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Child Care Radio Address (Mother's Day) 5/9/98 [2]

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Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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001. press release	Phone Number (handwritten at top). [partial] (1 page)	05/11/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

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Child Care Radio Address Mother's Day 5/9/98 [2]

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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Date: Tuesday, March 17, 1998

FACT SHEET

Contact: ACF Press Office (202) 401-9215

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT: A CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PRIORITY

Overview: *The goal of the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program, established in 1975 under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, is to ensure that children are supported financially by both parents.*

Designed as a joint federal, state, and local partnership, the program involves 54 separate state and territory systems, each with its own unique laws and procedures. The program is usually run by state and local human service agencies, often with the help of prosecuting attorneys and other law enforcement officials as well as officials of family or domestic relations courts. At the federal level, the Department of Health and Human Services provides technical assistance and funding to states through the Office of Child Support Enforcement and also operates the Federal Parent Locator System, a computer matching system that locates non-custodial parents who owe child support.

Despite recent record improvements in paternity establishment and child support collections, much more needs to be done to ensure that all children born out-of-wedlock have paternity established and that all non-custodial parents provide financial support for their children. Currently, only about one-half of the custodial parents due child support receive full payment. About twenty-five percent receive partial payment and twenty-five percent receive nothing.

For that reason, President Clinton proposed, and Congress passed, legislation to strengthen and improve state child support collection activities. These provisions, included in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, could increase child support collections to over \$24 billion in 10 years: a national new hire reporting system, streamlined paternity establishment, uniform interstate child support laws, computerized state-wide collections, and tough new penalties, such as driver's license revocation.

Clinton Administration Increases and Innovations

President Clinton has made improving child support enforcement and increasing child support collections a top priority. Since taking office, President Clinton has cracked down on non-paying parents and strengthened child support enforcement, resulting in record child support collections: In FY 1997, the federal-state partnership collected a record \$13 billion from non-custodial parents, an increase of \$5 billion, or 63 percent, since 1992. The number of families that are actually receiving child support has also increased: In 1997, the number of child support cases with collections rose to 4.2 million, an increase of 48 percent from 2.8 million in 1992.

Encouraging state innovations. On October 10, 1997, HHS announced the award of \$1.5 million in demonstration grants to 17 states to support innovative projects to improve the nation's child support enforcement program. The projects will test cooperation with child support requirements by applicants for and recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; new models for coping with domestic violence in the context of child support enforcement; models of collaboration between child support enforcement, Head Start and Child Care programs at the state and local levels; collaborations to facilitate family preservation between child support and child welfare programs; reviewing and adjusting child support orders; determining the effect of child support collections on welfare recipient income; and, models for making the child support enforcement program responsive to the needs of low-income

noncustodial fathers to encourage greater parental responsibility. In addition, HHS on December 18, 1997, HHS announced approval of a child support waiver to allow the State of Washington to use federal funds normally used for child support enforcement to fund "Devoted Dads," an innovative public/private partnership to promote the responsible roles of fathers in the financial and emotional support of their children. The project, which serves the Tacoma, Washington Enterprise Community, intends to reach non-custodial parents, particularly young and at-risk fathers. This demonstration is the first child support waiver granted for an enterprise community.

Executive action. While working toward comprehensive improvement of child support enforcement, President Clinton used his executive authority to increase child support collections. Since taking office, President Clinton has directed the Treasury Department to activate a centralized, streamlined Federal system to offset child support debts against most Federal payments; ordered Federal agencies to take necessary steps to deny loans, loan guarantees, or loan insurance to any individual who is delinquent on child support debt; implemented a new program that will help track non-paying parents across state lines; proposed new regulations requiring women who apply for welfare to comply with paternity establishment requirements before receiving benefits; and issued an executive order to make the federal government a model employer in the area of child support enforcement. In addition, the Clinton Administration granted welfare reform waivers to a record 43 states. More than two-thirds of these states pursued innovative child support reforms under waivers approved by the Clinton Administration.

Increasing resources. President Clinton has proposed annual expansions in child support enforcement, increasing resources by 53 percent since taking office. HHS has also launched an initiative and given demonstration grants to states to promote improved performance, service quality and public satisfaction in the child support program. The President's FY 1999 budget proposal allocates \$3.2 billion to state child support enforcement programs, a 19 percent increase over FY 1998.

Prosecuting non-payers. Billions of dollars more in support is owed to children whose parents have crossed state lines and failed to pay. The Justice Department is investigating and prosecuting cases where parents cross state lines to avoid payment under the Child Support Recovery Act. At President Clinton's direction, the Justice Department submitted legislation to Congress in September 1996 that would make it a felony offense to cross state lines to evade a child support obligation if the obligation has remained unpaid for longer than one year or is greater than \$5,000; or to willfully fail to pay a child support obligation for a child living in another state if the obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than two years or is greater than \$10,000.

Seizing tax refunds. The Federal government collected a record \$1.1 billion in delinquent child support by intercepting income tax refunds of non-paying parents for tax year 1996. The amount was 10 percent higher than the previous year, and up 66 percent since 1992. Nearly 1.3 million families benefited from these collections.

Improving paternity establishment. The Clinton Administration has made paternity establishment a top priority. In FY 1997, 1.1 million paternities were established -- a 115 percent increase from 1992. In 1993, the Clinton Administration proposed, and Congress adopted, a requirement that states establish hospital-based paternity programs as a proactive way to establish paternities early in a child's life. Preliminary data from thirty-two states indicates that more than 285,000 paternities were established through the program in 1996.

U.S. Postal Service posts "wanted lists." The U.S. Postal Service is working with states to display "Wanted Lists" of parents who owe child support in post offices. Each state that has such a list will be able to provide it to the Postal Service, and the list will be displayed in post offices within that state. The President has also challenged every state to create a "Wanted List" to expand efforts to track down parents who owe support and send the strongest possible message that evasion of child support responsibilities is a serious offense.

Action through the Internet. HHS's Office of Child Support Enforcement now has a home page on the Internet that provides information on the child support enforcement program, tells parents where they can apply for child support assistance, and provides links to states that have their own home pages

(currently 37).

→ Improvements Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996

At President Clinton's urging, the new welfare reform law includes the child support enforcement measures the President proposed in 1994 -- the most sweeping crackdown on non-paying parents in history. Under the new law, each state must operate a child support enforcement program meeting federal requirements in order to be eligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grants. Provisions include:

National new hire reporting system. The law establishes a Federal Case Registry and National Directory of New Hires to track delinquent parents across state lines. It also requires that employers report all new hires to state agencies for transmittal of new hire information to the National Directory of New Hires. This builds on President Clinton's June 1996 executive action to track delinquent parents across state lines. The law also expands and streamlines procedures for direct withholding of child support from wages. The directory began operation on schedule in October 1997. To date, the directory has found over 90,000 delinquent parents who owe child support.

Streamlined paternity establishment. The new law streamlines the legal process for paternity establishment, making it easier and faster to establish paternity. It also expands the voluntary in-hospital paternity establishment program, started by the Clinton Administration in 1993, and requires a state affidavit for voluntary paternity acknowledgment. These affidavits must meet minimum requirements set by the Secretary of HHS. In addition, the law mandates that states publicize the availability and encourage the use of voluntary paternity establishment processes. Individuals who fail to cooperate with paternity establishment will have their monthly cash assistance reduced by at least 25 percent.

Uniform interstate child support laws. The new law provides for uniform rules, procedures, and forms for interstate cases.

Computerized state-wide collections. The new law requires states to establish central registries of child support orders and centralized collection and disbursement units. It also requires expedited state procedures for child support enforcement.

Tough new penalties. Under the new law, states can implement tough child support enforcement techniques. The new law will expand wage garnishment, allow states to seize assets, allow states to require community service in some cases, and enable states to revoke driver's and professional licenses for parents who owe delinquent child support.

"Families First." Under a new "Family First" policy, families no longer receiving assistance will have priority in the distribution of child support arrears. This new policy will bring families who have left welfare for work about \$1 billion in support over the first six years.

Access and visitation programs. In an effort to increase noncustodial parents' involvement in their children's lives, the new law includes grants to help states establish programs that support and facilitate noncustodial parents' visitation with and access to their children. On October 3, 1997, HHS announced the award of \$10 million in grants to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories to promote access and visitation programs. The minimum allotment per state for FY 1997 is \$50,000.

New state incentives. Current law provides for HHS to make incentive payments to states for their child support enforcement systems, but these payments are based on only one factor: cost-effectiveness. Under the new welfare reform law, HHS was authorized to prepare an alternative incentive plan. On March 13, 1997, Secretary Shalala submitted a proposal to Congress which was designed to further improve the performance of state child support enforcement programs by linking federal incentive payments to states to their performance in five key areas: establishment of paternitys, establishment of child support orders, collections on current child support owed, collection on previously or past due child support owed, and cost-effectiveness. To reinforce the goal of achieving self-sufficiency, states will be rewarded

for collection in all child support cases, but with a stronger emphasis on welfare and former welfare cases. On September 16, 1997, Secretary Shalala joined Rep. Clay Shaw, chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, and Rep. Sandy Levin, the ranking minority member of the subcommittee, in announcing legislation that is drawn from the HHS proposal. The House of Representatives passed the bill on September 30, 1997, and the Senate will consider the legislation in 1998.

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The New York Times

April 27, 1998, Monday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 15; Column 2; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 390 words

HEADLINE: Bankrupt? Pay Your Child Support First

BYLINE: By Elizabeth Warren; Elizabeth Warren is a law professor at Harvard who specializes in bankruptcy.

DATELINE: CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

BODY:

The Senate and House are considering legislation to reform bankruptcy laws. The credit industry has lobbied aggressively for this legislation, complaining that it is difficult to collect from people hiding behind bankruptcy filings.

But it is important to recognize the unintended consequences of the changes the industry wants -- specifically, their devastating impact on the tens of thousands of women who turn to bankruptcy courts to collect alimony and child support from former husbands who have sought bankruptcy protection.

In 1903, Congress declared that child support and other marital obligations were "nondischargeable debts" -- meaning that no one who declares bankruptcy can escape liability for these obligations. Like taxes and student loans, these debts must be repaid in full both during and after a bankruptcy. Congress quite properly declared that child support and alimony were a priority and must be paid first and in full.

But some proposals before Congress would add to the list of nondischargeable debts. Credit card debt piled up in the 90 days before a bankruptcy filing or incurred when the person did not have "a reasonable expectation or ability to repay" would be included.

This means that even if a debtor declared bankruptcy, credit card bills, with their compounded interest, penalties and collection fees, would survive forever, and have just as much priority as child support payments.

This could be devastating to children. A system in which almost everyone must be paid could very well mean that no one is paid -- or, more likely, that only the most aggressive and powerful creditors are.

Last year, some 300,000 bankruptcy cases involved child support, alimony or another form of family maintenance. In about half of the cases, women were creditors trying to collect court-ordered support from their former spouses. Without such recourse, some families would have to turn to public assistance.

All creditors are victimized by fraudulent debtors. But bankruptcy law

The New York Times, April 27, 1998

already gives creditors effective tools to root out such abuses. Modest changes to the bankruptcy laws, like authorizing routine audits of debtors' petitions, would give creditors even better protection. But one thing should not change: when it comes to paying off debt, women and children should come first.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 27, 1998

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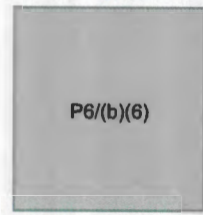
THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(University Park, Pennsylvania)

Embargoed For Release
Until 10:06 A.M. EDT
Saturday, May 11, 1996

*Kristina
John*

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION



[001]

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Tomorrow millions of Americans will honor our mothers with hugs and bouquets and visits for dinner. Others of us will simply offer up a silent prayer for the mother who still lives in our heart, but who has left this Earth. I miss my own mother very much, especially on Mother's Day. I can't give her roses tomorrow, but with your help we can honor all mothers by giving mothers-to-be something far more important -- the assurance that when they bring a baby into this world, they will not be rushed out of the hospital until they and their health care provider decide it is medically safe for both mother and child.

Today I want to discuss legislation that will guarantee mothers the quality care they need when they've had a baby.

In 1970, the average length of stay for an uncomplicated hospital delivery was four days. By 1992, the average had declined to two days. Now a large and growing number of insurance companies are refusing to pay for anything more than a 24-hour stay, except in the most extreme circumstances, and some have recommended releasing women as early as eight hours after delivery.

This is has gone from being an economical trend to a dangerous one, one that carries with it the potential for serious health consequences. Early release of infants can result in numerous problems, including feeding problems, sever dehydration, brain damage and stroke. In addition, many mothers are not physically capable of providing for a newborn's needs 24 hours after giving birth. Often they're exhausted, in pain, and faced with an overwhelming set of new responsibilities. Many first-time mothers also need more than 24 hours in the hospital to receive instruction in basic infant care and breast feeding. And sometimes an early discharge can be fatal.

Michelle Bauman testified before a Senate committee that she was told to go home 28 hours after her daughter was born. Her baby died within one day of going home. If she had been

allowed a 48-hour stay, she would have been in the hospital when her daughter's symptoms appeared. As she so tragically put it, another 24 hours and her baby's symptoms would have surfaced "so that we could have planned a christening, not a funeral."

Susan Jones and her baby son were discharged after about 24 hours. It turns out that he had a heart defect which was not noticed by the hospital or the home health nurse who came to visit on the third day. The baby died. Susan and an independent group of pediatric cardiologists believe the problem would have been noticed in the hospital by the second or third day.

As a nation that values the health of women and children, we must not turn our backs on this problem. There is an emerging national consensus that we must put a stop to these so-called "drive-through" deliveries. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have issued guidelines recommending a minimum stay of 48 hours following most normal deliveries, and 96 hours following most cesarean sections. Sixteen states have enacted laws to guarantee that level of coverage and 25 more are considering such a move.

A growing number of hospitals have taken it upon themselves to provide the second day of coverage free. And one group of insurers, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans of Pennsylvania, has responded to public concerns by voluntarily offering 48-hour minimum coverage. I believe every insurance company should step up to this problem and do what these insurers in Pennsylvania have done.

But in the absence of coverage for all women in all states, we have a responsibility to take action in Washington. Already a Senate bill and separate House bills have been introduced -- most with bipartisan support -- to guarantee 48-hour post-partum hospital stays for mothers and their children.

I urge members of Congress to move legislation forward as soon as possible that makes this protection for mothers and their children the law of the land. No insurance company should be free to make the final judgment about what is medically best for newborns and their mothers. That decision should be left up to doctors, nurses and mothers themselves. Saving the life and health of mothers and newborns is more important than saving a few dollars.

America's mothers hold a special place in our hearts. They provide the lessons and care that enable all of our children to embrace the opportunities of this great land. They deliver the precious gift of life. Let's give them a Mother's Day gift they richly deserve. Let's guarantee them 48-hour hospital stays to protect their health and the health of their newborn babies. Mothers sacrifice so much for us. It's the least we can do for them.

Happy Mother's Day and thanks for listening.

END

The President's Radio Address

May 7, 1994

Good morning. This week we saw a dramatic example of what we can accomplish together when you make your voices heard and Washington sets aside partisan differences to do the people's business.

Even though nearly everyone said it couldn't be done, the House of Representatives voted to make our streets safer by banning the sale of 19 different assault weapons. We pushed hard for this result, and the outcome defied the old enemy of gridlock. Democrats and Republicans alike sent a powerful message that the American people are determined to take their streets, their schools, and their communities back from criminals.

This vote teaches us an important lesson: No matter how uphill a battle may seem, when we set our minds to it, we can deal with the problems facing our country. Last year it took the same kind of commitment to pass a powerful plan to reduce the deficit. And now we're seeing the rewards of that.

Just yesterday, we learned that our economy has created over a quarter of a million jobs in April, and almost a million in the first 4 months of this year alone, about 3 million jobs since we all began this effort and nearly all of them in the private sector.

Our successes in fighting crime and improving the economy are worth thinking about on this Mother's Day weekend. We are honoring the people who are at the heart of our society's most important institution, the family.

Tomorrow, mothers all across America will enjoy the flowers, cards, and breakfasts in bed. But we should remember another gift that will improve and prolong their lives: the gift of good health care. Women are the people most likely to guard their families' health care and to make sure we're all healthier. And yet too often our health care system leaves women behind. Even when treatments are available, women don't get the necessary health care they need because they have inadequate insurance or none at all. More women than men work part-time or in jobs without insurance. And historically, research studies on everything from heart disease to strokes to AIDS have tended to focus on men,

leaving women more vulnerable to many diseases.

I am committed to redressing these inequities. We've made a good start. We've got a fine woman, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala. We created the first senior-level position in Government dedicated to women's health concerns. We've increased funds to prevent and treat diseases that afflict women. Right now, the largest clinical trial in the United States' history is underway, looking at how to prevent heart disease, the biggest killer of our women. We launched a national action plan on breast cancer to fight the killer of 46,000 women every year. These women are not just numbers, they are loved ones lost forever. And most important, we're pushing to reform the health care system.

The great majority of the letters Hillary and I have received about health care reform have been from women, voicing concerns for their families, their children, and their parents. One was from a New York woman forced to take a job with no medical coverage. Last year, a lump was found in her breast, and her doctors said it should be removed. But her family can't afford the operation. "I don't want to die," she wrote us, "and because of lack of money, I may. I hope that you'll be able to do something soon so that no one will have to go through what I am going through."

This mother is just 44 years old. I can't share her name because she hasn't told her family yet. She doesn't want them to worry. This woman's condition may be treatable, but she won't know because treatment is simply out of her financial reach.

Travesties like this happen too often. Women avoid preventive care because they're afraid of having records of preexisting conditions that will deny them insurance coverage. In a recent survey, 11 percent of women said they didn't get their blood pressure checked; 35 percent didn't receive a Pap smear; and 44 percent didn't receive a mammogram.

Our health care plan emphasizes preventive care. It eliminates preexisting conditions and bans lifetime limits on health coverage. It makes research of women's health problems a priority.

It helps families when a loved one needs long-term care. And it gives coverage to everyone, regardless of whether she is healthy or ill, married or single, working inside or outside the home.

For every American blessed with a mother, or the wonderful memory of one, I ask you to think about the 16 million women in our Nation who don't get the health care services they need. And think about their children. Think how a single illness can destroy a family.

I think of a courageous woman I met this week named Kate Miles, who is caring for a son with multiple disabilities. Her family has no assistance for long-term care. So to keep her son, Robert, out of a nursing home, and because of the awful way our system operates, Kate Miles had to give up her job, and her husband, Tom, must work two jobs. As she so eloquently put it: "In an institution, who will be there in the middle of the night when he's

frightened, to tell him it's all right and that his mother loves him?" No mother should have to know such pain.

So today I ask every mother's child to send another card this Mother's Day. Address it to your Senator or Representative in Congress. Tell them this health care reform plan is important, because it may help the most important person in your life. And tell them along with mother love, most of our mothers taught us that the most important thing in life was to be a good person and do the right thing.

Well, this Mother's Day, the right thing is to make sure that by next Mother's Day we never have to worry about the health of our mothers being cared for.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:06 p.m. on May 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 7.

Remarks Announcing the Appointment of William H. Gray III as Special Adviser on Haiti and an Exchange With Reporters May 8, 1994

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I want to speak for a few moments about the crisis in Haiti, the challenge it poses to our national interests, and the new steps I am taking to respond.

Three and a half years ago, in free and fair elections, the people of Haiti chose Jean-Bertrand Aristide as their President. Just 9 months later, their hopes were dashed when Haiti's military leaders overthrew democracy by force. Since then, the military has murdered innocent civilians, crushed political freedom, and plundered Haiti's economy.

From the start of this administration, my goal has been to restore democracy and President Aristide. Last year, we helped the parties to negotiate the Governors Island accord, a fair and balanced agreement which laid out a road map for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. But late last year, the Haitian military abrogated the agreement, and since then they have rejected every effort to achieve a political settlement.

At the same time, the repression and bloodshed in Haiti have reached alarming new pro-

portions. Supporters of President Aristide, and many other Haitians, are being killed and mutilated. This is why 6 weeks ago I ordered a review of our policy toward Haiti. As a result of this review, we are taking several steps to increase pressure on Haiti's military while addressing the suffering caused by their brutal misrule. We are stepping up our diplomatic efforts, we are intensifying sanctions, and we are adapting our migration policy.

Let me describe these steps. First, to bring new vigor to our diplomacy, I am pleased to announce that Bill Gray, president of the United Negro College Fund, former House majority whip, and chair of the House Budget Committee, has accepted my invitation to serve as special adviser to me and to the Secretary of State on Haiti. Bill is here with his wife, on his way to the inauguration of President Mandela in South Africa, and I will ask him to speak in just a few moments. But let me just say that he is a man of vision and determination, of real strength and real creativity. And I appreciate his willingness to accept this difficult and

Remarks on Women's Health Care

May 6, 1994

Thank you, Mrs. Bailey, for the wonderful introduction and for the wonderful life you have lived.

I want to thank all the mothers who are here for doing such a good job with their sons and daughters, helping them to achieve a full measure of ambition. I want to thank the Vice President and Mrs. Gore for being wonderful examples of good parents. And I want to thank my wonderful wife for being the best mother I have ever known, as well as for taking on this often thankless but terribly important job.

You know, since Tipper was kind enough to mention my mother—I was sitting here thinking, I know some of these mothers here. Rosa DeLauro's mother campaigned with me in New Haven, and Rosa said, "You need to get my mother to go with you. She's worth a lot more votes than I am." [Laughter] So I watched all the people along the way being too intimidated to say no, they wouldn't vote for me. [Laughter] Sure enough, we carried it.

On Mother's Day we tend to think of the wonderful and warm and kind and loving and sacrificial things our mothers do. You heard Hillary say that, like most families, mothers make the health care decisions and prod everybody else to do it. But you know, very often mothers are also the most practical members of the family and the most hard-headed and the most insistent that we face up to our responsibilities. Very often the values, the internal character structure of children is profoundly influenced by the sort of daily insistence of mothers that you just face up to your daily tasks and do your job and life will take care of itself. And that may seem terribly elemental, but one of the reasons that I ran for President is I thought all that had been abandoned here, and there was a lot more talk than action.

Now, last month, we just learned today that our economy produced 267,000 new jobs, in no small measure because the people in this National Government have begun to take responsibility for bringing the deficit down and trying to do things that will grow the economy.

Yesterday, in a heroic move, the United States House of Representatives voted to ban 19 assault weapons. It was a very difficult thing for

some of the Members, who were literally threatened with losing their seats and their political careers. But in the end, they got beyond the rhetoric to a very commonsense, old-fashioned American judgment that it was the right thing to do, the disciplined thing to do, the sort of thing your mother would be proud of you if you did. [Laughter]

I say that because I want to focus on what your mother would tell you to do in health care, not just for emotional reasons but because every day, those of us who are charged with the responsibility of working here are supposed to get up and do what my mother told me to do, which is to do your job. And my mother used to tell me all the time, "Bill, you give a good speech, but you still have to *do* something—[laughter]—in the end you still have to do something."

There's so much talk and genuine concern in this country about the American family. We're here paying tribute to it. Sunday we'll pay enormous tribute to it. And I think all of us would admit, whether we're Democrats or Republicans or independents and whatever our political philosophies are, that if the families of this country weren't in so much trouble, we'd have about half as many problems as we've got. I think we all know that. But what I want to ask you is what my mother would ask me, "Well, so what are you going to *do* about it?" And how can we be so concerned with the stability of the family as an institution, and still walk away from those stories that Hillary talked to you about? I mean, we've heard so many of these stories, we can't keep up with them all now. We literally cannot keep up with them all.

Millions of women in this country have no health insurance. Many more have insurance policies full of the kind of loopholes that you heard Hillary describe. There are policies that deny mammograms or that don't pay for well-baby visits or prescription drugs, that routinely exclude pregnancy as a preexisting condition. How can a pro-family country say pregnancy is a preexisting condition? Some insurance companies have gone so far as to call domestic violence a preexisting condition. Well, so is breathing.

A couple of weeks ago, in the New York Times, there was a remarkable column by a novelist named Anne Hood who wrote how the system fails families today. She said she was a self-employed writer and her husband had a hard time finding health insurance. And when they finally found insurance that they were actually able to purchase, the quarterly payment was \$1,800. That's \$7,200 a year for a family policy.

And still, after they paid all that money, their worries weren't over. She and her husband moved from New York to Rhode Island, and she had a baby. After the baby was born, she learned the insurance company had dropped their coverage when they moved 6 months into her pregnancy. And to renew her insurance would have cost \$2,000 more a quarter, an extra \$8,000 a year for maternity coverage. That was more than it would cost to have the baby.

Now, it's seems to me that common sense tells you that if we can make it possible for self-employed people, like this fine woman and her husband, and small business people to afford to take care of themselves and their families, and to stop passing on their costs to the rest of us, and we can organize it so they can buy insurance on the same terms that those of us who work for government or big business can, that we ought to do that. And it seems to me that their mothers would tell them they ought to pay a little for it and assume their responsibility, too.

We have got to try to reform this system to try to help people stay healthy and take care of them when they're sick. In any given year, about a third of all American women fail to get basic preventive services, like clinical breast exams, Pap smears, complete physicals. More than half of all American women over the age of 50 fail to receive a mammogram, often because of problems with their insurance.

In medical research, women have been on the sidelines too long, too little research into the causes and cure of breast cancer and osteoporosis. Heart disease is a number one killer of women, but until recently, all of the search for a cure was centered only on men. The simple fact is that we've paid too little attention to the unique problems of women.

I met with a lot of mothers this week whose children either have or have already died of AIDS, and there are an enormous number of women who now have the HIV virus and who have passed it along to their children, or some

have it and some don't. And we don't know whether or not there are different potential resolutions of this for women than for men.

We're trying to change all that in this administration. For one thing, I've put only women in charge of the health care struggle. Donna Shalala is Secretary of Health and Human Services. America became the first nation in the world to establish a senior Government position to oversee women's health issues. I put a woman and a mother in charge of health care reform, and you can see she's done a pretty good job and we're all still pretty healthy.

We created an office of research on women's health at the National Institutes of Health, an increased funding for breast cancer research, a national action plan on breast cancer, for research into other problems that affect women. We removed barriers that stood in the way of finding cures to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. We passed the family and medical leave law, a pro-family bill if I ever saw it. You ought to read the letters that we get on that.

But if we really want to do right by the American family, and if we really want to honor our mothers, if we want the emotional satisfaction of seeing a lot of that pain taken away and the personal satisfaction of thinking we have done what our mothers would have told us to do, which is to face up to our responsibilities and do the right thing, then we've got to find a way to provide health care to all Americans to guarantee comprehensive benefits, including preventive care, including those screenings and tests and check-ups to keep people well, not just spend a fortune on them when they really get in trouble.

We've got to preserve the right to choose doctors that women normally make the choice of. And our older women need to be able to rely on Medicare.

We can do these things. We can fix what's wrong with our system and not mess up what's right. But in order to do it, it's going to take the same discipline that was required to deal with the problems of the economy, the same courage that was required to take that vote yesterday on assault weapons, and some memory that that is, after all, what we were raised to do. And on Mother's Day, I hope that we will all resolve that by Mother's Day next year, the women who cared for us will have a health care system that cares for them.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Barbara Bailey, mother of Representative Barbara B. Kennelly, and Luisa DeLauro, mother of Representative Rosa L. DeLauro.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad of Malaysia May 6, 1994

Jones Lawsuit

Q. Mr. President, do you have any comment on the lawsuit filed against you today?

The President. Well, I thought Mr. Bennett did a fine job. I don't have anything to add to what he said.

Q. Are you going to argue that all the charges are false?

The President. I don't have anything to add to what Mr. Bennett said. I'm going back to work.

Q. Do you categorically deny the charges?

The President. Bob Bennett spoke for me, and I'm going back to work. I'm not going to dignify this by commenting on it.

Haiti

Q. Can you tell us whether you're thinking of changing your Haiti policy regarding the return of the refugees given the escalation of violence?

The President. We've had our Haiti policy under review, as you know, for the last 3 or 4 weeks. And we had a meeting about it today. We're going to meet again tomorrow. And I think we may have some announcements to make after that.

Q. About changing the policy on the refugees, sir?

Q. Have you tasked the Defense Department to do some military options just in case these sanctions cut today don't work?

The President. I don't want to discuss that. As I have said, I do not favor that option. I just don't think we can rule it out. I think it would be irresponsible to rule it out.

Q. You do not favor that option?

The President. Well, I've never favored—you know what I favor. What I've been trying to do is to get Governors Island followed. I'm trying—I think the people down there ought to

keep their word. But we certainly can't afford to rule it out.

Q. Do you think you might have announcements regarding the refugee policy, was that what you were referring to?

The President. I don't have—I'll make an announcement when I have something to say about Haiti policy. But I don't have anything else to say.

Q. Are you referring to the refugee policy?

The President. I have nothing else to say about it.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Malaysia

Q. Mr. President, you missed Dr. Mahathir in Seattle. Now that you have met him personally, how do you feel about it?

The President. Well, we haven't had a chance to visit yet, but I have been looking forward to this for a long time. I admire his leadership very much, and I admire the incredible accomplishments of his nation under his leadership over the last several years. And I look forward to establishing a good relationship with him and continuing our partnership.

I'm also very grateful for the security partnership we have had and for the contributions that have been made by Malaysia to the operation in Bosnia, to the operation in Somalia, and to being a responsible leader in world affairs.

So we've got a lot to talk about and I'm looking forward to it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to attorney Robert Bennett. Former Arkansas State employee Paula Jones' lawsuit sought civil damages for alleged sexual harassment in 1991. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

*This is an
old
draft*

The following letter was prepared following meetings involving NEC Principals and Deputies. Discussions continue on who will sign the letter. Please provide comments to me ASAP, but no later than 10:00 AM, tomorrow, Friday, 5/1.

You will receive a hard copy of this request also.

DRAFT

Senator Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to express the Administration's general views on consumer bankruptcy reform proposals currently under consideration in the Congress.

Over the past two decades, consumer bankruptcy filings have risen sharply. While there are many contending theories on the cause of that increase, it is clear that there is no single explanation. Nonetheless, the growing number of filings, examples of abuse of Chapter 7 and state exemptions, and evidence of imprudent extensions of credit suggest **some changes to the consumer bankruptcy laws are appropriate**. The lack of definitive evidence about the reasons for the rise in bankruptcies means that it is difficult to predict the effect of reform efforts. The Administration, therefore, has developed the following set of principles to guide its review of changes to the consumer bankruptcy laws.

- 1. Access to Chapter 7 should not be governed by an arbitrary means test; the court must have discretion to fairly account for the great variations in circumstances that bring debtors into bankruptcy (including medical expenses, unemployment, divorce, responsibility for the care of others, etc.) . To promote more uniform application of bankruptcy standards, this determination should take place within indicative or presumptive guidelines established by Congress that take into account factors such as the debtor's income and ability to repay a portion of the debt.**
- 2. National bankruptcy policy can respect state variation in exemption levels without allowing state exemptions to be used to shield luxury assets from creditors.**
- 3. It is appropriate to expect debtors who can afford to repay a portion of their debts (taking into account all relevant circumstances) to act responsibly; but the bankruptcy and credit reporting system should reward those who complete a Chapter 13 plan.**

4. **Bankruptcy reform should not create opportunities for creditors to coerce debtors to forgo bona fide rights in bankruptcy.**
5. **Bankruptcy rules should discourage bad faith repeat filings and other attempts to abuse the privilege accorded by access to bankruptcy.**
6. **Child support and alimony payments should be carefully protected.**

We must ensure that reforms have no unintended adverse impact on debtors' ability to meet these, and other, priority payments.

7. **Bankruptcy data collection and accuracy must be improved.**

Analysis and understanding of the forces affecting bankruptcy filings are impeded by the lack of high-quality, nationally uniform data. Better data collection and verification procedures should be incorporated in any reform proposals. Such data can be used to assess and monitor the impact of reform legislation.

8. **Scrutiny must also be given to credit industry practices that have led some borrowers to overextend themselves.**

While some of these issues may fall outside of the Judiciary Committee's jurisdiction, Congress and the Administration should consider proposals to ensure that consumers are well informed about the dangers of excessive debt accumulation and understand the implications of their credit agreements.

The Clinton Administration is open to responsible consumer bankruptcy reform that meets these principles. We have reluctantly concluded that we cannot support H.R. 3150 in its present form. We would look forward to working with Congress toward legislation more similar to the approach of S. 1301 -- with modifications necessary to meet the principles articulated above.

Sincerely,

Overall: everybody has to take responsibility or

peace of mind
- child support

'96 child support radio

Too many fathers think they can walk away

But every child has 2 parents

In fact (one of) main reasons people go on welf is b/c of deadbeats

- If every father pd what owed, welf rolls drop by million
- Govt ends up

We have made great progress

Dbl'd ~~on~~ collection → even more

~~welf & other~~

Much of good ^{progress} work cd be accidentally undone

Bank reform will

by making mothers compete

When a father declares bank, forces mother to compete w/ cc co's
for the \$ they are owed

DRAFT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Kharfen
(202) 401-9215**HHS HELPS PARENTS CHOOSE AND STATES BETTER INFORM PARENTS ON QUALITY CHILD CARE**

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala today released a new, practical and easy-to-use guide for parents to choose quality child care providers and a brochure for states on improving consumer education to parents. Both were announced by President Clinton in his message for Mother's Day. The guide, named "Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider", will be available on the world wide web and distributed to states and communities to share with parents. The brochure, entitled "Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education" will be sent to states and available on the web.

"As President Clinton says, no parent should have to choose between the job they need and the children they love," said Secretary Shalala. "Millions of America's working parents struggle each with three basic questions about child care: can I find it? can I afford it? and can I trust it?"

"This handy and helpful guide can give parents more confidence in selecting the best child care provider for their kids," Shalala added. "The valuable information we provide to the states will help ensure that parents learn the who, where and how of getting good child care."

The "Four Steps" guide suggests a simple, basic approach to selecting a quality child care provider: interview the potential caregiver, check references, make the decision for quality care and stay involved with the caregiver. Each step has a list of easy to follow questions for parents to ask and check off to learn about how the potential provider interacts with children, responds to parents, ensures proper health and safety standards, is affordable, and meets any special needs of their children. There are also toll-free numbers for more information on health and safety and to find a local child care resource and referral program.

A February 1998 report by the HHS Inspector General found that "most [states] were not able to provide sufficient consumer education" for parents to decide on quality child care programs. HHS's new guide to states provides successful examples and useful recommendations to states and child care administrators on efforts to inform parents better on how to their assess their child care needs, locate services, obtain subsidies for income eligible families, evaluate quality and choose the best, appropriate care for their children. The guide contains examples of effective public awareness campaigns, use of the world wide web and toll free telephone numbers, information resources, and state initiatives to enhance child care quality.

The availability of quality child care is a challenge for parents to find. A survey of parents revealed that 62 percent of working parents report major problems finding quality child care to meet their needs. A study on quality and cost of child care in several states found that only 1 out of 7 child care programs met an acceptable level of quality. Another reported that 13 percent of regulated and 50 percent of non-regulated care were found to provide inadequate care. Most importantly, a continuing study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, shows that there is a direct connection between higher quality care and better cognitive development for children.

"Though states are making investments to help improve the quality of care, most are using funds to provide as many child care spaces as they can." Golden added, "The 'Four Step' guide and the consumer education brochure for states won't go out of date to help parents find quality child care."

Mike R.
712-5692

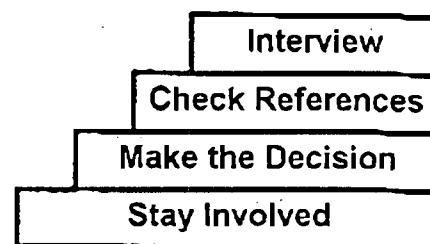
DRAFT

Early this year, President Clinton proposed an historic investment in child care for America's working families. The unprecedented \$21.7 billion program will expand subsidies for low income working families, increase tax credits for middle income families and provide resources to states and communities to enhance and ensure that parents have quality choices in child care providers. The President's plan gives parents flexible options to choose a child caretaker in their home, in a neighborhood home or a center. There are 10 million children eligible for federal subsidies, yet only 1 million children receive support. With 70 percent of America's mothers in the work force, working parents are desperately in need of help to continue to support their kids and have safe, healthy places for their children for part of the day.

"Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider" and "Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education" can be found on the world wide web at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>. For the toll-free number for a nearby child care resource and referral program, call Child Care Aware at (800) 424-2246. For more information on health and safety in child care programs, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at (800) 598-KIDS.

###

Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider



1. Interview Caregivers

Call First

Ask....

- ✓ Is there an opening for my child?
- ✓ What hours and days are you open and where are you located?
- ✓ How much does care cost? Is financial assistance available?
- ✓ How many children are in your care? What age groups do you serve?
- ✓ Do you provide transportation?
- ✓ Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- ✓ Do you have a license, accreditation, or other certification?
- ✓ When can I come to visit?

Visit Next (Visit more than once, stay as long as you can!)

Look for....

- ✓ Responsive, nurturing, warm interactions between caregiver and children.
- ✓ Children who are happily involved in daily activities and comfortable with their caregiver.
- ✓ A clean, safe, and healthy indoor and outdoor environment, especially napping, eating and toileting areas.
- ✓ A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks, and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting and which will contribute to their growth and development.
- ✓ Children getting individual attention.

Ask....

- ✓ Can I visit at any time?
- ✓ How do you handle discipline?
- ✓ What do you do if a child is sick?
- ✓ What would you do in case of an emergency?
- ✓ Are all children and staff required to be immunized?
- ✓ Do you have a substitute or back-up caregiver?
- ✓ Where do children nap? Do you know that babies should go to sleep on their backs?
- ✓ What training have you (and other staff/substitutes) had?
- ✓ May I see a copy of your license or other certification?
- ✓ May I have a list of parents (current and former) who have used your care?



2. Check References

Ask other parents....

- ✓ Was the caregiver reliable on a daily basis?
- ✓ How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- ✓ Did your child enjoy the child care experience?
- ✓ How did the caregiver respond to you as a parent?
- ✓ Was the caregiver respectful of your values and culture?
- ✓ Would you recommend the caregiver without reservation?
- ✓ If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Ask the local child care resource and referral program or licensing office....

- ✓ What regulations should child care providers meet in my area?
- ✓ Is there a record of complaints about the child care provider I am considering and how do I find out about it?

3. Make the Decision for Quality Care

From what you heard and saw, ask yourself....

- ✓ Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- ✓ Which caregiver can meet the special needs of my child?
- ✓ Are the caregiver's values compatible with my family's values?
- ✓ Is the child care available and affordable according to my family's needs and resources?
- ✓ Do I feel good about my decision?

4. Stay Involved

Ask yourself....

- ✓ How can I arrange my schedule so that I can...
 - talk to my caregiver every day?
 - talk to my child every day about how the day went?
 - visit and observe my child in care at different times of the day?
 - be involved in my child's activities?
- ✓ How can I work with my caregiver to resolve issues and concerns that may arise?
- ✓ How do I keep informed about my child's growth and development while in care?
- ✓ How can I promote good working conditions for my child care provider?
- ✓ How can I network with other parents?

These steps are only the beginning. Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. To find the Child Care Resource and Referral Program nearest you, call Child Care Aware: (800) 424-2246. For more complete guidelines on health and safety in child care, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care: (800) 598-KIDS (5437).

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REACHING
PARENTS
WITH CHILD CARE
CONSUMER EDUCATION



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

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REACHING PARENTS WITH CHILD CARE CONSUMER EDUCATION



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

What is Child Care Consumer Education?

Especially in this day and age when most parents work, nothing is more important than finding child care that is affordable, accessible and safe.

- President Bill Clinton, October 23, 1997

Families need quality, affordable child care so that they can succeed as parents and as workers. Child care consumer education provides parents with child care information to assess their needs, locate services, evaluate quality, and choose the best possible care for their children. The ability to select high quality arrangements from an array of choices is essential. Since parents of all incomes are using child care in increasing numbers, one-on-one consumer education and multi-media public awareness campaigns are critical to improving access to quality, affordable care. The development of effective consumer education initiatives involves input and feedback from the consumer -- the parent.

We...know how important it is to ensure choice for parents in their selection of child care. One size fits all child care does not fit America's families. We don't work the same hours, we don't have the same economic or other kinds of pressures that we're dealing with, so we have to provide more options and we have to empower parents with good information to enable them to become good consumers.

- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, October 23, 1997

Parents across the country report difficulties accessing child care. In 1996, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies found that 62 percent of working parents report major problems finding quality child care to meet their needs.

The availability of child care varies from community to community and by the type of care needed. In one study, 88 percent of the available spaces in centers in low-income communities were filled (Ross, 1996). Child care may also be especially difficult to find in rural communities, where there are fewer centers or family child care providers and where available caregivers may not be near a family's home or workplace. Compounding these scarcities are difficulties encountered by parents looking for care for infants and toddlers, school-age children, during nontraditional hours and for children with special needs. The General Accounting Office found in 1997 that "the largest gaps between known supply and demand in the poor areas of the selected sites exist for infants, school-aged children or both."

Good consumer education is critical to making the market function properly. If parents are not able to make informed choices, their access to the

market is limited. Further, if parents demand safe and quality care, providers are more likely to supply it. (Office of the Inspector General, US Department of Health and Human Services)

Research with parent focus groups has found that this consumer decision is challenging for many families because:

- ◆ parents may feel isolated when looking for child care and report that they usually do not know what they are looking for at the outset of their search;
- ◆ most parents are not aware of the availability of child care resource and referral services; and
- ◆ many parents cannot afford quality care, even if it is available.

To face these challenges and make informed choices about child care, parents need support as they begin the process of choosing and evaluating care for their children. This support includes information, personal attention, and access to financial assistance.

INFORMATION. Parents need information to make the best decision for their children's care, including:

- ◆ What child care arrangements are available, and how to identify the elements that ensure the health and safety of the children.
- ◆ Strategies to develop a partnership with the caregiver.
- ◆ Opportunities to observe, evaluate, and stay actively involved.

PERSONAL ATTENTION. As parents seek child care, the opportunity to have one-on-one discussions with a referral counselor is important to ensure that the information provided is tailored to the unique needs of each family.

Child Care Aware is a national initiative to provide information about child care to parents. The mission of Child Care Aware is to ensure that every parent has access to good information about finding quality child care and resources in their community through national consumer marketing and by raising the visibility of local child care resource and referral agencies.

Child Care Aware has identified eight key principles for designing effective child care consumer education efforts at the state and local levels. Successful project designs include:

- ◆ outreach to targeted audiences;
- ◆ respect for parents' perspectives;
- ◆ feedback from consumers;
- ◆ the importance of trust;
- ◆ an understanding of adult learning;
- ◆ linkages between consumer education and other family issues;
- ◆ engaging community partners; and
- ◆ partnerships that build upon the strengths of resource and referral programs and public agencies that serve low-income parents.

Child Care Aware is an initiative managed by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) with the Child Care Action Campaign and the National Association for Family Child Care as advisory partners.

ACCESS TO SUPPORT. Information about child care subsidies at the state and local level, materials about the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit can help parents afford the care of their choice.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) can support families by connecting them to the information they need, while providing one-on-one counseling opportunities to help them choose quality care for their children. According to the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), community based CCR&Rs:

- ◆ support families in the most important roles of nurturing their children and balancing the demands of family and work;
- ◆ compile, analyze, and share information with parents, child care providers, and communities;
- ◆ support individuals and programs that care for children; and
- ◆ build connections in communities and states to create appropriate policies on family and children's issues and to generate additional resources for child care.

Bright Dreams: A Child Care Consumer Education Program Reaching Parents-to-Be and New Parents

Programs for Parents, a child care resource and referral agency in NEW JERSEY, is implementing a Child Care Aware consumer education program focused on parents-in-waiting and new parents. The program conveys a message about quality child care to parents attending Lamaze method and parenting classes, and through closed circuit television in the maternity departments of four large hospitals in Essex County, New Jersey.

Programs for Parents, in collaboration with the Newark Office for Children and the County of Essex, designed the program to reach parents when they are the most receptive to this information, in the late stage of their pregnancy or just after the birth of their baby. The Bright Dreams program presents a brief video showing scenes of quality child care activities and programs. The video includes segments with parents describing why they chose their caregiver, along with charts of what is important to look for when seeking quality care. Accompanying the video is a newsletter published in English and Spanish that provides information about quality and a checklist for evaluating infant care options.

A draft version of the video was presented to several groups of parents, family child care providers, staff members, and the hospital committee. The producers also attended the meeting, to be responsive to suggestions. Input from providers and parents was also incorporated into the newsletter and checklist.

The Bright Dreams program includes a media campaign that includes public service announcements, press releases, and bus advertisements. Campaign materials are produced in both English and Spanish. Local television stations that broadcast to a primarily Latino audience have expressed interest in designing a program around the video. Cable television stations have expressed similar interest.

What States Are Doing

The Child and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the major source of federal funding to the States to help low-income parents find and afford child care. Under the CCDBG, States are required to certify that they will "promote informed child care choices." Additionally, the CCDBG legislation includes a set aside of not less than 4 percent of total funds for activities that are "designed to provide comprehensive consumer education to parents and the public, activities that increase parental choice, and activities designed to improve the quality and availability of child care (such as resource and referral services)."

This requirement has led to innovative new consumer education initiatives across the country. Many states have begun efforts to integrate the child care subsidy application process with consumer education programs. CCDBG funds have supported the efforts of community agencies such as child care resource and referral agencies to inform parents about available child care services. These efforts have increased the child care consumer education services available to low-income families, and have created new opportunities to tell families about child care assistance available through subsidy programs.

When a parent is enrolled in the child care subsidy program in CALIFORNIA, he/she is asked if a child care provider has been selected. If they have not selected a child care provider, they are referred to the local resource and referral program. The resource and referral agency provides counseling on how to select a child care provider that best meets the family's needs, and a list of providers for the family to visit. California has legislated that child care resource and referral staff be co-located in each county welfare office in order to provide consumer education and referrals to parents. Multimillion dollar funding for this new initiative is part of the Governor's budget.

However, some barriers continue to exist that interfere with the development of strong consumer education networks. The Office of the Inspector General, in a 1998 report, found that "most [States] were not able to provide sufficient consumer education." Similar obstacles were found across the states, including:

- ◆ large caseloads and long waiting lists, impeding community agencies' ability to regularly provide services beyond eligibility determination and payment;
- ◆ multiple functions of child care resource and referral agencies, including separate subsidy and education components that do not interact to serve parents; and
- ◆ reliance on print materials as the primary means of communication with families.

According to a study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., low-income families face severe constraints, including limited income, jobs with inflexible and nonstandard schedules, an insufficient supply of formal child care, and a lack of other adults in the household to assist with work and childrearing responsibilities. These constraints make the search for child care more difficult.

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Quality of Care From a Parent's Point of View

Traditionally, in designing child care and family policy, everyone speaks for the child and for the parents -- except perhaps the parents themselves. OREGON is setting a place at the table for the child care consumer by trying to help parents find their voice and articulate their vital interests in public policy through a coordinated effort at many levels. Efforts include:

- An on-going research project measuring quality of care from a parent's point of view and studying its policy correlates.
- The 20-member Achieving Quality for Children Policy Council, a vigorous parent group, has developed a brochure: "In a Parent's Voice: Tips from Parents to Parents, about Looking for Quality Child Care."
- A network of groups, task forces, research projects, and agencies cooperating in a loosely coordinated way to pursue common goals, in affiliation with the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership.
- The collection, analysis, and use of data on family and child care demographics to drive policy and planning.

(Quality of Care From a Parent's Point of View: A Place at the Policy Table for Child Care Consumers, Arthur Emlen, 1996 unpublished paper, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Portland, Oregon)

Recognizing that it is through a combination of individual consumer education and public awareness activities that parents will seek and assess child care, and eventually increase the demand for high quality care, states have adopted different strategies to help educate parents about their child care choices and the availability of subsidies. In some cases, they have established statewide networks of resource and referral agencies to insure that every parent in the state has a reliable resource to turn to for information about child care.

INDIANA has launched an initiative to enhance and expand statewide and local resource and referral activities. The primary services available to parents and community agencies will include information on the supply and availability of child care throughout the state, and consumer education and child care referrals for families. The goal is to create a system of consumer education and public awareness to encourage parents to seek, evaluate and eventually demand quality child care.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Report of State Plans shows:

- ◆ More than one-quarter of the states use the media, mailings, brochures, posters, public service announcements and other mechanisms to alert parents to the availability of subsidized child care.
- ◆ Over half of the states provide materials to community agencies, local programs and child care providers and other state agencies to distribute information to the families they serve.
- ◆ Three-quarters of the states provide information on the availability of child care at the point of intake for families

applying for TANF.

◆ Almost two-thirds of the states use resource and referral agencies to provide information to families on the availability of child care subsidies and on the range of choices available to families.

Other states are using multi-media campaigns to make consumer education available 24 hours a day. Internet and other technologies have made this approach cost-effective and simple to implement.

NORTH CAROLINA, CALIFORNIA, NEW JERSEY and ILLINOIS are among the states using the World Wide Web as one means of delivering child care consumer education to families. Each state has several child care pages, including information on "What Parents Should Know about Child Care," searchable directories of regulated child care providers, how to participate in the child care subsidy program and a listing of local child care resource and referral agencies. Illinois includes information about standards for centers and family child care homes. Links to other organizations with information on finding and choosing child care are also included.

Community resource and referral agencies are also using technology to meet the diverse needs of families in multiple settings. In **WASHINGTON** state, Child Care Resources, the community resource and referral agency serving Seattle/King County, is using the Web to provide consumer education and referrals. This will soon be available statewide.

Many states have developed systems to bring consumer education to families applying for the child care subsidy. Co-location of these services at the time and place of application has helped

many states maximize the effectiveness of the consumer education services they provide.

In **UTAH**, the resource and referral agency has prepared a slide show and video for parents on how to choose child care, which are shown while families apply for the child care subsidy at the Employment Center. Pamphlets and books are also available. Families may also attend a workshop on "How to Choose Quality Child Care."

In other states, the resource and referral system is the central point of contact for families to access the child care subsidy program and consumer education. This integrated approach is designed to provide parents with easy access to resources, financial assistance, and counselors to support their child's needs. It is also used to support statewide public awareness campaigns to educate families, providers and employers about the importance of quality child care.

Child Care Management Agencies in **ALABAMA**, located in the community resource and referral agencies, provide consumer education and child care referral services to low-income families. They also process eligibility applications from families and process payments to providers.

The **FLORIDA** Children's Forum administers a statewide resource and referral network that oversees consumer education activities throughout the state. The Forum develops a statewide listing of early childhood services, consumer education materials in a variety of languages and formats, including the brochure "See It Through Your Child's Eyes," and outreach programs to help families locate and afford quality child care.

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Several states have designed consumer education initiatives targeted to the needs of certain families, such as those with school-age children or families of children with special needs. Often, these are collaborative efforts with partners from other state agencies, community agencies, schools, health care providers and other service agencies.

COLORADO Options for Inclusive Child Care, administered by the Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies, is a project designed to increase the awareness of child care resource and referral agencies (RARRs) of the issues that impact families of children and youth with special needs, and to assist RARRs to develop strategies that support families in building partnerships with child care and respite care workers. The project will build the capacity of community agencies to act as a catalyst in promoting community involvement in inclusive child care and increase community utilization of RARRs for recruiting, training, and supporting providers of child care and respite services. Services for families and providers include problem solving when care options are limited or non-existent, tips on interviewing and contracting, and help in identifying barriers to inclusion specific to each care setting.

Child Care 2000, a broad collaborative in WASHINGTON coordinated by the Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network and involving 14 statewide early childhood and youth organizations, 4 state agencies, the Child Care Coordinating Committee, is a consumer education and parent engagement campaign to inform parents about the importance of quality adult caregiving relationships for children and youth of all ages. One of the lessons learned during the campaign has been that one message does not fit all parents' situations. Child Care 2000 developed a message to the parents of school-agers that is relevant to the complexities involved in the process of choosing an appropriate place for their school-age child. A positive message was chosen which grabs parents' attention: **School Age Care: Growing Up With Someplace To Go.**

Reaching Parents through child care consumer education is a vital step in the process of ensuring that families have access to the best possible child care services for their children. Responsive consumer education strengthens the child care delivery system and enables parents, providers and communities to work together to identify and address their child care needs.

There are many examples in states and local communities of effective consumer education initiatives. As states continue to address the growing need for child care services, consumer education will be the mechanism for sharing information with families, providing essential support and connecting families with the services they need.

Four Steps for Parents Selecting a Child Care Provider

1. Interview Caregivers
2. Check References
3. Make the Decision for Quality Care
4. Stay Involved

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National Organizations

The following organizations have information and resources for states, families and communities.

Child Care Action Campaign
330 7th Avenue, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 239-0138

Children's Defense Fund
25 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 628-8787
World Wide Web: <http://www.childrensdefense.org>

Families and Work Institute
330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 465-2044
World Wide Web: <http://www.familiesandworkinst.org>

I Am Your Child
(888) 447-3400
<http://www.iamyourchild.org>

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(800) 424-2460 or (202) 232-8777
World Wide Web: <http://www.naeyc.org/naeyc>

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
1319 P Street, NW, Suite 606
Washington, DC 20004-1106
(202) 393-5501
World Wide Web: <http://www.childcarerr.org>

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 387-1281
World Wide Web: <http://www.nbcdi.org>

National Child Care Information Center
243 Church Street, NW 2nd Floor
Vienna, VA 22180
(800) 616-2242 (*List of state child care administrators available*)
World Wide Web: <http://nccic.org>

National Parent Information Network
University of Illinois Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
(800) 583-4135 or (217) 333-1386
World Wide Web: <http://nptn.org>

Zero To Three/National Center for Clinical Infant Programs
734 15th Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-2101
(202) 638-1144
World Wide Web: <http://www.zerotothree.org>

CHILD CARE AWARE

A toll-free phone number provides parents with a direct link to their community child care resource and referral agency:

800-424-2246

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Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education was prepared for the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by the National Child Care Information Center.

DRAFT



GUIDELINES

FOR THE SCREENING
OF PERSONS WORKING
WITH CHILDREN,
THE ELDERLY,
AND INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES
IN NEED OF SUPPORT

OJDP
Summary

All too frequently, we read stories in our daily newspapers, see on the nightly news, or hear about yet another individual who is the victim of abuse at the hands of a care provider - - a care provider with a criminal history of similar abuses or who is otherwise not fit to care for vulnerable individuals. The victim may be a child in a preschool program, an elderly person who needs assisted living care, or a disabled individual who requires institutional care.

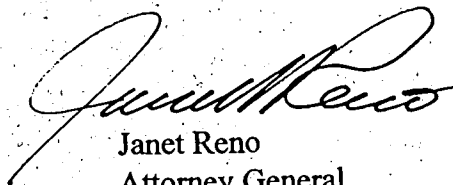
Today nearly 35 million adults come into contact with more than 70 million children in educational institutions, day care facilities, foster care homes, youth development organizations, social service agencies' medical facilities, recreation centers, religious-based programs, and juvenile detention, correctional, and law enforcement facilities. More than 5 million of the estimated 33.9 million Americans older than 65 years need some form of assisted care and an additional 2.3 million of the 36 million Americans with a disability require residential treatment. The total number of Americans in need of some care is estimated at more than 77.3 million.

When Congress introduced and passed the National Child Protection Act in 1993, it addressed concerns we all share: concerns about the qualifications of those who care for the members of our society most susceptible to abuse. The Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 amended the National Child Protection Act and directed the Attorney General to "develop guidelines for the adoption of appropriate safeguards by care providers and by states for protecting children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities from abuse." With the release of these guidelines, we are taking a step forward in providing this vulnerable population with additional protection from abuse by those responsible for their care. These guidelines present a logical decision model to guide the screening decisions of individuals and organizations who hire employees or recruit volunteers to work with and provide care to children, the elderly, or the disabled.

The guidelines do not mandate criminal record checks for all care providers but do present advice on establishing a policy that provides an appropriate level of screening based upon specific situations. The suggested screening mechanisms may include the Federal Bureau of Investigation's fingerprint based criminal records check, where warranted. The first step presented in this decision model includes an assessment of "triggers" that pertain to the setting in which the care is provided, the employee's or volunteer's level of contact with the individual receiving care, and the vulnerability of the care receiver. The next step is weighing the availability of information, the costs of the screening, and the human resources needed to carry out the screening process. The third step is the analysis and selection of appropriate screening practices that would be used in addition to "Basic Screening," which includes reference checks, interviews, and a written application. These three steps lead employers and volunteer organizations through a thoughtful process of evaluating the circumstances and establishing appropriate screening measures for each care provider.

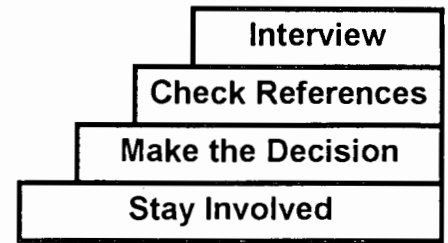
The guidelines were developed to help reduce the incidence of abuse by care providers. However, the guidelines alone will not eliminate the problem. We, as the relative or friend of an

individual receiving care, must remain aware of the potential for abuse. Screening of care providers does not remove our responsibility to talk to our children and family about what is and is not acceptable behavior from care and service providers. Similarly, service organizations and employers providing care have an ongoing responsibility to monitor those in contact with vulnerable populations. While the use of these Guidelines is a necessary first step to ensure their safety, we must remain vigilant at all times to ensure proper care.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet Reno".

Janet Reno
Attorney General

Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider



1. Interview Caregivers

Call First

Ask....

- ✓ Is there an **opening** for my child?
- ✓ What hours **and** days are you open and where are **you** located?
- ✓ How much **does** care cost? Is financial assistance **available**?
- ✓ How many **children** are in your care? What age **groups** do you serve?
- ✓ Do you provide transportation?
- ✓ Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- ✓ Do you have a license, accreditation, or other certification?
- ✓ When can I come to visit?

Visit Next (Visit more than once, stay as long as you can!)

Look for....

- ✓ Responsive, **nurturing**, warm interactions between **caregiver** and children.
- ✓ Children **who are** happily involved in daily activities **and** comfortable with their caregiver.
- ✓ A clean, **safe, and** healthy indoor and outdoor **environment**, especially napping, **eating** and toileting areas.
- ✓ A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks, and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting and which will contribute to their growth and development.
- ✓ Children getting individual attention.

Ask....

- ✓ Can I visit **at any** time?
- ✓ How do you **handle** discipline?
- ✓ What do **you do** if a child is sick?
- ✓ What would **you do** in case of an emergency?
- ✓ Are all **children and** staff required to be immunized?
- ✓ Do you have **a substitute** or back-up caregiver?
- ✓ Where do children nap? Do you know that babies should go to sleep on their backs?
- ✓ What training have you (and other staff/substitutes) had?
- ✓ May I see a copy of your license or other certification?
- ✓ May I have a list of parents (current and former) who have used your care?



2. Check References

Ask other parents....

- ✓ Was the caregiver reliable on a daily basis?
- ✓ How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- ✓ Did your child enjoy the child care experience?
- ✓ How did the caregiver respond to you as a parent?
- ✓ Was the caregiver respectful of your values and culture?
- ✓ Would you recommend the caregiver without reservation?
- ✓ If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Ask the local child care resource and referral program or licensing office....

- ✓ What regulations should child care providers meet in my area?
- ✓ Is there a record of complaints about the child care provider I am considering and how do I find out about it?

3. Make the Decision for Quality Care

From what you heard and saw, ask yourself....

- ✓ Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- ✓ Which caregiver can meet the special needs of my child?
- ✓ Are the caregiver's values compatible with my family's values?
- ✓ Is the child care available and affordable according to my family's needs and resources?
- ✓ Do I feel good about my decision?

4. Stay Involved

Ask yourself....

- ✓ How can I arrange my schedule so that I can...
 - talk to my caregiver every day?
 - talk to my child every day about how the day went?
 - visit and observe my child in care at different times of the day?
 - be involved in my child's activities?
- ✓ How can I work with my caregiver to resolve issues and concerns that may arise?
- ✓ How do I keep informed about my child's growth and development while in care?
- ✓ How can I promote good working conditions for my child care provider?
- ✓ How can I network with other parents?

These steps are only the beginning. Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. To find the Child Care Resource and Referral Program nearest you, call Child Care Aware: (800) 424-2246. For more complete guidelines on health and safety in child care, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care: (800) 598-KIDS (5437).

Talking It Over

By Hillary Rodham Clinton



Bankruptcy shouldn't let parents off the hook

Over the past weeks, I've learned about proposed bankruptcy-reform legislation in the House of Representatives that could undermine the ability of some parents to collect child support. I have no quarrel with responsible bankruptcy reform, but I do quarrel with aspects of the bill that would force single parents to compete for their child support payments with big banks trying to collect credit card debt. The welfare of our children must come first.

Let me tell you about a hypothetical family: Jan and Simon have three children, ages 1, 3 and 5. Simon is the manager of a small shoe store with an annual salary of \$33,000. Jan is a full-time homemaker.

Sadly, they divorce, and Simon agrees to pay child support. Unfortunately, within a year, he's involved in a serious car accident and loses his job. Jan, struggling to raise their three children, stops receiving child support checks. Unable to find work, and behind on his bills, Simon files for bankruptcy protection. Jan is just one of his creditors.

Under current bankruptcy law, Simon is obligated to pay his taxes, his student loans and his child support and alimony. But under the legislation being considered by the House, certain of his credit card debts would also be mandatory. In Simon's case, as parties vie in the fierce competition for limited funds, child support payments and credit card obligations would be pitted against each other.

Unfortunately, Jan and Simon's story is all too common. This year alone, 1.4 million families will file for protection from unmanageable consumer debt under our bankruptcy laws. This represents an increase of about 400 percent since 1980. While some reform is in order, any accompanying threat to child support and alimony payments is not.

This administration has worked too long and too hard to improve child support collection to see it now threatened. The president has cracked down on nonpaying parents and strengthened enforcement. Since 1992, collections are up 68 percent.

Today, families that file under Chapter 7 are relieved of certain debts, but as in Simon's case, they must still repay others, including taxes, educational loans and family and child support obligations. Many also try to continue making home mortgage and car payments. They leave court relieved of some debt but certainly not

debt-free.

The aspects of the House bill that concern me would elevate certain types of credit card debt to the same high priority as taxes, school loans and family support. The challenge for Congress is to pass a law that is balanced and fair to both the creditor and the debtor — protecting families and children while reducing abuse of the bankruptcy laws.

The challenge for our economy is to preserve access to credit while making sure that eligible consumers are educated, responsible and protected from unscrupulous practices. It wasn't too long ago that large segments of our society were denied credit. At the time, it was important to provide people with this valuable economic tool, but now, as we all know, credit is readily available.

How many times in the past few months has your phone rung during dinner? You excuse yourself, leave the table and pick up the receiver, only to be greeted by a cheery voice on the other end of the line, happily offering you a "pre-approved credit card." Or how many times have you seen or heard advertisements encouraging people with bad credit to borrow more?

For many people in financial straits — for whatever reason — such offers may sound too good to be true. Unfortunately, down the line, too many people find they didn't comprehend how much they would owe and don't have the means to repay the additional debt.

The average bankruptcy filer in this country earns less than \$18,000 a year after taxes. And, now, credit card companies even target college and high school students.

Most people use their credit cards responsibly and pay their bills reliably. But, for many Americans — like Jan and Simon — the difference between fiscal security and financial ruin is just one calamity away. A divorce, a lost job, an accident or a child's illness can rob a family of its financial security and eventually lead to bankruptcy court.

As members of Congress grapple with bankruptcy reform, they must deal with the problems that face both creditors and debtors. But one issue is clear. Any effort to reform the bankruptcy system must protect the obligations of parents to support their children.

• To find out more about Hillary Rodham Clinton and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate World Wide Web page (www.creators.com).

← the central issue at stake

single parents shouldn't be just another creditor

accomp.

The Washington Times

★ THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1998

Pentagon asks Gulf cuts for morale, cost

By Rowan Scarborough
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Pentagon wants to significantly reduce ground and air forces in the Persian Gulf by mid-summer and will submit options later this month to President Clinton, senior military officers said yesterday.

With Gulf tensions receding, one officer said the Defense Department may ask to shrink force levels from the 38,000 troops to 20,000 and one aircraft carrier — the Gulf deployment before Saddam Hussein began defying United Nations inspectors seven months ago.

Meanwhile, six senators yesterday put pressure on the White House to scale back, saying the increased deployment was draining defense dollars and morale.

"Clearly, I think it's time for us to reduce the deployment in the Persian Gulf and get it down to the point where people do not have to go back," said Sen. Ted Stevens, Alaska Republican and chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on defense. "I think this repeated deployment to the same locale under the same conditions — they cannot go off the bases, there's no towns for them to visit. They really are very confined. And that's leading to a long-term loss of morale."

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas Republican and a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said: "I would describe the morale in the desert as adequate. There are very severe problems in that regard, and there's no question we're going to have to go through some kind of a deployment reduction here back to the



Sen. Ted Stevens

precrisis levels."

One of two carriers in the Gulf, the USS Independence, is due to leave the region at month's end. Defense Secretary William S. Cohen on Tuesday ordered a possible replacement carrier, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, to depart the United States on June 10, as planned. The scheduling raises the prospect of leaving one carrier in the region as the first stage of a troop downturn.

At the White House, Mr. Clinton told reporters, "Secretary Cohen has not recommended a final decision to me on this, and I have certainly not made one, and we've done our best to keep all of our options open."

On the morale issue, the president said, "One of the things I recognize is that as we ask more and



Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison

more and more of our men and women in uniform, and they have longer deployments, we're going to have to work harder to make sure they get adequate support."

A senior military officer said planners want a new Iraq policy that doesn't involve the costly, morale-draining deployment of troops everytime Saddam acts up.

With Saddam less bellicose in recent months, the administration has sent signals it was considering a drawdown.

The administration's dilemma is cost vs. iron-fisted diplomacy.

The buildup is projected to require \$1.3 billion this year in extra defense spending. But withdrawing forces could wrongly signal Saddam that he again is free to defy U.N. weapons inspectors.

"We've got to get out of the mode

that allows him to dictate what we do," said a senior military officer. "We're going to make it absolutely clear we're not going to react to his every whim."

The administration is discussing the option of coupling a withdrawal to precrisis levels with heightened U.S. warnings that defiance of U.N. weapons inspections would bring military strikes.

Another consideration is the weather: The region's intense summer heat is an inhospitable environment for soldiers housed in tents in Kuwait.

"Most of our troops stationed in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are in tents," a military spokesman said.

John Hillen, a former Army officer and analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations, said the administration is mistaken if it believes it can influence Saddam's behavior without robust military forces.

"It will be difficult to deter Saddam on the cheap. I don't know what model they're going to use," Mr. Hillen said. "There's no free lunch. You have to be excessively creative to not wear out our forces by keeping them in the Persian Gulf, but at the same time to keep enough there to deter Saddam."

A senior officer at the Pentagon said the United States "lost the propaganda war" in the latest crisis with Saddam. Fewer nations now back continued economic sanctions as a lever to force Iraq to reveal its prohibited weapons of mass destruction.

"Saddam seems to gauge our threshold for tolerance, and he operates underneath that threshold," Mr. Hillen said. "He operates at just under the threshold where we would knock the crap out of him."

MOTHER'S DAY, 1998

- - - - -

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Mothers are the heart of our families and the soul of our society. They are the givers and nurturers of life, our teachers, confidants, counselors, and lifelong friends. They believe in our dreams and help us to achieve them. From the moment our mothers first take us into their arms, we are blessed with their love and with the gift of knowing that we matter.

As our first and best teachers, our mothers help us to develop the values, self-esteem, strength of character, and generosity of spirit we need to embrace the wider world beyond the family. We, in turn, will pass on to a new generation these vital lessons of love and responsibility. And so there are no boundaries to a mother's love and no way of adequately measuring her influence.

While the special love between mother and child is unchanging, the challenges of motherhood are not. The role of women in our society has grown and altered dramatically during the past century. Millions of American women today pursue full-time careers in addition to carrying out their duties as parents, balancing family, job, and community responsibilities. But, whether they stay home with their children or become working mothers, whether they are biological, adoptive, foster, or step parents, mothers today care for their families and meet the new demands of our complex society with strength, courage, and quiet selflessness. On Mother's Day, as we reach out to embrace our mothers in person or only in memory, let us strengthen the timeless bond between us and acknowledge the many gifts with which they have graced our lives.

Doesn't
all this
seem a
bit obvious

2

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 8, 1914 (38 Stat. 770), has designated the second Sunday in May each year as "Mother's Day" and requested the President to call for its appropriate observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 10, 1998, as Mother's Day. I urge all Americans to express their deep love and respect for their mothers and to remember how much they have contributed to our lives and the well-being of our country. I also call upon all citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
day of _____, in the year of our Lord
nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of
the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jeff,

As I mentioned on your movement, the radio address is on for child care - background attached. An additional issue is bankruptcy reform and its potential adverse consequences for single moms of children b/c of weakening child support collection. Rahm/Aun, etc want a strong paragraph on that, too (background attached - HRC wrote her column on this issue).

Jan & I think this should be a primarily values-oriented address, with lots of praise of

for moms - all moms (whether they work or not), and the

"announcements" should be secondary to a strong message on the need for action on child care, & to give moms greater peace of mind (best

~~Jim off to a meeting~~
gift for Mother's Day).

I'll check in when I

return from meeting (c. 10³⁰)

Nicole