

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

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From: Anna Briatico *Anna Briatico* Date: June 28, 1995

Remarks: Attached are copies of the signed letters to Senators Kassebaum and Kennedy regarding S. 673 (Youth Community Development Block Grant). The markup on this bill by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources has been postponed.

EOP : Gaynor McCown
Paul Dimond
Jeremy Ben-Ami
Bruce Reed
Ken Apfel
Bob Litan
Larry Matlack
Keith Fontenot
Mike Schmidt 220
Kumiki Gibson
Sheryll Cashin
Pres. Crime Prevention Council
Maureen Walsh



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

June 27, 1995

Honorable Nancy Landon Kassebaum
Chairman
Committee on Labor and Human
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Kassebaum:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the Administration's views on S. 673, the Youth Development Community Block Grant Act of 1995, under consideration by your committee. While the Administration is supportive of the goal of promoting the positive development of youth, we have serious concerns about fundamental provisions of the bill and cannot support it as currently drafted.

We are sympathetic to your efforts to bring coherence, comprehensiveness, and integration to youth development programs. We also support the bill's focus on prevention and the developmental needs of youth rather than crisis intervention. And we agree with the bill's emphasis on local decision-making coupled with accountability measures, as long as there is adequate federally led program evaluation. However, we oppose the inclusion of the summer youth jobs program, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program, programs funded from the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund, and Department of Justice juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs. Further, we believe that shifting the focus of programs now primarily serving inner city youth to a much less targeted delivery system will greatly dilute the impact of these scarce resources. Finally, we are concerned about the potential for a diminished role for schools in local communities and at the national level.

Concerns Relating to Consolidations

- o **Summer Youth Employment and Training Program:**
The Administration strongly opposes the consolidation of this program into S. 673. The summer jobs program is an integral part of youth workforce development and has traditionally been targeted on economically disadvantaged youth. The Administration views summer jobs as more appropriately included as a component of the workforce preparation activities for at-risk youth included in pending proposals to consolidate vocational training and employment programs. In

that context, summer jobs should remain a separate, identifiable, required activity, albeit closely coordinated by Governors and local elected officials with other school-to-work activities.

- o **Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC):** The Administration strongly opposes the termination of this important drug and violence prevention program. Inclusion of SDFSC in S. 673 would eliminate the only Federal effort devoted to making schools safe, disciplined, and drug-free. In light of increasing drug use and incidence of violence among our Nation's youth, the Administration views this program as a top priority. The public, too, remains committed to addressing these issues: every major poll cites drug use and violence as key concerns of families and communities.

The reauthorization of SDFSC last year made a number of changes that will improve program quality and increase performance accountability. These include the expansion of the program to address violence prevention, support for comprehensive efforts of proven effectiveness, stronger community participation provisions, the establishment of accountability mechanisms such as program goals and performance measures, and the targeting of funds toward the neediest communities. Unfortunately, the lack of focus in S. 673 on school-based drug and violence prevention would likely hinder program accountability by limiting our ability to address and measure progress toward decreasing drug use and violence.

- o **Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund (VCRTF):** The Administration strongly opposes the consolidation of the prevention programs authorized by the crime bill in S. 673. These programs address the needs of a full range of at-risk populations, rather than youth only; provide, through the Ounce of Prevention Council, for coordination of Federal programs; and bring together law enforcement and human services in a concerted effort to reduce violent crime. We believe that eliminating these VCRTF programs reduces the overall effectiveness of what is currently a balanced approach to fighting crime and could limit funds available for all VCRTF programs.
- o **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Programs:** The Administration strongly opposes the repeal of three programs

within the Department of Justice's OJJDP: Gang-Free Schools and Communities, Juvenile Mentoring Programs, and Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs. The repeal of these programs would eliminate valuable services that are targeted at high risk and delinquent juveniles, weaken services that provide a national impact, and seriously undermine the ability of professionals in the field to implement demonstrably effective programs linked to sound research and evaluation. For example, it would eliminate the National Gang Assessment Center and the Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Program, which has already begun a three-year cycle assisting communities with locally developed delinquency prevention plans.

Loss of Focus on Urban Problems

Cities and towns currently provide many of the services addressed in S. 673. However under this bill, they would not be involved in the grant process in a meaningful way. While we recognize that large urban counties face problems comparable to large cities, it is of primary importance that the Nation's cities be directly involved in the grant process.

Barriers to the Participation of School Districts

S. 673 creates several barriers that could preclude effective participation of schools. These include inadequate representation of schools on the Community Youth Development Board, as well as lack of clarity on whether schools would be grant recipients and on what would happen when school district boundaries did not align with county borders. These barriers could lead to a wasteful restructuring of effective programs and undermine, rather than extend, local flexibility.

Schools have a critical role to play in addressing the competencies outlined in S. 673 and 95 percent of school districts have already established local programs under SDFSC. The bill would hinder these efforts at least in part because many school districts are not coterminous with county boundaries, making the involvement of schools particularly difficult and the representation of the needs of all types of school districts on the Community Boards virtually impossible.

Lack of Targeting on At-Risk Youth

Over the last several decades categorical programs for distinct populations of at-risk youth, such as runaways, homeless youth, and substance abusers, were created specifically because these youth were not being adequately served by the larger

system. Within the parameters of a youth development philosophy, then, it is critical to ensure that services reach those young people who are considered at greatest risk.

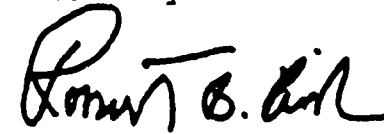
S. 673 does not effectively target local funds on youth most in need of the services it supports. Although State and county grant allocations are determined partially by poverty and other need factors, distribution of funds to the entities that provide services to these youths is not assured.

Again, we support your efforts to improve administration of these Federal grant programs. We look forward to working with you to achieve the goals of positive youth development and crime and drug prevention.

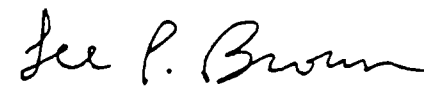
The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection from the standpoint of the Administration's program to the submission of this report to the Congress.

Sincerely,


Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education


Robert B. Reich
Secretary of Labor


Janet Reno
Attorney General


Lee P. Brown
Director, Office of
National Drug Control Policy



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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June 27, 1995

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Member
Committee on Labor and Human
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

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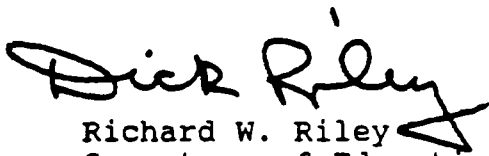
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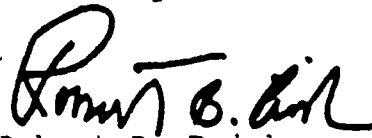
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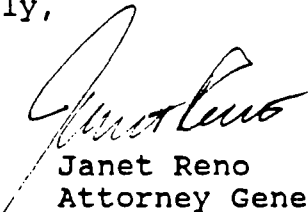
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