

March 29, 1996

See email

MEMORANDUM FOR CAROL H. RASCO

FROM:

Molly Brostrom

RE:

Century Council's Requests

As you recall, Jack Lawn of the Century Council has requested Presidential involvement (e.g. message for use in publicity material; attendance at an event) in a couple of their initiatives. One of the initiatives, launched in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, is a video educational program designed to help parents talk to their kids about underage drinking. The other is a video designed to encourage high school students not to drink that is narrated by a boy named Brandon who tragically crashed his car after drinking.

I have looked at the videos, and asked ONDCP and DOT to give us their advice. No one has a strong recommendation one way or the other. After reading the following pros and cons of possible Presidential involvement, please let me know what you think.

Potential Risks:

- . Prevention groups, MADD in particular, might be upset that we are seemingly endorsing the Century Council -- an alcohol industry group.
- . "Open up a can of worms": other groups doing similar initiatives might use this as a precedent to ask the Administration for involvement in their initiatives.

Benefits:

- . Gives high-profile attention to the important issue of preventing underage drinking
- . Any benefits gained by helping out the Century Council and Boys & Girls Club

If we decide the benefits outweigh the risks, we could focus the message entirely on preventing underage drinking and not reference the Century Council in order to mitigate any negative reaction by groups such as MADD.

Attached are a copy of Jack Lawn's original letter and a memo prepared by ONDCP staff describing some of the discussions they have had.

[NOTE: I have talked to Jack Lawn's office and let him know that we are considering his requests.]

CC: Dennis Burke, Elizabeth Drye

FEB 8 1996

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Hon. John C. Lawn
Chairman

February 6, 1996

Ms. Carol Rasco
Domestic Policy Advisor to the President
West Wing
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Carol:

I'd like to bring to your additional attention two new national efforts by The Century Council to reduce underage drinking problems. Given the President's interest in the issue of illegal underage drinking, I wanted to make sure you were aware of these programs in case you feel he would like to be associated with them in some way. We are now preparing to launch both programs in several states with high visibility; these launches could provide a national opportunity to keep the President's message about this important issue in the public's mind.

Ready or Notsm: Talking With Kids About Alcohol

You may have seen our television spots, currently running on CNN and in the D.C. area, for this innovative video educational program. Ready or Notsm was recently launched nationwide in partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The program helps prevent illegal drinking among children of middle-school age (10 to 14) - where it often starts - by involving the people who matter most in the lives of these children: their parents and other adult role models. To date, the program and its message of parental/adult responsibility has received strong bipartisan support from more than 40 members of Congress. A list of supporting organizations is attached.

We are currently planning an exciting Ready or Notsm "Family Night" event, to be piloted in Detroit on March 26. The event will combine a 90-minute television special on the ComCast Cable Network with related homework assignments for students at Detroit's middle schools. The event is being spearheaded by the Black Baptist Pastors' Council, which along with other church groups will encourage families to watch the TV special together and discuss the issues raised in the show and in the

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homework assignment. After this pilot, we will expand this "model" program to other parts of the country, including a similar Family Night in the Washington, DC area tentatively scheduled for May 1996.

If desired, we could provide a quote from the President and First Lady that would be used in all publicity materials as we launch Ready or Notsm in different states. Should the President care to become involved in the Washington, DC Family Night activities, we would certainly focus our efforts around his participation. Also, because of his past experience with Boys & Girls Clubs, the President might like to provide a commendation that could be framed and issued to the directors of Clubs that successfully implement Ready or Notsm.

Brandon Tells His Story

On the high school level, you may remember that The Century Council sponsors an extraordinary young man named Brandon Silveria in a lecture program that has been acclaimed by educators across the country. Brandon and his father Tony have encouraged more than 200,000 high school students to "make the right choice" about alcohol. Brandon's story of his crash and recovery is now on video, and is available to any interested schools across the country, along with a student activity guide. We are already receiving requests for statewide distribution from Superintendents of Education in a number of states.

On March 28, just in time for prom and graduation season, Brandon and Tony's powerful message will go out to young people nationwide in a one-hour satellite TV special, "Brandon's Story," that will be available for unlimited educational use in schools or communities throughout the U.S. Students, teachers and school administrators watching the program will be able to call in questions to Brandon from anywhere in the country.

We would be very pleased if either the President or Mrs. Clinton would consider taping a short message to teenagers that would introduce the Brandon Silveria satellite broadcast and encourage young people to celebrate their proms and graduations safe and sober.

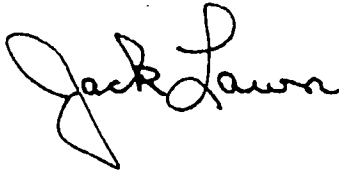
The messages in Ready or Notsm and "Brandon's Story" can make a difference in the choices our young people make about alcohol. The Century Council will be publicizing these programs aggressively. With the President's and First Lady's long history of concern for children's well-being, and the President's strong support for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, we hope you will agree that these programs are excellent opportunities for them to help get these vital messages to as many young people and parents as possible.

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I have enclosed some background material on each of these programs for your review. Thank you in advance for your time and attention. If you believe any of these suggestions present opportunities worth pursuing, we would like to sit down with you or your designee to discuss details.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Lauer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jack" and last name "Lauer" clearly distinguishable.

JCL\rq:bws

Enlosures:

- Ready or Notsm program video
- Ready or Notsm press kit
- Ready or Notsm TV spot
- Brandon Tells His Story video/activity guide



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D.C. 20503

MEMORANDUM TO RICIA McMAHON

MAR 25 1996

FROM: ALAN LEVITT
KAREN DODGE

SUBJECT: The Century Council

The following comments should be considered relevant to the decision whether to have the President or Mrs. Clinton introduce the Century Council video, Brandon Tells His Story

SAMHSA:

o Betina Scott, acting Associate Director for Alcohol Policy believes Century Council is the most responsible industry group and thinks it would be appropriate for the President to make a statement about their materials.

CSAP:

o Bob Denniston (Director of Public Education and Dissemination and speaking for CSAP Director) says these videos are about best you can get from industry. Bottom line is that he is mildly in favor of the President's making some comments on these projects. He believes most major prevention groups would probably not make a big deal about such statements on these two efforts, but perhaps some groups (e.g. MADD, NFP, SADD) would. There is a risk. Overall, he says, it would give more attention to the issue which would be good.

Bob notes that the video lays blame on powerful peer pressures as the cause of underage drinking, when other factors also have significant impact on issues (e.g. advertising and marketing, access, etc. Bob also notes that "Ready or Not" always refers to "illegal underage drinking" as opposed to unhealthy or unwise underage drinking - phrases that other groups use.

CSAP points out that another issue here is setting a precedent - the first time the President would endorse an industry project. It could generate more requests from specific beer companies or beverage industry groups for

Presidential endorsements of their own anti-drinking projects. This could put us into a more confrontive position of having to choose which ones we liked and didn't, with possible hard feelings and misunderstandings. As a matter of policy Federal agencies do not endorse any program or product.

- o FYI, CSAP is in process of writing Jack Lawn a letter, which, among other things would clarify that CSAP does not "endorse" products and that Century took liberties in listing CSAP as an endorser of the "Ready of Not" program.
- o Bobby Heard from MADD stated unequivocally that prevention groups would take issue with the President supporting/endorsing the Century Council's materials.
- o If the President were to work with the Century Council it most likely would force attention on underage drinking and have possible policy implications for the new Director.
- o In the final analysis this has to be a strictly political decision. There is no downside to declining this invitation.