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Welfare Reform Daily Talking Points
Tuesday, April 18, 1995

ENDING WELFARE AS WE KNOW IT

As the President prepares for a prime-time news conference tonight, welfare reform is high on his agenda. Last week, he made it clear that "ending welfare as we know it" should be a bipartisan effort, and that the concerns of religious leaders should be heard. Tonight, his message of change will continue to urge congressional leaders to work together on this urgent national issue.

- o **Our "must" list.** As the President said in Saturday's radio address, welfare reform is first on his "must" list for this Congress. Americans of both parties agree: we must restore the mainstream values of work, responsibility, family and community to the broken welfare system.
- o **Real reform.** To be credible, welfare reform legislation must demand work, set definite time limits, demand responsibility of both parents, include tough child support enforcement measures, and provide more flexibility for the states. To date, however, the proposals in Congress are still too weak on work -- and on helping people move from welfare to work. We need to provide real supports for single mothers - like education and child care - and avoid proposals that simply punish children for their parents' past mistakes.
- o **Working with the states.** Already, we've granted 25 states freedom from federal rules so they can find new ways to move single parents from welfare to work. We're committed to the waiver process that lets states start "ending welfare as we know it" -- even as we continue to press for national welfare reform legislation in Washington. Look for the President to allow even more states to move forward on welfare reform in the days ahead.
- o **Investing in the future.** As President Clinton has said, "If we're going to make people on welfare work, then we have to make it possible for them to work. If we're going to make people on welfare self-reliant, we have to make it possible for them to support themselves. We can be tough, but we've got to be practical." Governors of both parties agree, and are now on record against the more punitive provisions in the bill passed by the House of Representatives. Governor Edgar of Illinois, for example, recently expressed concern that the House bill "...would not allow our current program for teen parents, which stresses the role of education in self-sufficiency." Conservative micromanagement, combined with more than \$66 billion in budget cuts, is not welfare reform.
- o **Bringing people together.** Welfare reform should also build on the consensus for change that has brought Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, and religious leaders of all faiths to the conclusion that the status quo must go. While the House debate was often divisive, the "silver lining" was the bipartisan agreement on tougher child support enforcement. Such teamwork and consensus is possible on the Senate's broader welfare reform legislation, but only if work is the cornerstone of a real effort that puts long-term gains ahead of short-term politics.

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Welfare Reform Daily Talking Points
Monday, April 24, 1995

"MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY IN MISSOURI"

Today, Secretary Shalala travels to Kansas City, Missouri, to visit TransAmerica, a local company that trains and employs former welfare recipients. Less than a year ago, President Clinton unveiled his own welfare reform proposal in Kansas City, and last week, his Administration granted its most recent welfare reform waiver to the state. Missouri's waiver reflects our commitment to let states move ahead in "ending welfare as we know it" -- even as we continue to press for national welfare reform legislation in Congress.

Missouri's "Families Mutual Responsibility Plan," like President Clinton's approach, will move people from welfare to work by making work pay, promoting parental responsibility, and reaching out to the next generation.

- o **Work.** Missouri's demonstration project, championed by Governor Carnahan, has both strong work opportunities and strong work requirements. Like President Clinton's plan, Missouri requires welfare recipients to sign a self-sufficiency contract and places a two-year time limit on benefits. In return, Missouri is making work pay by allowing recipients to keep a larger portion of the income they earn from employment. As the President said last week, Missouri is "committed to require people to go to work within two years. That's the same time limit I called for when I ran for President and that I called for last year."
- o **Responsibility.** Like the Clinton Administration, Missouri is seeking to ensure that children receive financial and emotional support from both parents. Missouri is working to increase child support payments among non-custodial parents by providing them with the education and training they may need to get a job and pay support, and by giving those who volunteer for the state's JOBS program credit against support they may already owe. "There are too many parents," Secretary Shalala says in a speech today, "who are skipping town and leaving their spouses and the taxpayers with a big fat bill."
- o **Reaching the next generation.** Like President Clinton's welfare reform plan, Missouri is sending a clear message to teen parents that having children is an immense responsibility rather than an easy route to independence. Missouri requires minor mothers to live at home in order to receive benefits, and provides strong incentives for them to stay in school and prepare for work. And, by encouraging two parent families to work and stay together, Missouri is also creating a better future for the next generation.
- o **State flexibility.** Through these innovative welfare reform strategies, Missouri is working to move families from dependency to self-sufficiency. Since taking office, the Clinton Administration has approved a total of 30 welfare demonstrations in 27 states, granting them freedom from federal rules to reward work, make welfare a transitional system, demand parental responsibility, and strengthen child support enforcement. More than half the states are now moving ahead to end welfare as we know it, and President Clinton has urged Congress to do the same.