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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 3, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JOHN HILLEY *JH*

SUBJECT:

KEY STAFF EFFORTS IN THE PASSAGE OF HEALTH CARE REFORM, WELFARE REFORM, AND THE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

You will soon sign welfare reform, health care reform, and a minimum wage increase. I want you to know of the efforts of some of the people who were instrumental to this effort. Leon was exceptional in overseeing our efforts. I greatly appreciate the confidence and trust he has shown in me and all those who helped.

Health Care Reform

This was the most interesting dance of legislation of the three. The back and forth between House and Senate, committees and Leadership, Hastert, Kennedy, Lott, Daschle and many others went on for over a month -- but always in the direction of compromise. Our strategy of moving the bill close enough for Kennedy to validate the outcome ultimately succeeded -- and he was, as always, the ultimate team player in closing the deal.

I don't believe there would have been a bill without the efforts of Chris Jennings. His creativity and hard work were critical to the MSA compromise. As we moved the discussion to where Kennedy and Archer could close the gap and reach an agreement, Chris was instrumental every step of the way -- including the final week as we worked through the portability issue. He was supported throughout by the strong efforts of Jennifer Klein.

David Nexon of Senator Kennedy's staff deserves special recognition for making the bill work. He was a great negotiator and a very positive force in bringing Senator Kennedy along.

Nancy Ann Min coordinated the interagency and Congressional effort on designing an MSA cap, monitoring, and enforcement mechanism. Numerous people at Treasury, including Don Lubin, Mark Iwry and Eric Toder helped with the technical estimation and design issues. Bob Rubin was a tremendous help in encouraging Treasury's technical people to make the MSA experiment work. Susan Brophy oversaw the passage of the bill on the Senate floor, a unanimous vote on a clean bill after the defeat of the Dole MSA amendment.

Welfare Reform

Throughout the year we had a working group consisting of Bruce Reed, Rahm, Emily Bromberg, Ken Apfel, Rich Tarplin of HHS, Susan, Janet Murguia, and myself. Each of them made wonderful contributions both on substance and legislative tactics.

Rahm and Bruce are the "doers" who have generated a string of initiatives that gave us credibility on welfare. They are great on substance and message. Ken Apfel is a liberal at heart but was always realistic and willing to make this bill work. He knows his stuff and is a tireless helper. Rich Tarlin was important in keeping HHS on the reservation and monitoring the Hill.

Our strategy was to keep the process moving toward the middle using Breaux/Chafee, Castle/Tanner and the Leadership. With the power of your two vetoes and the push from the moderates we were able to markedly improve the Republican bill. Our liberals deserve great credit for moving to the center and substantially staying with us. We believe you will sign a mainstream welfare reform bill that is good for the country.

Minimum Wage

This was our great issue. It energized Congressional Democrats and ultimately drove Bob Dole from the Senate. Senators Kennedy and Daschle knew when to pounce and used the divisions among Republicans to elevate the issue.

After the Republicans broke ranks in the House, our office was instrumental in helping defeat the "small business carve out" in both the House and the Senate, giving you a bill without a poison pill. Janet Murguia and Barbara Chow worked closely with me on this bill, with Barbara working with Treasury on the tax package. We had the outstanding cooperation of Bob Rubin and his chief legislative aide, Linda Robertson.