We refrained from doing this during the last Congress, but perhaps it's appropriate now.)

* Friday, January 6

- POSSIBLE: Release of campaign finance reform/free TV proposal. The plan could be released by the Vice-President or the Chief-of-Staff; or, possibly, by the President. (This may make sense if the gift ban has been enacted, especially if the GOP is embarrassed in the process.)

* Saturday, January 7

- Radio address on reform -- Should be done live from the Oval Office before an audience of "validators" -- reform leaders, DLC types, civic leaders. This would be an opportunity to rope in organizations who are theoretically for our reform agenda, but who haven't done much on it.

- The validators would then go to the stakeout outside the West Wing, to praise the President's reform agenda, and push the GOP Congress to move on it.

- [IF WE HAVEN'T RELEASED THE CFR PROPOSAL ON FRIDAY: We could release it today through backgrounders, with the "announcement" made by the President during the radio address.]

draft draft draft

MESSAGE TO CONGRESS:

Congratulations. As the new congressional session begins, we have an opportunity to make historic change in the way that Washington works and the government serves the people.

Today, the Congress will take important and positive steps to change its operations for the better. Reducing staff, shrinking the number of committees and other measures are valuable, and long overdue. The passage of legislation that would apply to Congress the laws that apply to the public is only fair, and simple common sense.

But let us be honest with the American people: true congressional reform must reduce the power of lobbyists and special interests. That is why it is so important that professional lobbyists be barred from giving gifts, meals and entertainment to members of Congress -- just as they are now barred from giving these benefits to executive branch officials. And it is why Congress must immediately complete the job of reforming our lobby disclosure and campaign finance laws, so that wealthy interests do not wield disproportionate influence over our government.

That is true congressional reform. I look forward to working with the Congress to achieve results that are bipartisan, bold, and give the government back to the people.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON