

WHITE HOUSE UNVEILS NEW RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE WORK AND BOOST CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS

January 26, 2000

Today, the White House will unveil a major new initiative to promote work, child support, and responsible fatherhood. The responsible fatherhood initiative, part of the Administration's FY 2001 budget, will include new measures to 1) collect child support from parents who can afford to pay; 2) ensure that more child support goes directly to families, and 3) provide funds to help more "deadbroke" fathers who owe child support go to work. These responsible fatherhood proposals are a critical next step in welfare reform, and will build upon the Administration's efforts to help low-income families succeed in the workforce and help even more long-term welfare recipients go to work. The White House today will also announce new data showing that thanks to the Administration's child support crackdown, collections have nearly doubled since President Clinton and Vice President Gore took office.

COLLECTING MORE CHILD SUPPORT FROM FATHERS WHO CAN PAY. The Administration's budget will include new initiatives to crack down further on parents who owe child support. These initiatives will collect nearly \$2 billion for children over the next five years by:

- Booting the Cars of Deadbeat Parents. This will take nationwide a policy adopted in Virginia that immobilizes vehicles owned by deadbeat parents until they begin to pay what they owe. During the pilot phase, this initiative collected an average of \$5,000 from each deadbeat parent. This new tool will enable every state to collect more child support; there will be safeguards to ensure that those legitimately trying to pay are not targeted.
- Intercepting Gambling Winnings to Collect Past-Due Child Support. Gambling winnings are a form of income, which until now has been out of reach to families who are owed child support. Under this initiative, gambling establishments will check whether individuals with large winnings owe child support as they complete existing procedures for withholding federal income taxes. Gamblers owing child support will have their winnings seized.
- Denying Passports to Parents Who Owe \$2,500 or More in Child Support. This proposal will deny passports to parents owing more than \$2,500 in child support. This expands the current passport denial program, which rejects passport applications or renewal requests if child support arrearages exceed \$5,000, and currently results in 30-40 denied passports per day. Rejected parents often pay child support immediately in order to obtain their passports.
- Prohibiting Medicare Participation by Providers Owing Child Support. This bars doctors and other health providers who owe child support from becoming Medicare providers.
- Requiring More Frequent Updating of Child Support Orders. This proposal will require states to review support orders every three years for families receiving TANF and adjust them accordingly. New orders reflecting parents' updated salary information will bring more child support to children who need it.

STREAMLINING CHILD SUPPORT RULES SO MOTHERS GET MORE RELIABLE CHILD SUPPORT INCOME. The Administration's budget will contain a proposal that will ensure that more child support goes directly to families. Current child support distribution rules are complicated, and often result in government, not families, keeping child support monies paid by the father. Today's proposals will enable states to simplify distribution rules and provide incentives to states that pass through more child support payments directly to families. In states that adopt the new options, families that have left welfare will be able to keep all the child support paid by the noncustodial parent; families still working their way off welfare will be able to keep up to \$100 a month. These proposals will create a clearer connection between what a father pays and what his family gets, giving parents more reason to cooperate with the child support system.

HELPING LOW-INCOME FATHERS AND WORKING FAMILIES SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN. The Administration's budget also proposes \$255 million for the first year of a new "Fathers Work/Families Win" initiative to help low-income non-custodial parents and low-income working families work and support their children. These new competitive grants will be awarded to business-led local and state workforce investment boards who work in partnership with community and faith-based organizations, and agencies administering child support, TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid, thereby connecting low-income fathers and working families to the life-long learning and employment services created under the Workforce Investment Act and delivered through one-stop career centers.

- Fathers Work. To ensure that low-income fathers who are not living with their children provide the financial and emotional support their children deserve, the Administration's budget will include \$125 million for new "Fathers Work" grants. These grants will help approximately 40,000 low income non-custodial parents (mainly fathers) work, pay child support, and reconnect with their children. As part of this effort, states will need to put procedures in place allowing them to require more parents who owe child support to pay or go to work, expanding to include parents of children not on welfare. This initiative builds on over \$350 million in responsible fatherhood initiatives funded through the Labor Department Welfare-to-Work program.
- Families Win. To reward work and responsibility and ensure that all families benefit from the booming economy, the Administration's budget will include \$130 million in new grants to help hard-pressed working families get the supports and skills they need to succeed on the job and avoid welfare. These funds will leverage existing resources to help families retain jobs and upgrade skills, and get connected to critical work supports, such as child care, child support, health care, food stamps, housing, and transportation. Families Win grants will serve approximately 40,000 low-income families, including mothers and fathers, former welfare recipients, and people with disabilities. Within these funds, \$10 million will be set aside for applicants from Native American workforce agencies.

CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS SET NEW RECORD, NEARLY DOUBLING SINCE 1992. The White House today will also announce new data showing that the Administration's child support campaign nearly doubled collections to \$15.5 billion in FY 1999, up from \$8 billion in 1992. A record \$1.3 billion of these collections came from withholding federal tax

returns from deadbeat parents, with the balance coming from a variety of stronger enforcement tools put in place since 1992, allowing garnishing of wages, seizing of bank accounts, and taking of drivers and other licenses. The new data show that efforts to track deadbeat parents across state lines are working – 2.8 million parents were located in the first two years of operation of the National Directory of New Hires, which matches child support orders to employment records. These statistics confirm promising trends, showing that paternity establishment – often the first step in collecting child support – tripled to nearly 1.5 million in 1998, and the number of child support cases with collections rose from 2.8 million in 1992 to 4.5 million in 1998.

EXTENDING WELFARE-TO-WORK GRANTS. To help more long-term welfare recipients and low-income fathers go to work and support their families, the Administration's budget will give state, local, tribal, and community- and faith-based grantees an additional two years to spend Welfare-to-Work funds, ensuring that roughly \$2 billion in existing resources continues to help those most in need. This will give grantees an opportunity to fully implement the \$3 billion Welfare-to-Work initiative the Administration fought to include in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, as well as the program eligibility improvements enacted last year with the Administration's support.

NEW INITIATIVES ARE IMPORTANT NEXT STEP IN WELFARE REFORM. The initiative to be announced today is an important next step in welfare reform, which has moved millions of single parents (mainly mothers) into the workforce, and it is a logical extension of the existing Welfare-to-Work funds, which are helping long-term welfare recipients and low-income fathers work and support their families.

Three years after the enactment of the welfare reform law, we've seen revolutionary changes to promote work and responsibility. Numerous independent studies confirm that people are moving in record numbers from welfare to work, and welfare rolls are down by more than half since 1992 to their lowest level in 30 years. The 12,000 companies in the Welfare to Work Partnership launched by the Administration in 1997 have hired nearly 650,000 former welfare recipients. More than 1.3 million welfare recipients nationwide went to work in 1998 alone; the percentage of adults still on welfare who were working nearly quadrupled between 1992 and 1998, with all fifty states meeting the welfare reform law's overall work requirement. Today, there are 2.2 million fewer children living in poverty than in 1993, and the child poverty rate declined from 22.7 percent to 18.9 percent – the largest five year drop in nearly 30 years. The overall poverty rate fell to 12.7 percent in 1998, with 4.8 million fewer people in poverty than in 1993.

Father's Day Radio Address Deliverables
Draft as of 6/13/00

Release Report from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services: "A Call to Commitment: Fathers' Involvement in Children's Learning"

Research shows that fathers, no matter what their income or cultural background, can play a critical role in their children's education and learning. When fathers are involved, their children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behavior. This report, one of several outcomes of an October 1999 teleconference jointly convened by Secretaries Riley and Shalala, offers educators, Head Start and child care providers, and other providers of children's services information, strategies and tools to successfully involve fathers in children's learning, including readiness to learn at home, at school, and in the community. It summarizes research findings, discusses strategies for improving and extending fathers' involvement in their children's education – whether they are living with their children or not, highlights model programs around the country, and provides resource information for practitioners. The teleconference and publication of the report are among a series of actions the departments have taken in response to President Clinton's June 1995 directive to agencies to involve fathers in their programs, policies, and research.

Status: Education will have pre-print copies of the report ready for the radio address; printed copies will follow. AK has reviewed and made a few edits; also gave copies to Karin and to our Ed team (Kendra is reviewing). Contact: Menahem Herman, ED 401-0960

Release new child support enforcement accomplishments

Announce new data showing the Administration's child support enforcement strategies continue to pay off. The latest FY 1999 data from HHS shows child support collections reached a record of nearly \$16 billion, double the level in 1992. This progress includes successes with tough and effective new tools including a new program put in place in 1999 to match records of delinquent parents with financial institution records that has already identified nearly 900,000 delinquent parents with financial accounts valued at about \$3 billion. HHS has prepared a short report documenting the Administration's record of accomplishments on strengthening child support enforcement.

Status: OCSE (Paul Legler) has drafted report at DPC request. DPC has provided comments; OMB and DOL are reviewing. HHS needs to clear. Coordinate with Paul and Ellen Dahl.

Direct federal agencies to provide interagency guidance on promoting responsible fatherhood

The President will direct HHS, DOL, HUD to develop joint guidance for states, communities, and practitioners on federal resources available to support responsible fatherhood efforts. This will focus on how to access welfare, workforce, and housing/community development funds to help low-income fathers increase their employment and provide both the financial and emotional support their children deserve.

Status: DPC has drafted Executive Memorandum and sent to OMB for clearance. DOL has provided examples of the questions that should be addressed in the guidance. DOL is also

identifying examples of one-stop career centers that are working effectively with low-income fathers.

Announce HHS distribution of new tools for Head Start programs to help them connect fathers and children.

Head Start programs will receive new tools to help them connect fathers and children. In an effort to increase the number of fathers voluntarily acknowledging paternity, the Office of Child Support Enforcement recently developed a video called "The Power of Two: Voluntarily Acknowledging Paternity" that will be used by hospitals, vital records offices, and child support staff who work directly with unwed parents in encouraging them to acknowledge paternity and emphasize the importance of father involvement. This has been widely distributed to child support offices and a variety of national organizations. Next week, HHS will distribute this video, along with a brochure called "Child Support Services for Families in Head Start Programs," to Head Start programs around the country. These tools will help Head Start staff comply with a recent legislative requirement (in the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 1998) for Head Start staff to inform single parents about the availability of child support services, including paternity establishment. The video can be customized to fill in locality-specific information.

Actions to Encourage Paternity Leave??

The Federal government has been a leader in providing paternity as well as maternity leave, but many private companies still make it very hard for fathers to take time off to be with their newborn children. With new evidence that young fathers are putting family first, the President will challenge the private sector to help fathers – as well as mothers – balance work and family responsibilities and spend time more time with their children, including taking paternity leave. [OMB is exploring additional steps. Outside groups are providing examples of model companies and statistics. Need to explore whether there is more federal agencies can do, and whether we can challenge private sector to step up to the plate]

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO HIGHLIGHT – While these items are not brand new, they are important elements of the Administration's efforts to support and strengthen services for fathers and families.

Highlight HHS' child support waivers to help promote responsible fatherhood.

In March 2000, Vice President Gore announced HHS' approval of ten state waivers for the Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration projects. Working at the community level with non-profit and faith-based partners to provide employment, health, and social services, these projects will test new approaches to involving young fathers with their children and to helping mothers and fathers build stronger parenting partnerships. Projects sites are located in California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

New automated tool to help fatherhood programs manage and assess their programs.

On May 30, HHS announced the availability of a new tool to help fatherhood programs manage and assess their programs. This was highlighted by HHS Deputy Secretary Kevin Thurm in his

speech at NPCL's International Fatherhood Conference that same day. The Responsible Fatherhood Management Information System (RFMIS) developed by HHS will help programs maintain information on the services needed and delivered to fathers in their programs. The system allows programs to track the progress of individual fathers and to aggregate data on program participants for reporting purposes. The RFMIS is available for use as a paper and pencil tracking system or as an electronic database that can be downloaded into any computer system that uses Microsoft Access. A supplementary data tool for tracking client outcomes will be available by the end of June. RFMIS is available at <fatherhood.hhs.gov.> Click on What=s New. The RFMIS is currently being used by 15 HHS fatherhood project sites and in eight fatherhood projects funded by the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina.

Background paper

Two – three pager documenting agency actions in response to June 1995 Executive Memorandum (GC coordinating – responses due 6/12).

Points to include in speech/paper

- Importance of fathers providing emotional and financial support
- VP's leadership – Family Reunion 1994, Father to Father has now signed up 400 communities
- Fathers play a critical role in their children's lives – beginning at birth, continuing through their school years, and as mentors and role models later in life.
- Fathers must take the first important step and legally acknowledge paternity – we've seen record increases in the rates of paternity establishment. The number of fathers establishing paternity tripled from 1992 to 1998. The number of fathers establishing paternity each year now exceeds the number of children born out of wedlock and the percentage of all children born out of wedlock who now have paternity established has increased from 44 percent to 60 percent (92 to 98?). This means a far greater percentage of children have the benefit of knowing who their fathers are and fathers and children have the legal rights and responsibilities that result (such as ...)
- Only a small fraction of fathers are taking advantage of existing family leave policies to spend time with their newborns. Despite strong evidence of the importance of the father-child bond developed early on, fathers who want to take paternity leave still encounter resistance and ridicule in too many workplaces.

Andrea Kane

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: child support collection success stories

we got some great success stories late yesterday showing the impact of the financial institution data match. I'm putting in Q&As, which I'll forward shortly, but we might want to work into the press paper too:

While there is not a comprehensive tally of the amount of child support recovered as a result of this match, examples provided to HHS by state child support enforcement offices show this tool is making a big difference for children. For example, Washington state recently seized \$74,000 from a money market account belonging to a parent who had not paid child support in 11 years. For eight of those years the mother and her two children received welfare. This action provided \$40,000 to the children and the remainder paid off the state for welfare costs. In Massachusetts, child support workers recovered and distributed to a mother and her two children \$12,000 from the bank account of their father living in Georgia who had failed to pay support for two years. Arizona seized \$27,000 from an account of a father who had not paid support in years. When the mother received the check, she did not cash it because she said it had been so long since she'd received support that she assumed it must be a mistake. When assured it was no mistake, she burst into tears!

Message Sent To:

Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP
Barbara Chow/OMB/EOP@EOP
Jennifer E. McGee/OPD/EOP@EOP
Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP
Anna Richter/OPD/EOP@EOP

**GETTING MORE OF OUR FATHERS INVOLVED:
STRENGTHENING LATINO FAMILIES**

by
Kevin Thurm,
Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

and

Jerry Tello
Director of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute

A Latino father who was recently appointed to a state fatherhood commission wrote that his 10-year-old son, David, once told him that he did not fit the definition of a responsible father. "You always make me do chores around the house and don't let me watch TV until I finish my homework," the son complained. The boy then chided his dad for not giving him an allowance and for grounding him when he didn't clean his room. The way the son viewed it, this dad was just too strict and demanding.

The "dance" and dialogue between this father and son is exactly what we want to encourage. If only more fathers would frustrate their children by working hard to instill values and habits that will prepare them for their futures.

Being a father does not mean discipline alone; it also means nurturing and caring for a child, from infancy to adolescence and beyond. This Father's Day, we are reminded that the relationship between fathers and children is critical to building and motivating solid families.

Even while the American economy provides many families with unparalleled prosperity, many other families continue to face the difficulties and strains of poverty, out of wedlock births, maintaining steady employment, school dropouts and discrimination. In Latino communities, these strains are often aggravated by language barriers and by struggles between parents and children over the importance of cultural identity, traditions and customs.

Building on the strong values of work and family within the diversity of Latino communities, we want to assist struggling fathers in providing educational and 21st century

technological opportunities for their children. We also want to support the desire of many Latino families to transmit to their children the traditional customs, mores and spiritual values that are a source of strength and pride for Latino peoples.

To help more Latino fathers, the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute are proud to be working together and with Latino programs to support fathers' efforts to help their children become the success story of the 21st century.

Last January, we brought together literacy organizations, fatherhood groups and Latino agencies for a dialogue on "Hispanic Fathers and Family Literacy." We learned a lot about the frustrations of Latino fathers as well as the frustrations met by the programs working with Latino fathers to help strengthen fathers' involvement in children's learning and education. And we learned about the successes of some programs.

The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, programs build on tradition, culture and extended kinship to strengthen the positive involvement in the lives of their children and their families is just one example of what we can do to help Latino fathers through creative approaches. The Institute's *Respetar y Leer*, as it is called, involves fathers, grandfathers and other males reading to children and telling stories, whether at school or at other gathering places for children.

At HHS, the Head Start, Migrant Head Start and Early Head Start programs are working to ensure that programs in Latino communities promote and provide opportunities for Latino father involvement. For example, Family Star, an Early Head Start program in northwest Denver, has hired a Latino male involvement coordinator who uses poetry to promote literacy and family involvement.

Also, at HHS, the department's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) "Hablemos en Confianza" is a public service campaign with an educational kit for Latino parents to talk with their children about substance abuse in a manner that will engage the whole family.

*Parenting **IS** Prevention*, a SAMHSA parenting initiative focuses on helping parents build close and positive relationships with their children. Four Latino community-based programs in Texas are being funded to help implement culturally competent programming for Latino fathers.

HHS has also reached out to Latino fathers through Spanish public service announcements. A major public awareness campaign, called “Be Their Dad,” initiated by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, encourages fathers to be involved with their children even when they live apart. This spring a public service campaign called “Hero,” focused on Latino dads emphasizing the importance of making sure children are immunized on time.

We can all take lessons from David, the 10-year-old son mentioned earlier, who was a little disappointed after listening to a lecture about how his dad was trying to be responsible through his seemingly harsh actions. David did realize that his father was responsible, but still warned his father: “don’t assume you’re the best father in the world.”

“OK, David,” the father said. “I think I can live with it.”

Father-son dialogues will always be tough. Not long ago, few sons would have imagined challenging their fathers, like David did. But times have changed. David will soon realize how lucky he is to have his father there to talk to, a father who listens as well as expects to be listened to. He will come to appreciate his father’s strict discipline and the good life habits he encouraged. And he will understand how much he has learned from his father’s parenting and how much of his dad’s good parenting he will pass down to his own children.

On this Father’s day, we hope that if you are a father, you take advantage of this most glorious role and spend quality time with your children talking about their thoughts and dreams, while slipping in some good health messages. Your child needs you to be a good listener and a source of inspiration.

###

KEY FATHERHOOD FACTS

-with sources-

June 12, 2000

One in three children live without their father. 27.3 percent of children live in single mother households (Source: March 1998 Census data), and 37.4 percent of children live without their biological father (Calculated using 14.6 percent of children live with biological mother and step-father, according to 1990 Census, page 1255 of 1998 Greenbook; and applied to March 1998 Census data).

The proportion of children living with only one parent has doubled since 1970. [cited in Theodora Ooms, Toward More Perfect Unions: Putting Marriage on the Public Agenda, July 1998; reference is to U.S Bureau of the Census, March 1998]

About 40 percent of the children who live in fatherless households have not seen their fathers in at least a year. [National Fatherhood Initiative, Fathers Facts – Third Edition, 1998]

There is compelling evidence that fathers matter:

- Children who live apart from their fathers are five times more likely to be poor than children with both parents at home are. [National Center for Children in Poverty, Young Children in Poverty: A Statistical Update]
- ? Girls without a father in their life are two and a half times more likely to get pregnant and 53% more likely to commit suicide. [HHS, Press Release on Launch of Parental Responsibility Campaign, March 26, 1999]
- Boys without a father in their life are 63% more likely to run away and 37% more likely to use drugs. [HHS, Press Release on Launch of Parental Responsibility Campaign, March 26, 1999]
- Boys and girls without father involvement are twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to abuse alcohol or drugs, twice as likely to end up in jail, and nearly four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioral problems. [HHS, Press Release on Launch of Parental Responsibility Campaign, March 26, 1999; see also, HHS Fatherhood Initiative Fact Sheet, June 21, 1999; for alcohol or drugs statistic, see National Opinion Research Center for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Relationship between Family Structure and Adolescent Substance Abuse cited in fact sheet provided by Senator Bayh with July 14, 1999 press release]

CHILD SUPPORT

Child support helps reduce poverty: custodial parents who received child support were more than one and a half times less likely to be poor (22% are poor) than those who did not have a child support award and did not receive a child support payment (36% are poor). [Child Support for Custodial Mothers and Fathers: 1995, report by U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999]

Child support is especially important for poor children. The average poor child whose family received child support from a nonresident parent received \$1979 in 1996, an amount representing over one-quarter of their family income. [Elaine Sorensen and Chava Zibman, *Child Support Offers Some Protection Against Poverty*, March 2000]

Receipt of child support helps families stay off welfare: Women who do not receive child support had a 31% chance of returning to welfare after 6 months while women who received even small amounts of child support had only a 9% chance of returning to welfare. [Elaine Sorensen, Ron Mincy, and Ariel Halpern, *Redirecting Welfare Policy Toward Building Strong Families*, March 2000]

Despite record increases in child support collections since 1992, two-fifths of custodial parents do not have a child support order in place and only one of four parents in the publicly funded child support system who owe child support actually pay it. [HHS, *Temporary Assistance for Needy Programs, Second Annual Report to Congress*, August 1999] Child support collections nearly doubled from \$8 billion in 1992 to \$15.5 billion in 1999. [HHS Press Release, January 27, 2000]

Non-custodial parents who continue to be involved with their children are more likely to pay child support: 74% of non-custodial parents with joint custody or visitation agreements made support payments compared with 35% for parents without such arrangements.

[Child Support for Custodial Mothers and Fathers: 1995, report by U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999]

Most fathers can afford to pay child support – 85 percent of non-custodial fathers have income above the poverty level. [Elaine Sorensen, "A National Profile of Noncustodial Fathers and Their Ability to Pay Child Support", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, November 1997.]

There are about 2.7 million 'deadbroke' non-custodial fathers who are impoverished and do not pay child support. [Elaine Sorensen, Urban Institute]

FRAGILE FAMILIES

Half of unmarried parents live together and another 30 percent are romantically involved at the time the child is born. Eight of ten fathers provided support during the pregnancy and 90 % of mothers want the father to be involved in raising their child. [Initial data results from Oakland and Austin in the Fragile Families and Wellbeing Study, Sara McLanahan and Irwin Garfinkle, *The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study: Questions, Design, and a Few Preliminary Results*, May 2000.]

However, from the time of the baby's birth the relationship between the father and the family tends to weaken. [Elaine Sorensen, Urban Institute]

Welfare Reform

Work requirements and financial incentives that make work pay are found to both increase work effects and have powerful social impacts. Minnesota's welfare reform program succeeded in increasing employment of long term welfare recipients by 35%, and earnings by 23%, while

reducing domestic abuse of mothers by 18% and improving children's behavior and school performance. The program also dramatically increased the percentage of parents who were married at the end of the three-year study by 38 %. [MDRC, June 2000. Final results from an evaluation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program]

Young Men Put Family First:

Unlike men in older age groups, eight-two percent of men ages 21-39 put family time at the top of their list of job characteristics (ahead of money, power, and prestige). Seventy one percent of men in that age group would give up some of their pay for more time with their families. [Life's Work: Generational Attitudes Toward Work and Life Integration, Radcliffe Public Policy Center, June 2000]