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FOLDER TITLE:

Child Poverty [1]

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RESTRICTION CODES

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

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Helping Children in Poverty

This proposal is the last in a series of three to help America's families. The first (on health care) was released on September 28, 1999. The second (on the stress on working families) was released on October 7, 1999.

HELPING CHILDREN IN POVERTY A PROPOSAL FROM BILL BRADLEY

Today, 13.5 million American children (18.9 percent or almost one in five) live in poverty. The percentage of minority children who live below the poverty line is even higher – 34.4 percent for Hispanics and 36.7 percent for African Americans.

Bill Bradley's goal is to eliminate child poverty as we know it. He will commit to lifting 3 million children out of poverty in his first term, and at least an additional 4 million children in his second term.

Increases he is proposing in the minimum wage, EITC, and dependent care tax relief, coupled with improvements in child support and food stamps, will lift 1 to 1.5 million children and 1 million parents out of poverty. These estimates do not include large numbers of additional children who would be lifted out of poverty with Bradley's health care, child care, and education proposals.

The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty is based on two fundamental beliefs:

- As the most prosperous nation on earth, America can – and must – do better when it comes to protecting our children.
- If we fail to care for our most defenseless citizens, we fail to fulfill our responsibility not only as Americans, but, more importantly, as human beings.

The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty recognizes that very large numbers of children who live below the poverty line come from hard-working families with parents whose wages simply are not adequate to support them. These parents do not have enough access to child care, health care, or programs designed to reduce economic hardship.

Bill Bradley recognizes that a comprehensive proposal to help children in poverty must address a child's need for economic security and provide hope for a better future.

To address both components, the Bradley proposal will:

Increase the income of poor families by:

- Increasing the minimum wage over two years and indexing it to the growth of the median wage
- Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Permitting mothers on welfare to keep their child support

- Making the Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable
- Increasing subsidies for child care through the Child Care Development Block Grant
- Investing in child care and early education programs for children age 0-5
- Guaranteeing health care for all children
- Improving access to existing programs for eligible low-income families (particularly food stamps)

Provide hope for a better future by:

- Enrolling an additional 400,000 children in Head Start
- Creating Teach to Reach Partnerships to place 60,000 new qualified teachers a year in urban and rural school districts
- Creating a National Beacon Centers Program to provide afterschool care and community development centers to offer a range of academic and social services to 5.6 million children and adults a year
- Matching senior volunteers with children's programs that need them
- Creating Second-Chance Homes for pregnant teens that offer young mothers a positive and supportive environment during their pregnancy and their baby's first year

INCREASING THE INCOME OF POOR FAMILIES

The Bradley proposal recognizes that the optimal way to help poor children is to make sure fewer families live in poverty. To encourage more work and put more money into the pockets of people who need it, the Bradley plan will:

1. Increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 over two years and index it to the annual increase in the median wage.

Twelve million workers (10 percent of the labor force) earn the minimum wage – 33 percent of them are working parents; 58 percent are women; and, one million are single mothers. Adjusted for inflation, a \$1 increase in the minimum wage beginning in mid-2001 will raise real wages 11 percent over their current levels. The increase will be implemented in equal installments over two years.

Indexing the minimum wage to the annual increase in the median wage means that the minimum wage will rise by the same percent that the median wage rises each year (i.e. if the median wage rises 3 percent, the minimum wage will also rise 3 percent). This will ensure that the low-income workers who earn the minimum wage do not fall further behind most Americans.

2. Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to:

- Provide a more adequate reward for work among families with three or more children and achieve a more substantial reduction in poverty among children in these families;**
- Reduce the marriage penalties that some low-income families face as a consequence of the EITC structure; and**
- Reduce the portion of each added dollar earned by working poor families that is taxed away by the phase-down of the EITC.**

The Earned Income Tax Credit is one of America's most effective anti-poverty programs. Bill Bradley has played a leading role in expanding and strengthening it four times – in 1984, 1986, 1990 and 1993. The Earned Income Tax Credit lifted an additional 2.6 million children out of poverty in 1998.

As valuable as the EITC is, it can be and should be improved. The

poverty line is adjusted for family size; this reflects the fact that families with more children need a somewhat higher level of income to avoid poverty than families with few or no children. The EITC should also take recognition of the number of children in a family.

The current EITC has two tiers – one for families with one child and another for families with two or more children, but it needs to be strengthened by adding a third tier for families with three or more children. The poverty rate among children in families with three or more children is more than double the poverty rate for children with smaller families.

In 1997, Congress enacted a child tax credit of \$500 per child, and made the credit partially refundable for a small portion of families with three or more children. The Bradley proposal would convert the limited and complex refundable component of the child credit for families with three or more children into a third tier of the EITC for families with three or more children. This change would increase the EITC for these families, reducing poverty among them and increasing the value of work by them.

In addition, the Bradley proposal reduces the marriage penalty the EITC can engender among some low-income families. Under the Bradley proposal, the level of income at which the EITC begins to phase down would rise by \$2,000 for married filers so that it is set at a higher level than the level of income at which the EITC begins to phase down for other filers.

Finally, the Bradley proposal would reduce the very high marginal tax rates that working families modestly below the poverty line can face when their earnings rise because their EITC, food stamp benefits, and (if they receive them) child care subsidies all phase down at the same time, while their payroll taxes (and in some states, their state income taxes) rise. Many working families below the poverty line but above the level at which the EITC begins to phase out are effectively taxed at a rate above (often well above) 50 percent. In other words, more than half of each added dollar they earn is effectively taxed away as a result of the reduction in EITC, food stamps and other benefits, and the increase in taxes withheld from their paychecks. The Bradley proposal would ease these high marginal tax rates by substantially reducing the rate at which the EITC phases down for most working families in the EITC phase-out range whose incomes fall below the poverty line. For poor families with at least two children, the rate at which the EITC phases down as earnings rise would be cut about in half. This change will increase the value of work for these families and provide incentives for them to increase their earnings, while also reducing poverty.

3. Improve the child support system so that it serves children better. Ensure that child support paid by a parent goes to the child instead of to the state bureaucracy.

A child's economic well-being is the responsibility of both mothers and fathers. But children who grow up in single-parent families are five times as likely to live in poverty as those who do not. Clearly we need to do more to ensure that non-resident fathers help provide for their children. This means both giving fathers incentives to support them and removing disincentives to their doing so.

Bradley recognizes that many non-resident fathers want to help their children but that the system effectively discourages it. Under the current system, mothers on welfare are required to turn over their claim to child support to the state. The state then collects child support from the father and, in most cases, keeps it to reimburse itself for the welfare assistance it provides to the mother. (For example, a mother with one child who receives

\$4,500 from the state through welfare and is entitled to \$2,000 in child support takes home only \$4,500. The \$2,000 is retained by the state in exchange for welfare assistance.) Under the Bradley plan, a father's child support will go to the mother and child.

4. Make the Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable.

Unless parents have relatives who live nearby they need child care for their children when they are at work. Often this child care can be prohibitively expensive for families who live below the poverty line. The Bradley proposal will make child care more available and affordable. The first step is to make the Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable.

The Dependent Care Tax Credit is a non-refundable credit for expenses incurred in caring for children under 14 or a disabled dependent/spouse. The credit is capped at \$1,440 a year for a family with two children, regardless of income. Because the credit is non-refundable, however, it is not available to poor families that have no tax liability. This includes a family of four with an income up to \$18,000. This, in effect, means the Dependent Care Tax Credit is not available to those who need it the most – low-income working parents who require child care for their children while they work.

The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty will make the Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable so that low-income families will benefit from the same tax credit now available only to higher-income families. This will help 1.9 million low-income families – 1.2 million of whom don't currently receive any tax credit and 700,000 of whom will receive a larger credit. The average credit for these 1.9 million families will be \$474.

5. Increase funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant program.

The Child Care Development Block Grant program is the main source of child care assistance for poor families. It provides block grants to states to subsidize child care expenses for children under age 13 whose parents work or are in school. Services are provided on a sliding scale based on need.

In 1999, the Child Care Development Block Grant program provides assistance to 1.4 million low-income children, just one in seven who are eligible for subsidies. In many states, the waiting list for child care assistance is very long. The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty will increase access to child care for low-income families by increasing funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant program from \$3.3 billion per year to \$4.3 billion per year. This additional funding will increase the number of low-income children who receive child care by 420,000 (30%). It will also increase the number of poor parents who work by removing one of their major roadblocks. Because studies have shown that a considerable portion of current child care fails to meet basic quality standards, 10% of the new funding must be used for quality improvements such as teacher training, child care center renovations, and recruiting qualified child care providers.

6. Invest in child care and early education for children age 0-5.

Bill Bradley understands that quality care and education at an early age are an essential part of a child's development. Research has demonstrated that the first years of a person's life are critical in terms of cognitive, emotional and social development. For this reason, Bradley will create an Early Care and Education Partnership program to ensure that America's youngest citizens are nurtured and cared for in a manner that maximizes their development. The program, first proposed on October 7, 1999 as

part of Bradley's Proposal to Help Working Families, will be funded at \$2 billion per year. The program will supplement the above programs with initiatives such as activities for infants and toddlers or preschools. Because the needs of each community differ, the Early Care and Education program will be based on public-private partnerships that put decision making in the hands of leaders in the communities where funding will be spent.

More information on the Proposal to Help Working Families, including the "Early Care and Education" initiative, may be found on the Bill Bradley for President website (www.billbradley.com).

Note: the Bradley initiatives for child care mentioned above complement each other and work as a comprehensive package. They do not allow low-income families to "double dip." For example, if a family receives a subsidy under the Child Care Development Block Grant program, it may not claim that subsidy as part of the Dependent Care Tax Credit. The credit, however, may be claimed for expenses that are not covered by the subsidy.

7. Guarantee health care for children.

The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty recognizes that a primary concern of low-income parents is the health of their children. The Health Care Proposal From Bill Bradley (released on September 28, 1999) addresses this concern and guarantees health coverage for every child in America. Low-income parents who are unable to purchase insurance will receive a full subsidy from the government.

More information on the Health Care Proposal from Bill Bradley, including how it helps low-income adults, may be found on the Bill Bradley for President website (www.billbradley.com).

8. Improving access to existing programs for eligible low-income families.

The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty recognizes that many low-income families that are eligible for benefit programs such as food stamps, Medicaid and child care do not participate in them either because they are difficult to access or the application/renewal process requires a potential recipient to miss work (forcing a choice between potentially losing a job or receiving essential benefits).

To support low-income families that work and ensure they participate in benefit programs designed to help them, the Bradley proposal will better coordinate the application/renewal process and enable potential recipients to complete it at accessible locations during non-work hours. Streamlining this process will support work among welfare recipients, lift more children out of poverty, and reduce inefficiency and bureaucracy.

The Bradley proposal will also give states the flexibility to apply the same standards used by TANF or Medicaid in determining the maximum value of a car that a welfare recipient may own without losing food stamps. The value of the car has barely been adjusted at all since 1977. This makes it difficult for a welfare recipient to own a car -- which is often required to get to work -- without jeopardizing his or her food stamp benefits.

PROVIDING HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty recognizes that a child's education is one of the critical determinants of his or her success. Education can be the ticket out of poverty. To improve education opportunities for poor children, the Bradley proposal will:

1. Increase funding for Head Start and Early Head Start.

Head Start provides part-day child development to almost 850,000 poor children age 3-5. Its four main components are early education, health services, parent involvement, and social services.

Head Start (which includes 40,000 children age 0-3 in Early Head Start) is currently funded at \$4.7 billion per year. The Bradley Proposal to Help Children in Poverty will increase this funding by \$1 billion in year one, \$2 billion in year two, \$3 billion in year three and \$4 billion in year four (for total funding of \$8.7 billion). At the end of this period, almost every eligible child who wants to enroll in Head Start will be able to do so.

2. Create Teach to Reach Partnerships to train 60,000 new teachers every year for urban and rural schools.

The country will need 200,000 new teachers each year for the next ten years. Nowhere are teachers more needed than in low-income urban and rural schools. To confront this urgent reality, Bill Bradley proposes to create Teach to Reach Partnerships to train 60,000 high quality teachers each year for low-income urban and rural schools, and to improve the effectiveness of teachers currently in high-need schools.

There are four components to the program -- all designed to ensure high quality teaching in disadvantaged schools. The program encourages the development of partnerships between universities and high-need elementary and secondary schools in their area. Collaboration between schools and universities will maximize the educational possibilities for all participants.

First, to attract new teachers, the program would offer up to 4 years of loan forgiveness for 50,000 students each year -- up to \$5,000 per year for 4 years -- for a 4 year commitment to teach in an elementary or secondary school of high need. The student must attend a university that is part of a recognized consortium, and must commit to teaching after graduation in a low-income urban or rural school. Students would receive rigorous training during college, including practical training in a participating public school, and would have to be certified before they teach. Under the Bradley proposal, certification would be based on a demonstration of competency to teach, not simply acquiring the necessary classes and credit hours.

Second, the Bradley proposal would establish 10,000 scholarships per year for high school graduates who show academic promise and are willing to commit to teaching for 5 years in an area of high educational need. As above, the student must attend a consortium university and then teach in a low-income public school. The student also must commit to teaching in critical-shortage subject areas: science, math, technology and foreign languages. Scholarships will be targeted to students who will bring economic, racial and cultural diversity to the nation's teaching force. In exchange, students will receive 4 year scholarships of up to \$7,500 per year or \$30,000 over 4 years.

Third, the Bradley proposal would create a "Teachers Teaching Teachers" program to offer existing teachers lifelong learning opportunities. This program would allow public school teachers to stay current in their subject and update their skills and knowledge throughout their teaching careers. Under the program, consortia university and local schools could apply for federal funds to conduct university-led professional development programs for teachers. University professors would lead seminars or site-based activities which would foster collegial exchange, mutual learning, mentoring relationships and pride in the profession of teaching.

Finally, there are literally thousands of people who have valuable skills and knowledge who are interested in teaching as a second career. The current certification process often discourages highly competent people from entering the profession. The challenge we face is to create greater flexibility in the certification process without sacrificing rigor.

The Bradley proposal would encourage consortia universities to devise certification programs that are competency-based for second-career teachers. Second-career teachers who receive alternative certification from a consortia university in the consortia would be eligible to receive the same \$5000 per year loan forgiveness. In exchange for the loan forgiveness, the second-career teacher would be required to teach in an urban or rural school for each year of loan forgiveness.

The overall budget for the Teach to Reach Partnerships would be \$1.3 billion.

The Bradley proposal further recognizes that a child's needs do not end when school ends. Most youth violence occurs between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., after school but before the parents return from work. This is when working parents feel most helpless. In addition to the education and child care initiatives specified above, the Bradley proposal will expand and invest in after school programs for children. Specifically, it will:

3. Create a National Beacon Centers Program to provide community centers for school-aged children and their parents.

Increasingly, both parents are required to work to make ends meet for their families. Single parents struggle even more to provide for their children. This trend has left millions of our nation's children unsupervised after school until their parents return home from work. These hours are at best a lost opportunity to develop skills, interests and assets. At worst, they are hours that invite violence, teen pregnancies and other aberrant behavior.

The Bradley proposal seeks to address this problem by creating a national program of community centers modeled on the Beacons program in New York City. The Beacons are recognized as one of the best examples of community schools in the country. They are located in schools, run by a designated non-profit, and open 7 days a week until 11 or 12 p.m. They offer a wide range of services, including: homework help, arts and recreation, mentoring, career counseling for students or parents, literacy classes, health information and neighborhood involvement activities. They are much broader than just afterschool programs: they are open late in the evening, on weekends and in the summer. They are one-stop shopping centers for families facing the new realities of the new economy.

The National Beacons program builds on Bradley's 1994 Community Schools Program. It is yet another example of Bradley's belief that unleashing the positive power of civil society is key to successfully addressing needs that exist in individual communities.

Bradley will provide \$1 billion in grants to non-profits who want to start Beacon-like Centers. The non-profit may run a Beacon out of any community organization: schools, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, settlement houses, faith-based organizations and others. They will be coordinated by a lead local community-based organization, advised by a community council that includes principals, teachers, parents, young people, local police and other residents to ensure that the programs are tailored to fit the needs of the community. While Beacons serve as the primary model for this program, there are multiple models of community schools that

could meet the goals of this program and qualify for funds.

Non-profits can apply for grants between \$250,000-\$500,000. At a total funding level of \$1 billion, the Beacon Program could fund 2,000 or more centers and serve 5.6 million children and their families. Priority for grants would be given to low-income urban and rural areas.

4. Create a Senior Volunteers Program that matches senior citizen volunteers with school and community-based programs that need them.

The program, first proposed on October 7, 1999 as part of Bradley's proposal to help working families, will be funded at \$300 million in its first year. As the number of senior volunteers rises to a maximum of 500,000, the cost will increase to \$1.2 billion. Seniors could work in Beacon Centers.

More information on the Proposal to Help Working Families, including the Senior Volunteers Program, may be found on the Bill Bradley for President website.

5. Establish Second-Chance Homes for teen mothers.

Being a teen mother is a difficult and often disorienting experience. The primary goal of the Bradley Second-Chance Homes would be to reduce additional teen pregnancies by providing disadvantaged young mothers a supportive and nurturing environment during their pregnancy and their baby's first year. Second Chance Homes can be the road to hope for women whose future might otherwise look bleak.

The Homes would offer young mothers parenting skills, job counseling, and offer educational and housing referrals. They may also link up teen mothers with other supportive services in the community.

The program would provide \$300 million in federal funds to the states, which will disperse the funds and provide a 25% match. The overall \$375 million would fund approximately 550 group homes and more than 10,000 women.

ANNUAL COST

Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit	\$4 billion
Making the Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable	\$740 million ¹
Enrolling an additional 400,000 children in Head Start	\$1 billion ²
Increasing funding for Child Care Development Block Grants	\$1 billion ³
Child Support	\$700 million
Food Stamps	\$500 million ⁴
Teach to Reach	\$1.3 billion
Beacon Centers	\$300 million ⁵
Second-Chance Homes	\$300 million
Total Annual Cost	\$9.84 BILLION

Footnotes for Annual Cost

(1) \$3.7 billion over five years.

(2) New funding in addition to current funding (\$4.7 billion). This will increase by an additional \$1 billion each year, for a total of \$8.7 billion by year four. This will enroll nearly all children who want to participate.

(3) New funding in addition to current funding (\$3.3 billion).

(4) First year costs. As participation in food stamp program by currently eligible families increases, costs will rise over four years to \$1.7 billion (assuming 500,000 more families participating).

(5) Year one estimate. Estimated cost for full funding for 2,000 or more centers per year is \$1 billion.

IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL POLICIES

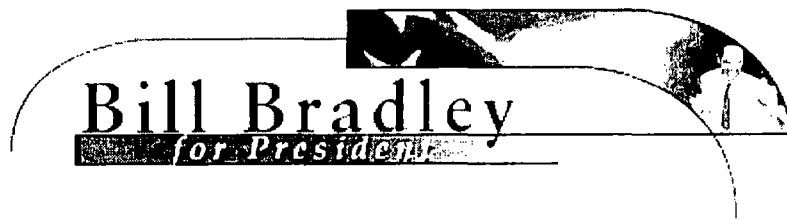
In the past month, Bradley has announced proposals that will:

- Raise the minimum wage for 12 million workers (an additional \$2,000 for someone working full-time year round at the current minimum wage).
- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for 10 million working families.
- Enroll an additional 400,000 children in Head Start (currently 835,000 enrolled).
- Provide an additional 420,000 child care subsidies for low income families (a 30% increase over the current 1.4 million).
- Give 1.9 million low-income families tax relief on their child care expenses (additional credit of \$475).
- Provide Beacon community centers for 5 million people that are open 7 days a week, 12 months a year.
- Enlist 500,000 senior volunteers to provide mentoring for children in and out of schools.
- Put 60,000 qualified new teachers in urban and rural high-need schools every year.
- Mandate health care coverage for the 11 million American children who are currently uninsured.

Paid for and authorized by:

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Speech on Children in Poverty

October 21, 1999
Concord Baptist Church
Brooklyn, New York

as prepared for delivery

Let me tell you a story that I tell everywhere I go.

A friend of mine knows a fourth grade teacher in a poor area of Minnesota who one day walked in his classroom and asked the children, "How many of you had a big breakfast today?" Ten of the 20 kids raised their hands. He then asked, "How many of you had any breakfast today?" Six more kids raised their hands. "What about you other four?" he inquired. Silence. Finally, one little girl raised her hand and said, "It wasn't my turn to eat today."

When the Founders of our republic said that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were the unalienable right of all Americans, they didn't say anything about taking turns.

They didn't say that it was your turn today to have life and liberty, but not tomorrow. Or that it was your turn tomorrow to pursue happiness, but not today.

The whole point of the American idea is that opportunity is always present for all of us - not just to have the food and shelter we need, but to enjoy the fruits of our democracy. While our democracy can't guarantee happiness, it should absolutely guarantee every one an equal opportunity to pursue that happiness.

Therefore, I speak today for justice - which has been the grand theme of this country from the beginning - that justice which Madison described as the purpose of our government, the goal of our society. That justice which demands that opportunity accompany freedom - that every citizen be allowed to share in the promise of the land.

This principle is the heart of the American dream. It is, indeed the very meaning of America. It has often been threatened, and occasionally violated. Today, it is again under assault, not from without, but from within. It is attacked by the persistence of poverty amid wealth, the denial of opportunity to millions of American children in a land of abundant opportunity.

Abraham Lincoln said, "I do not believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich, . . . we wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else. . . I want every man to have a chance . . . in which he can better his condition."

It is the task of government, and thus of public leaders, to ensure that all should have a chance, with their own effort and abilities, to

find a decent level of comfort and fulfillment for themselves and their families.

This principle is not a liberal principle or a conservative one. It does not belong to any political party. But is a consistent theme of two centuries of American life. Yet that chance is being denied to millions of working families who are trapped in an inherited imprisoning poverty.

What does it mean to be poor in America? There's no single description. For many, perhaps most, it means homes with peeling paint, inadequate heat, uncertain plumbing...

It often means a home where some go to bed hungry and malnutrition is a frequent visitor...

It means stacking your clothes in garbage bags in the closet because you can't afford a dresser...

It means keeping your kids inside all afternoon after school because you're afraid to let them roam the streets and there is no other place for them to go...

It means taking home \$852 a month in salary, and having \$836 in fixed costs every month...

It means that when your baby develops asthma or ingests lead paint - as the children of the poor so often do - you take three different buses to the doctor, lose a day's pay, and then end up getting turned down because you don't have enough health insurance.

Being poor means that the most elementary components of the good life in America - a vacation with the kids, an evening out, a comfortable home - are but distant and unreachable dreams, more likely to be seen on TV than in the neighborhood. And for almost all of the poor - all thirty-five million of them - it means that life is a constant struggle to obtain the merest necessities of existence, these things that most of us take for granted.

Worst of all it means hopelessness for the children -- children who are born into a poverty they did not choose or deserve. These are the children who don't get immunized against the simplest diseases; who are cared for by young sisters or neighbors or sit alone in ramshackle apartments. These are the kids who can't concentrate in school, who sometimes sell drugs by 12 and carry a gun by 16. These are the children you see on street corners when you drive through any poor area of America. These children - our children - are not growing up with the tools to pursue happiness or with the foundation that will allow them to achieve their full potential.

To allow this kind of poverty to exist in America is simply unacceptable.

Some people say you cannot see the future but that is wrong. You can see the future in the faces of these children. For them we have failed to live up to our own conception of ourselves as a nation that is unique on God's earth. We have failed to live up to a promise that these children don't even know that we've made to them. And that is unconscionable. By failing the children we are also denying the nation the skills and energy they could contribute, the income they could earn, the wealth they could create.

We know poverty is not a genetic affliction. It is imposed on the young by the conditions of their life. If we are ever to break this cycle of poverty we must attack the conditions which nurture that cycle.

It is time for change.

The American Dream belongs to everyone - and to all our children most of all. We Americans can never say: It is not my turn to provide for you today. It is not my turn to educate you today or to make sure you're safe and have something to eat and a roof over your head. We must do all these things everyday for all of our children - every last one of them.

The task of presidential leadership is to challenge ourselves to do things we weren't sure we could do. Things that we know we want to do, things that deep down we know we need to do, but that we are not sure how to do. We set the goal, and then we figure out how to get there. That's what Americans do.

I think this is what Franklin Roosevelt had in mind when he looked out at America and saw that one-third of our nation was ill-clad, ill-fed, and ill-housed. Roosevelt said, "No, this is not acceptable in America. We have to change it." He wasn't sure exactly how to do it, he didn't know exactly how to put food on those tables, but he knew that we had to do it, and the first step was saying so. The first step was making the challenge. He challenged the nation and he followed through on that challenge.

I think this is what John Kennedy had in mind when he looked at our menacing competition with the old Soviet Union and vowed that America would put a man on the moon within a decade. No, he didn't know what kind of fuel should be used in that booster or what kind of suit the astronauts should wear. He just knew we had to do it, and the first step was saying so. He challenged us. And Americans followed through on that challenge.

Today, at a time of unparalleled prosperity, I look out over a nation and I see that nearly one-fifth of our children are ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-educated. At a time of peace, when America is not threatened from without, I see nearly 14 million of our children who are being denied their chance to live out the American dream. This is not acceptable.

I am issuing a simple challenge today. Let us eliminate child poverty as we know it in America by the end of the next decade and let us begin by raising 3 million children out of poverty by the end of the next presidential term. If we can achieve the kind of prosperity we have, if we can change the world through our ideas and inventions, if we can muster the will and create the technology to put a man on the moon in a decade - then surely, by all that we hold dear as Americans, we can eliminate child poverty as we know it. Unlike putting a man on the moon, eliminating child poverty is not a single, clear-cut achievement. Poverty is, to some extent, a relative measure. But there are specific aspects of poverty that we can use to make clear-cut, achievable goals, goals that we can accomplish together within the decade.

What I am proposing today will not by itself change the culture that has produced what is perhaps the most intractable American problem of this century. The programs outlined are just a start, a down payment on solving this problem. But we can solve it. Child poverty is not just a government problem; it is a national problem that will require a national solution. We must mobilize individuals and communities and businesses and places of worship - for government alone cannot solve this problem. Only we the people, all of us working together, can solve it.

Some have talked about how we have reduced child poverty by 3.8 percent in the past 6 years. I do not want to minimize that, and certainly, it is better than doing nothing. But even with these small advances, there are still 3 million more children in poverty today

than in 1970, and we still have the highest percentage of children in poverty of any advanced industrial nation. Only in an indifferent moral universe can we feel satisfied with ourselves for lifting a small percentage of children out of poverty. When there is a great natural disaster, a hurricane or a flood, we don't talk about repairing a roof here and a window there, a house here and a bridge there. We talk about a wholesale rescue effort. We make an enormous investment in restoring things to the way they were before tragedy struck.

Child poverty is a kind of slow-motion national disaster. We don't see it because it is usually hidden and not concentrated in one place. But if all the poor children in America were gathered in one place, it would be a city bigger than all five boroughs of New York and you can be damn sure we would see it as a great national disaster.

As with those great floods and hurricanes, we cannot just talk about helping a few children here and there, bringing some boys out of poverty here and some girls out of poverty there. We must talk about remedying this disaster altogether.

At a time of great prosperity, I believe we have the wealth to eliminate child poverty as we know it. At a time of all sorts of new technologies, I believe we have the methods. The question is, do we have the will? That, more even than money or know-how, is the real issue. For to solve this problem we must decide that we want to truly solve it, that we will not rest or be diverted until we do so. And, we will not solve it only with policies and programs, but with our hearts and souls and wills.

The dictionary defines poverty very simply and starkly: a lack of money. But poverty is more than just a lack of money - it is so often a lack of hope as well. People in poverty often see no way out of it - they see nothing to grab onto, no daylight to run for, nothing to wish on but a lottery ticket. To lift people out of poverty, you must not only put money in their pockets, you must put hope in their hearts.

My proposals attempt to do both: to help parents give their children the necessities of life, which is a basic requirement of defeating poverty, and to put hope on their horizon, which is the star that they can steer by. The first set of my proposals mainly deals with parents; the second set with their children.

The foundation of our effort should be the guarantee that no one who works full time year round should have to live in poverty. The vast majority of the poor of working age have income from work. They are trying hard and still not making it.

To fulfill that commitment, I propose to increase the minimum wage by one dollar over two years, and to index future increases to average median income. This step will mean an extra \$2,600 a year for 2 parents working at the minimum wage. In addition, I propose to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to help the poorest of the poor, who are those with more children. I propose to subsidize child care for low-income families. And to make that child care even more affordable - I will give low-income families the same tax relief for childcare that middle-income families now receive. And finally, I will make sure that every child - every child in this nation - is covered by health insurance.

The next set of proposals will do something else: it will help children find a brighter and more hopeful future. It will reassure parents that their son or daughter will have opportunities that they themselves did not have. It will prepare them to fulfill the American dream.

We all want something better for our children, and no one wants

that more so than parents who are poor. Middle-class parents worry that their children won't have the things they had; poor parents fear that their children will. There is no moral calculus by which we can blame poor children for having the misjudgment of not choosing wealthier parents. What we can do is to help them. To give them hope, we must give them an image of what to hope for. We must help prepare them to go to school, and then later we must help them make the transition from the years of school to the larger society.

Hope begins with the development of imagination at a young age. One of the best ways we know to do that is Head Start. I will fund head start so that every child who is eligible will be able to go.

Another way to stoke ambition and hope is through great teachers. Teachers teach not only through what they know, but what they do. For so many students, especially poor students, teachers can be a model of a way to live a life that they had never known before. To that end, I am proposing a program I call Teach to Reach, which will put 60,000 new teachers annually in urban and rural schools around America where they are desperately needed.

But great teachers don't fill the time between three and eight PM each day, during which 2/3 of juvenile crime takes place. For so many young people, it is not just empty time, but time that offers the temptations of easy drugs, and sex without meaning.

Statistics offer a telling equation. If you are the child of a mother who didn't graduate from high school, has you before she is 20, and is not married you have a 78 percent chance of ending up in poverty. On the other hand, if you are the child of a mother who finished high school, has you after she is 20, and is married you have a 9 percent chance of ending up in poverty. Reducing poverty implies reducing teen pregnancy. That begins with fathers realizing that having a child is a lifetime commitment. Another way to do that is through the creation of second chance homes where teenage mothers who don't have caring adults in their lives can come and live in a nurturing adult environment for the first year of their child's life.

But how does one generate hope more broadly, for hope is ultimately the best antidote for self-destructive behavior. I propose we do that by starting a national program of community centers modeled on the Beacon schools program here in New York City. Beacon Schools, which are run by designated non-profits give parents a place where they know their children will be in good hands. They are open six to seven days a week, and till 11 or 12 at night. They offer a range of services, from homework help to literacy counseling to health information to career advice. In Beacon Centers youth workers will help students with homework and run sports and recreation programs, which as a 1994 study showed reduce teen parentage and drug use. After work, parents will pick up their children and often stay to participate in support groups or attend family night dinners in the cafeteria. Older kids will participate in evening leadership programs and other activities like dance, drama, and computer classes. Here we will be able to supply two things the children are often missing: the family ties they are not always getting at home, and the individual attention that is impossible for the teacher to give them in a classroom of 30 children.

As a Midwestern manufacturer who hires high-risk kids says, "They come in here with their eyes on their shoes, but I teach them to put their eyes on the stars."

The American firmament is aglow with stars. If we equip our young people to see them and to reach for them, we will give them something to steer by.

Franklin Roosevelt once asked, "And what do we mean when we talk about the reduction of poverty. We mean the reduction of the causes of poverty." Today those causes will not yield to individual effort alone, but need the healing assistance of public leadership. Not just in obedience to the command of our own traditions, but also to a far older command: "They shall not harden their hearts to the needy... Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land."

Eliminating child poverty as we know it is a big goal. I know that what I am proposing here today will not in and of itself accomplish that. But the first step is the commitment and I am making that here today.

To move toward this goal in our own time we need leadership willing to tell us what we ought to hear, not what they think we want to hear - leadership which is not guided by polls but by convictions and American values - and which understands it is hard for people to look up to a leader who has his finger to the wind. We do not need a poll to tell us what our values are. We do not need a poll to tell us what is right or that we must reach out to poor children. Our minds and our hearts tell us that. Our common sense tells us that.

The reason I entered politics in the first place was to ameliorate suffering and promote opportunity. I am running for President for the same reasons, but as President one has an even greater opportunity to do those things, to make this country whole, and reaffirm our connectedness. For ultimately we are not just one nation, but one family. We are many and we are different, but we are also one national family. And no family that I know of wants to neglect its children; no family can survive if it neglects its children. We must embrace and love and nurture all our children. This is our best self as a family; this is our best self as Americans.

For if we do not look to the future of our children, we have no vision.

If we do not look to raise the poorest children among us, we have no heart.

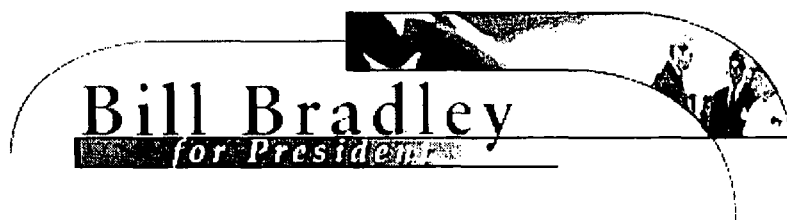
And if we do not nourish the spirit of our children, we have no soul.

For all the children hidden in pockets of poverty across this country, from the rural poor of South Dakota to the urban poor of Miami, from the asphalt streets of Brooklyn to the open Barrios of Los Angeles we must make the American Dream live again.

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Proposal to Help Working Families

This proposal is the second in a series of three to help working families. The first (on health care) was released on September 28, 1999. The third (on children in poverty) will be released on October 21, 1999.

Helping Working Families Today and Tomorrow

Bill Bradley's Proposal to Help Working Families recognizes the stress most working parents experience in their daily lives and provides them with some of the tools they need to meet their biggest challenges.

The Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families is based on the recognition that the two most important commitments Americans have are to their families and their jobs. These commitments often compete against each other, forcing parents to choose between working longer hours to provide more for their families, or spending more time with their families but providing them with less.

The proposal recognizes that all working parents, at a minimum, want the following:

- To ensure that when they are at work, their children are well cared for.
- To spend enough time with their children to raise them as they see best and to have the flexibility to be with them at important moments in their life.
- To ensure the health of their families, particularly their children.
- To know that amidst the increasing stress of daily life, it is possible not just to survive, but to build a better life - to advance.

The proposal is based on two core philosophies:

1. Parents play the primary role in raising their children.

The government and the private sector cannot - and should not - replace parents, but they should make it easier for parents to fulfill their duties by removing the roadblocks in their way.

2. The needs of working families differ.

Most working families have the same basic needs, but a "one-size-fits-all" solution mandated by the federal government doesn't work. Initiatives to help working families must be developed at the state and community

level, where they can be specifically tailored to the people they are designed to help. The federal government's role should be to serve as a catalyst and make sure no child gets left behind.

Based on the above, the Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families will:

- Create an Early Care and Education partnership program.
- Create a Senior Volunteer program.
- Expand the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- Address the health care concerns of working families.
- Invest in community colleges.

These initiatives are public-private partnerships, primarily developed and implemented on the state and local level. A more detailed explanation of each is provided below:

Child Care and Education

The Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families recognizes that one of the primary struggles working parents, particularly mothers, face is how to ensure their children receive safe, quality and nurturing pre-school care while they are at work. The Bradley proposal recognizes that quality care and education at an early age are an essential part of a child's development. Research has demonstrated that the first years of a person's life are critical in terms of cognitive, emotional and social development.

To help ensure that children receive the tools they need to develop to their full potential, the Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families will:

Create - for the first time - a federal Early Care and Education (ECE) Partnership Program.

The ECE program builds upon North Carolina's successful "Smart Start" initiative, and will ensure that America's youngest citizens (age 0-5) are nurtured and cared for in a manner that maximizes their development. The ECE program will be based on public-private partnerships that put decision making in the hands of leaders in the communities where funding will be spent. The federal government can - and should - assist local communities, but it should not micro-manage.

Specifically, the ECE partnership program will:

- Provide \$2 billion per year to states for early care and education activities. Funding will be provided by the federal government in the form of generous 5:1 matching grants. States must provide the seed funding (preferably contributed by the private sector) to trigger matching funds.
- Each state will create a public-private partnership to determine broad early-care-and-education goals specific to that state. The partnership will include, among others, educators, parents, child care providers, relevant government agencies, and representatives from the business, non-profit and faith communities.
- Individual counties within each state will create similar local public-private partnerships to determine early-care-and-education initiatives tailored to their specific counties and the communities within them. These initiatives may include programs that focus on school readiness,

infants and toddlers, family support, parenting, children with disabilities, and children whose primary language is not English.

- After confirming that the initiatives selected by the county promote state goals, the state partnership will distribute the funding to the county partnerships. The state partnership will be responsible for ensuring the accountability of county partnerships. The private sector will be encouraged to support county initiatives through additional funding or in-kind contributions.
- 40% of funding must be used to enhance the quality of existing programs and/or improve infrastructure. The remaining 60% of funding must be used to provide direct services and programs.

Create the Senior Volunteers Program

The Senior Volunteers Program, which builds upon the successful "Experience Corps," recognizes that America's greatest generation has a valuable role to play in cultivating its youngest generation. Research has shown that one of the best predictors of a child's success is regular contact with a caring adult. To ensure that more children have contact with senior citizens who can mentor them, expand their educational opportunities, and build their self-esteem, the Bradley proposal will: 1) remove the roadblocks to seniors who wish to volunteer; and, 2) provide seed money for fledgling programs that match senior volunteers with child care/development efforts. These programs will cover grades K-12.

Specifically, the Bradley proposal will:

- Make tax-free stipends of up to \$200 per month available to seniors who volunteer at least 15 hours per week in an approved program for children in grades K-12. Stipends will be used to offset transportation and other expenses.
- Provide "volunteer coordinators" to help communities better match senior citizen volunteers with programs for children. The government will also direct the Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA) program to give special attention to finding volunteer coordinators for schools and community organizations that work directly with children during after-school hours.

Helping Parents Spend Enough Time with Children and Giving Them the Flexibility to Be There at Important Moments

Family and Medical Leave Act

The Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families recognizes that many working mothers are unable to leave work for a short period of time to attend events that may not qualify as emergencies, but are nevertheless central to their lives and the lives of their children or elderly relatives. Such events, which are common to our daily life, include taking a child to the doctor, attending parent-teacher conferences, or taking a parent to a nursing home.

Under the Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families, parents will have the flexibility to attend these events - events which bind us as families. The Bradley proposal will extend the Family and Medical Leave Act to include firms with 25 or more employees. The current FMLA applies only to companies with 50 or more workers. This extension will cover an additional 10 million workers. The Bradley proposal will also expand the FMLA to provide an

additional 24 hours (3 days x 8 hours) of unpaid leave. No more than four hours may be used in a single month. Unlike the current FMLA, workers will be able to use this time in short increments that they determine to attend events important in their family life. The Bradley proposal will retain all other provisions of the current FMLA.

Forced Overtime

The Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families recognizes that in today's fast-paced world, it is increasingly difficult to coordinate the schedules of working parents and their elderly relatives or children. In major cities, for example, over-crowding in schools has resulted in staggered school hours, creating a situation in which some children attend class in the late afternoon and others in the early morning. Parents have to juggle competing demands of work and family life to adjust to these changes, most of which are beyond their control. Even when schedules remain unchanged, balancing the rising demands of work and family is difficult. Working mothers know that no matter what demands they face at work, the child care center where their child is enrolled closes at a certain hour, no exceptions.

Bill Bradley recognizes that overtime work is sometimes unavoidable and that it often helps families generate much needed extra income. He also recognizes, however, that too frequently employees feel powerless to refuse a last minute request to work extra hours even when it forces a mother to miss her daughter's doctor appointment or makes her son wait alone for an hour after basketball practice. To address this concern, the Bradley proposal will encourage employers to be flexible on the issue of forced overtime work. Businesses must have the manpower they need to excel, but families must also have the time they need to be families. Recognizing both of these realities, Bill Bradley, as President, will direct his Cabinet officials to work with employees in their departments to establish "fair time" policies for overtime work, including advance notice and worker choice. He will also encourage private-sector employers and employees to work together to do the same.

Health Care

The Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families recognizes that health care is a primary concern for working parents, many of whom are responsible for the health not only of their children, but, increasingly, their aging parents. Parents are further concerned about their ability to purchase and maintain insurance for themselves, particularly if they are part-time workers who don't receive insurance or full-time workers who lose or change their job.

The Health Care Proposal From Bill Bradley (released on September 28, 1999) addresses the health care concerns of working parents, specifically their concerns about access, affordability, quality and choice. The proposal, a recap of which follows below, is part of the package of Bill Bradley's broader initiatives to help working families.

The Health Care Proposal from Bill Bradley will:

- Guarantee health coverage for every child in America. (Parents who are unable to purchase insurance for their children will receive a full or partial subsidy from the government.)
- Preserve the Medicare guarantee and expand it with two optional programs: 1) a catastrophic and chronic drug benefit program; and, 2) a program that provides the elderly with the professional support they need to remain

independent. (The latter will significantly relieve the burden on working family members who double-up as caregivers.)

- Guarantee access to and portability of insurance for all Americans by allowing them to participate in a federally approved program of private plans that will be available to them whether they lose or change their job. (Adults who cannot afford the cost of premiums will receive a full or partial subsidy from the government.)
- Maintain all current health plans and systems, including employer-provided insurance, for those who are happy with their current coverage.

More information on the "Health Care Proposal from Bill Bradley" may be found on the Bill Bradley for President [here](#)

Building a Better Future

The Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families recognizes that working families in America have two sets of concerns - overcoming the stress in their lives today and building a better future for tomorrow. Increasingly, they feel the latter is impossible and that the most they can hope for is to work harder and harder just to stay even.

The Bradley proposal acknowledges that any comprehensive package of initiatives to help America's working families must address the present and the future: it must help working parents overcome their struggles today and achieve their dreams - the American Dream - tomorrow.

Lifelong Learning

The technological revolution has changed the way Americans live and work. To ensure that all Americans have the skills they need in this new, knowledge-based environment, the Bradley proposal will provide high school graduates and working adults with the tools they need to be sufficient in their current job and, if desired, to advance to a new, better one. Individual workers and the American economy will benefit from this initiative.

To improve access to lifelong education and give working parents a chance not just to stay even, but build a better future, the Bradley Proposal to Help Working Families will invest in community colleges. These colleges, long underappreciated, have served as learning centers for older, working Americans and career training programs for high school graduates. Today, there are over 1,000 community colleges in the country.

Specifically, the Bradley proposal will provide \$2 billion over five years for community colleges. Funding will be disbursed in the form of competitive grants designed to:

- Build strong partnerships with the local private sector, local high schools and universities.

This will provide a comprehensive approach that allows students to enter a community college from high school and exit to a four-year institution or a job in the private sector which demands the skills and training they have received.

- Improve the technology infrastructure of community colleges.

This will allow community colleges to provide students with the technological and other skills they need to remain qualified for their current job and to advance to a better one. (Community colleges must form technology-related

partnerships with local businesses to qualify for these funds.)

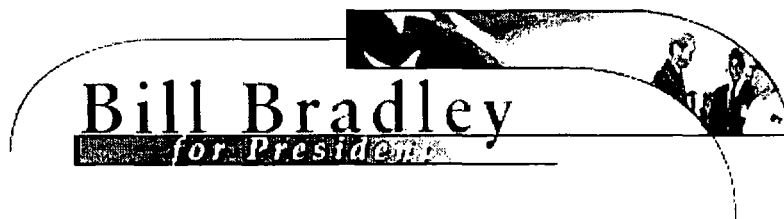
- Remove the barriers to access, including providing appropriate child care for students who need it and ensuring that class schedules are arranged in a manner that allows working adults with full- or part-time jobs to attend.

Health Care	See <u>Bill Bradley health care proposal</u> for detailed cost
Child Care	\$2 billion (ECE program) \$200 million (Sr. Vol. Program)
Ensuring that when parents are at work, their children are well cared for	
Investing In The Future	\$400 million (Community College)
Lifelong Learning/ Building a Better Tomorrow	
TOTAL	\$2.6 billion per year

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Speech on Working Families

October 7, 1999

Contoocook Valley Regional High School
Peterborough, New Hampshire

as prepared for delivery

When I was a boy growing up in Crystal City, the dinner hour was precisely at 6:30 every night. As some of you probably know, I spent many of my afternoons running around a gym in short pants shooting a leather ball into a basket. But when I looked up at the gymnasium clock and saw that it was 6:15, I knew I had to high-tail it home to be sitting at the dinner table by 6:30. Some days I practiced late and ate a cold supper. But most days, I'd run through the door, just in time, and sit down at the table with my parents. Today, that sounds like a fairy tale, doesn't it? Or maybe like something out of a Norman Rockwell painting or "Father Knows Best." How many families sit down together at 6:30 every night to eat supper? Dad's working late. Mom's got a meeting. The daughter has soccer practice. The son's rehearsing for the school play. Dinner in most American homes these days looks like a miniature Grand Central station, with people dashing in and out, saying hello and good-bye, grabbing something from the refrigerator, or putting something in the microwave. Either that or the kitchen is deserted. Our lives just don't operate on any kind of leisurely, regular schedule anymore, and we can't turn back the clock. When I was a Senator in Washington, my wife Ernestine was usually teaching in New Jersey during the week, so I was the primary caregiver. In the mornings I'd give our daughter Theresa Anne breakfast, drop her off at school, and head for the Senate. At the end of the day, I'd rush home to have supper with her and help with homework before returning to my Senate work. Sometimes Ernestine left a meal in the freezer that she had prepared the previous weekend; sometimes I prepared the meal myself, which meant a steady diet of hamburgers and TV dinners. Sometimes, when I'd forgotten to go shopping, I'd come home to face an empty cupboard. Then I'd rustle up one of the few dishes I can't ruin: milk and cereal. We never told Ernestine about that. But, you know, what was important was not the food but the fact that we were there together, sitting around a table, talking about our day. In the end, that's what we're all trying to do: to balance our work with our family life so that work and family are mutually supportive. That's part of our American dream. But, it isn't easy, I know. Often, one income just isn't enough anymore. Two incomes sometimes are, but then something else drops away, time with your kids, or your spouse, or your parents, or just time to take a deep breath. In this new global economy, old skills aren't needed anymore, and the new skills demanded by technology aren't easy to master. And the jobs that don't require new skills often don't pay very much or require you to sell your life away in hours of overtime. Part-time jobs help, but, then, they don't offer health insurance. The new global economy just doesn't care about the 6:30 dinner hour. And it doesn't care that you have aging parents,

as well as small children, to look after. It doesn't care that you're too tired or have too little time to help with the kids' homework. It doesn't care that you don't know how to use a computer. The global economy isn't worrying about you at all. And finally, for so many working families, and so many working women, they have no choice. They can't afford not to work the long hours that help support the family but prevent them from being with their children. They can't afford not to take the extra overtime, or work the night-shift, or do a job that is unrewarding. They don't have the choice to do what they know is in their children's best interest. I am talking about people who are doing the best that they can, but still know it's not enough. Our nation has been good at building our economic infrastructure. But for far too long, we have neglected our social infrastructure. We are economically healthy. But are we socially healthy? Are we spiritually healthy? Families today need support. What chance does one family have against the global economic order that requires companies to downsize in order to be competitive? What individual response can counter the power of technological change which allows one computer to do what 300 people once did? What can a single worker do when he or she is in competition with people from around the world to produce the best goods at the lowest price-the kind of dynamic that has created our prosperity in the first place? The virtuous circle for national prosperity can be a vicious circle for parents. But we're all in this together. And what individual families can't build on their own, we can all build together. So I'm here today to make a proposal that speaks to the concerns and worries of working families. It's a plan that looks ahead to our long-term interests in human terms, not just economic ones. Because I believe that a prosperity that fails to bolster families is hollow and unsustainable. We must make work and family work together and not against each other. Nine days ago in California I set out a health care plan that would insure all the nation's children and enable all adults to afford quality health insurance. Health care is an over-arching national problem, the kind of problem that only the federal government can really reckon with. But today, we're looking at a different kind of problem, where solutions should not involve only government but also the other two legs of the three-legged stool that makes up American society-the private sector and our civil society-the place where we live our lives, worship our God, where we go to Little League games, teach our children right from wrong. For families the civil society is in some ways the most important leg because it ministers to something the government can't, the human heart, and the small everyday joys and sorrows of our lives. But while government shouldn't be meddling with your family's dinner hour, it can and should be a catalyst for change in our civil society. Americans don't want new government bureaucracies, but I think they do want government to understand the enormous pressures and difficulties they face every day trying to work and provide care for their families. And I think they want someone to step forward and make their concerns a priority. This proposal is not about big government, but it's about big ideas and the courage to commit ourselves to finding a commonsense balance between family and work in America. It's about the American dream for everyone-a dream that begins at home. My proposal focuses on four areas that are of vital concern to all families, and is premised on a simple idea: that if you have health care coverage, good child care, educational opportunity, and supportive work environments, you can be a better parent. We need to help people be the best parents they can be, for that way they can best help their children, and then we'll have healthier families and a healthier nation. The health care proposal I have outlined would give all children health insurance and provide all adults and families with a choice of health care plans. I have done so in part because it seems to me that as we approach the new millennium, it is both morally unacceptable and economically imprudent for working American families to be without quality and affordable health care. It should be a fundamental and inalienable right. But healthy families are about

more than health care. In so many ways, child care is the key to finding a balance between work and family. Today in America, two parents working is the norm, not the exception, so that one parent staying home to look after the children is a luxury that most families can't afford. For single-parent families, that luxury isn't even possible. For most American parents, child care is essential. If you're not lucky enough to have an extended family in your neighborhood, you don't have many options. Either one of the two parents has to make more money so the other can stay home, or both parents have to earn more money to pay for quality child care, or the employer has to provide child care, or institutions within the community have to do so, or government has to help parents pay for the child care. Those are the options. The only imperative is that someone has to care for the child. But the plain and disheartening truth is that child care isn't very good in America. We are the wealthiest of the world's industrial nations, but we have perhaps the most inadequate child care network. Every day, 13 million preschool children spend part of their day in a place away from home, a place where care is not always what we want it to be. In most parts of the country, child care is expensive, hard to find, and far from ideal. It's child care, yes, but do they care for your child? We're not always so sure. For our poorest children, these places may actually be jeopardizing their development. The early care we give-or do not give-shapes a child for his or her life. Every one of us in this room is in part the sum of the joys and the sorrows we all experienced as children. Today, child care in America is not a system at all, but a catch-as-catch-can hodgepodge of under-funded, uncoordinated efforts. What I am proposing today is to try to convert that hodgepodge into a sensible system that will allow working parents to breathe a little easier when it comes to child care. I am proposing that we create a partnership between the federal government, the states, and communities that will improve early care and education for children from infancy through five years old. This proposal is modeled on an effective and widely acclaimed program in North Carolina, created by Governor Jim Hunt and called Smart Start. States will be allocated \$2 billion a year in a matching program to develop county or regional level partnerships that will include not only representatives from local government agencies, but educators, parents, business people, nonprofit leaders and others. They will assess the needs of children in their communities, identify available local private and nonprofit resources, and determine how the new federal money can best be spent in their area to help children. Some communities may wish to use the funds to upgrade skills of workers in child care centers or provide subsidies to increase access to child care or increase the number of child care slots available. In all cases, the state will perform rigorous audits to assure accountability. The partnerships operate under a simple understanding: that we all have a shared responsibility for our children and a vested interest in helping them become the best kids they can be. Everyone understands that government doesn't raise good kids-parents and communities and neighbors do. But government, acting as a catalyst, and in partnership with parents and communities, can provide the kind of supporting infrastructure that families need. In a few weeks I will lay out my ideas for improving the quality of education in this country. But I want to talk with you today about the educational landscape from a human perspective and how it affects family life. We have too many school-age children with nowhere to go and nothing to do after school and too many kids in schools without enough attention from a caring adult. But we also have an abundance of healthy, active, retired adults and, over the next decade, an avalanche of new retirees who may just have some free time in the afternoons. What better way to tap into the experience and the energy, the goodwill and generosity of our older citizens, than to ask them to step up and mentor our young people through schools, churches, and neighborhoods. We know that contact with such caring adults lowers crime rates, unintended

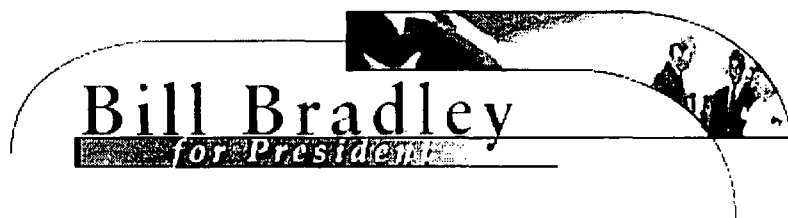
pregnancies, drug experimentation, and other anti-social behaviors. When wisdom and youth get together, the benefits are incalculable. For two years I wrote a column for a Web site called Third Age, which is focused on the interests and hopes of Americans between 50 and 70, a time when children have left home, careers have crested, and life takes on a different and often deeper meaning. The group is interested in health and money, but, more importantly, in meaning. People in the Third Age want something more than material possessions. Many of them feel a strong, unfulfilled service commitment. Indeed, in a recent survey 40 percent of Americans between 50 and 75 said they were "very interested" or "fairly interested" in a half-time volunteer role in their retirement. If only 1 percent of the future baby boom retirees agree to work in community service with young people, we could have 10 million hours of service per week. To encourage this phenomenon, what if we drew upon the very successful model of Experience Corps and other similarly created programs which use retiree volunteers 15 hours a week to tutor and mentor grade school children? What if we directed this army of new volunteers to work with young people in schools and nonprofit groups both during and after school? What if we offered small tax-free stipends to these seniors to help offset their transportation and to these organizations to help utilize the volunteers? What if we further said that any income a senior earned from a participating nonprofit would not be offset against social security payments? What if we directed Vista to provide community coordinators to help schools and organizations? This is just one model of combining America's greatest generation with our next generation in order to guarantee us all a better future. But I want communities to create their own plans using their own resources of people and time, and when they do innovate, we should reward them. I've talked about the need for young people to learn from older Americans, but we also need to redesign learning itself. The workplace is changing. Jobs that were the backbone of our economy 20 years ago are now obsolete. New technologies and whole new industries have taken their place. In order to be part of this new economy, workers have to learn new skills. Otherwise, all of us will be left behind. A pair of strong hands are not what they used to be. Now those hands have to be able to use a keyboard. Government can't prepare Americans for the new economy, but it can make sure they have a chance to prepare themselves. I believe one of a President's fundamental jobs is to help people and the country manage change. To that end, I'm today proposing that we create Lifelong Learning Communities which will harness the nation's 1,000 community colleges. They are the most cost-efficient and effective way to train young people about to enter the economy and older workers who may need to upgrade their skills to stay in that economy. The Lifelong Learning Communities program would be funded at \$2 billion over five years. The program would make grants to community colleges to upgrade their technology and expand their capacity to link up with employers and universities. For example, if a local company needs a dozen skilled nurses to learn new health care technologies or 25 operators for a new lathe or computer-aided design process, it would petition the local community college. Together the college and the company would apply to the federal government for money to buy the computers or lathes in order to train those workers. No money for equipment would flow until there is a company-community college partnership. In Texas, 95 percent of those retrained in such a program got jobs. The investment in training got immediate results. And the new equipment upgraded the college's future training capacities. This proposal would also provide funding for setting up child care facilities for parents who are going back to school to get more training. I have talked about health care, child care, and education. Now let me turn to work environments that support families. I happen to believe that even in small companies, struggling to make ends meet, a family-friendly environment is best for business in the long run. In the 21st

century, everyone will have the same high-tech equipment. The competitive edge will go to those who have the best people. That goes for nations as well as companies. And that brings me back to the health of families. I want to make sure employers give workers the time they need to take care of the small but important things in our lives that we need a little bit of time for. I strongly believe that we need to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to include firms between 25 to 50 people. In addition, we should provide workers with 24 unpaid hours a year for such things as taking a child or a parent to a doctor's appointment or just taking the time to attend a child's parent-teacher conference. An enlightened company should well understand how important a happy worker is to productivity. I applaud those states that are searching for creative ways to provide some wage replacement for low income workers who, without some help, cannot afford to take any unpaid leave. If we give working families a little more flexibility to meet the needs of their family life, we will all be better off for it. We also must bring common sense to the issue of forced overtime. Yes, there are times when overtime is a blessing, when you need extra money for bills or Christmas presents. But there are other times when it seems more like a curse. Like when you have to be at your sister's by five o'clock after your shift ends to pick up your son, so that she can leave to be at her work by six. What happens? Your boss taps you on the shoulder and asks you if you can work till seven. You fear that if you refuse, you might be fired, and if you don't agree, your sister could be fired. It's not a choice that any worker should have to make. As President, I will direct all government offices to develop an overtime policy for each of their departments that works for government and employees, and I'll call on private employers to do the same. I have traveled America for 30 years listening to the stories of working families. I've heard of wonderful successes and crushing failures, of hopes fulfilled and dreams unachieved. I spent 18 years in the U.S. Senate, focusing on the concerns of those families. I was thinking of working families when I crusaded for tax reform, which eliminated corporate loopholes so that working families could pay lower taxes. I was thinking of them when I worked for college loans that would be available whatever a worker's age. I was thinking of working families when I increased the EITC. But in the case of families and work, legislation cannot suddenly solve all of our problems. In addition, there must be help from the private sector, which must create family-friendly environments, and from civil society, which can cure what our hearts endure. In 1978, when I was first elected to the Senate for New Jersey, my daughter was two years old. When I took the oath of office, I raised my right hand high, but in my left hand I held Theresa Anne. In those days, it was rare for politicians to take the oath of office holding a child. I was proud to take that oath to serve the people of New Jersey. But I was just as proud to be a father and a husband, and I wanted my young daughter to see that my work and my family would be intertwined in a way that was good for both. I want that same possibility, that same dream, for all Americans. For work and family are the twin sides of the American dream. They are the keys to our happiness as individuals-and to our success as a nation and as a family.

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Bill Bradley on Education

Bill Bradley believes that education is the key to fulfilling the American dream.

He knows parents want to do what is best for our children. But those who are middle-class worry that their children won't have the things they had - while those who are poor fear that their children will. Bradley has listened to parents and understands that good schools and good teachers are keys to the success of all children. He has never voted to take money out of the public school system.

As the most powerful and prosperous nation in the world, we can do nothing less than provide our children with a bright and hopeful future. So we must ensure that all our sons and daughters will have every available opportunity.

Bradley has put forward a bold set of education proposals that will:

Prepare Children For School:

- Create a coordinated Early Care and Education (ECE) Partnership program - to improve the education of children from infancy to age 5. The partnerships will include educators, parents and business people, and federal agencies and will assess the specific needs of children in their communities. These local groups will determine if they need, for example, an infant/toddler center, a training program for caregivers or another early education program. Bradley's plan will allocate \$2 billion dollars a year to develop these county or regional level programs.
- Fully Fund Head Start - so no child is left out of this proven and valuable program.

Put More Trained Teachers in Classrooms

- Create a Teach-to-Reach Program - to hire and train 60,000 new teachers every year for urban and rural schools, where they are needed most. This new program will:
- Establish scholarships for gifted high-school graduates who commit to teach in high-need school districts.
- Offer loan forgiveness to students enrolled in universities that offer rigorous teacher training.
- Promote alternative teacher certification, so it is easier for talented mid-career professionals to enter the classroom.
- Encourage partnerships between universities and local schools to provide professional development for teachers already in the classroom.

Invest in Life-Long Learning

- Improve Access to Community Colleges, by providing child care and flexible class schedules for students with full or part-time jobs. The Bradley plan will provide \$2 billion over 5 years to improve the technology infrastructure of community colleges.

Improve After-School Care and Education

- Create and Invest \$1 Billion in After-School Community Centers, which will be open 6 or 7 days a week until 11 or 12 at night - so children have more positive options in their lives. These centers will offer a wide range of services, including: homework help, arts and recreation, literacy classes and health information.
- Tap into the Experience and Energy of our Older Citizens, through a new Senior Volunteer program. This program will remove roadblocks to seniors volunteering in schools and neighborhoods and will provide a \$200 stipend per month for transportation and other costs. When wisdom and youth get together, the benefits are incalculable.

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- vouchers = Democracy requires public education -

- voc ed = Partners into Tech Prep + ESL

- Kiryas Joel - bipartisan support - will get done - not an IDEA issue
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Bradley unveils details of new education plan

By Mike Glover, Associated Press, 2/8/2000 21:19

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, Ohio (AP) Democrat Bill Bradley said Tuesday he will propose doubling an \$8 billion federal program for distressed schools and giving parents the opportunity to choose what public school their children attend.

In addition, Bradley said he would institute a new "report card" to grade schools on issues like graduation rates and performance.

The biggest single piece of the package, which Bradley was outlining Wednesday in a speech at a St. Louis school, would be the doubling of the basic federal education program that offers funding to low-income and distressed schools.

That pot of money, which would grow to \$16 billion, could be used for a variety of efforts, including bonuses to lure qualified teachers into classrooms and rewards for schools that improve student achievement.

"If they do succeed they get a little more, part of that could be used for bonuses," Bradley said.

At a town meeting in a suburb of Cleveland, Bradley responded to a question on his views on education by sketching out much of the package he intends to unveil on Wednesday.

The school choice plan is among the most controversial areas, and Bradley is routinely criticized by Democratic rival Al Gore for having voted as a U.S. senator for school voucher experiments. Those programs allow parents to use public funds to send their children to the school of their choice, whether they are public or private.

Bradley carefully noted that his proposal would give parents a choice only among public schools.

In addition, he called for new teacher testing, saying it would assure quality teachers are in every classroom.

At the heart of the package, Bradley said, was an incentive system for schools to improve student performance.



Are you sure
your customers
can get to you?

"If they do succeed they get a reward," Bradley said.

He said the report cards would allow parents to better assess the quality of the school their children attend and would help them choose a new school if they decide to switch. "Parents would get a report card to help them." They then "can make a choice on where they attend," Bradley said.

The report cards would cover "five, six, or 10 different areas," including graduation rates, performance on standardized tests and other issues to be decided later, he said.

Aides said the proposals would compliment earlier Bradley initiatives to double the number of Head Start slots and to give scholarships to college students who agree to teach in distressed urban schools. Those scholarships would be worth \$7,500 a year and could bring up to 600,000 new teachers into the profession.

Aides said they were confident Bradley's education package would be viewed as more aggressive than Gore's. The vice president has proposed a \$115 billion, 10-year plan to improve education that includes making preschool universally available and would give salary increases of up to \$5,000 for public school teachers who meet certain standards in poor and rural areas.

"It confirms Bill Bradley as the education candidate," said one aide who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We are proposing more money, more innovation and more results than the vice president."

The education issue is a hard fought one between Gore and Bradley because polls have shown that Democratic primary voters put education high atop their list of policy concerns.

In addition to expanding aid to local schools, Bradley called for \$500 million for charter schools, to expand teacher testing and to tighten monitoring of student performance.

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Speech

Speech by Bill
Bradley at
University City High
School

February 09 --
Speech by Bill
Bradley
on Education
at
University City High
School

University City, MO
February 9, 2000

Fifty years ago the
Supreme Court ruled
that separate but

987-9331

equal was
unconstitutional
when it came to race
and education in
America. I'm here
today to say that we
have separate and
unequal when it
comes to the quality
of education in
America.

A good education is
an American
birthright. While
millions of children
are getting such an
education, there are
far too many
children who are
trapped in failing
schools. Education
may be the great
equalizer, but when
schools are unequal
-- when poor
children get an
inferior education
to wealthy children,
when minorities get
a worse education
than non-minorities
-- we are often
preparing them for a
life of failure.
That is
unacceptable.

I went to a public
school in Crystal
City, Missouri, the
small town where I
grew up only 35
miles south of here.
My senior high
school class had 96
students in it. My
teachers prepared me
not only for the
next grade, but for
a lifetime of
learning. That is
what schools today
must do for all our
children. Because in
this new age, it is
not so much
knowledge but
knowing how to learn
that is important.

But we are not just

creating an educated workforce for the 21st century, we are creating something even more important: citizens. Children must learn how to spell, but they also must learn the meaning of tolerance, of free speech, of community and responsibility, so that we strengthen our democracy for this new age.

I believe we need to create a new politics in this country -- because only when we have a new politics can we accomplish the big things we need to do, like fixing our education system. All campaigns are about the future, and there is nothing more critical to our future than lifting up our education system.

To do that, I am proposing a few simple but big ideas:

All teachers must be qualified.

All schools should be held accountable for making sure their children learn.

All parents should have information about their child's school.

And all students must have the option of leaving a poor public school for a

better public
school.

These ideas are my
core convictions
about education in
this country and if
they are achieved --
as they must be --
they will help
launch our children
into the 21st
century.

But these basic
things -- things I
think we can all
agree on -- are not
happening in America
today. During the
past seven years,
we've heard a lot of
talk about
education, but too
often the rhetoric
hasn't been backed
up by action. We
have a minimum of
250,000 teachers in
America that the
Secretary of
Education says are
unqualified -- "warm
bodies," he called
them. That means up
to 6 million
children don't have
a qualified teacher.

The Dow Jones has
been soaring to
record heights, but
our children's test
scores in reading,
writing, math and
science have stayed
essentially flat.

The educational
divide in this
country is not just
digital. The
achievement gap
between minority and
non-minorities,
between poor and
non-poor remains
unacceptably large.
Yes, we do have laws
on our books to hold
schools accountable

for making sure
their children
learn, but those
laws are not
enforced. In far too
many schools in this
country, there is
what amounts to
educational
malpractice.

But in America, we
can't afford to lose
any of our children.
We can't afford to
leave anyone behind.

I believe every
child, every child
in this country,
must have the
opportunity to
achieve his or her
potential. All
across the country,
we see schools in
every type of
neighborhood, where
children are
achieving results
that defy
predictions.
Academic success is
possible for all
children. All poor
children. All white
children. All Black
children. All
Hispanic children.
All immigrant
children.

All children in this
country, whether
they live in
Greenwich,
Connecticut, or the
barrios of East
L.A., deserve and
must get the same
quality public
education. That is
the promise of
America. And that is
a promise we must
always keep. Only
when every child
lives up to his or
her potential as an
individual will we
be able to achieve
our full potential

as a nation. That's
the American
equation.

Right now, we give
the states \$8
billion a year to
increase student
achievement, but we
ask for almost
nothing in return --
and do not even
bother to find out
whether students are
achieving. That is
unacceptable and I
will end that.

And I will do it in
three ways.

First, how many of
you in this room
have had your lives
changed by a
teacher? Raise your
hand.

I know how teachers
can change a life.
My mother was a
fourth grade
teacher. My aunt was
a seventh grade
teacher. They
changed my life and
hundreds of others.
They not only taught
history and reading,
they imbued their
students -- and me
-- with abiding
American values:
honesty, hard work,
persistence, and
looking after your
neighbor. They
believed that
teaching was not
only about imparting
knowledge but
molding character.

Yes, I know how
teachers can change
a life.

I believe there is
nothing more

important to education than a qualified teacher. Research shows that one of the strongest predictors of how students perform on national tests is not class size or per pupil spending, but the presence of a qualified teacher, a teacher who was fully certified and had majored in the subject he or she taught.

That is why I will require that schools that receive federal money will have to ensure that their teachers are fully qualified. "Warm bodies" are just not good enough for our children, millions of who sit down every day in classrooms before teachers who do not meet the minimum requirements for teaching in a public school.

Finally, I've already proposed a plan that will put 600,000 new teachers in high need classrooms over the next decade by offering scholarships and loan forgiveness to those who wish to take up this noblest of professions. I will set aside money for schools to give teachers signing bonuses and merit bonuses for outstanding performance.

Second, I will require that schools be held accountable for results. Schools

that receive federal money must make measurable progress in closing the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students, and between poor and non-poor students. And in raising the achievement level of all students so that they are performing at grade level.

Third, if a school is not meeting a child's needs, I will give parents a choice to send their child to a better public school and give them the information they need to make that choice. Each school must then issue a report card to parents on the qualification of their children's teachers. Parents must be able to monitor whether their children are getting what they deserve.

Children who attend failing schools must not be trapped there. They must have the freedom to choose something better. As a condition of receiving federal aid, states must allow students to transfer out of a low performing public school into a better public school, including charter schools.

To do all this, I will double our investment in Title I, which is the program that helps

educate our poorest
children. That's
exactly \$8 billion
more than the Vice
President is
proposing for
increases in Title
I.

Yes, I'll give
schools that money,
but I'll tell you,
there are strings
attached. Money from
Washington should no
longer be a one way
street, with money
going out and then
being forgotten. I
will hold those
schools that receive
federal money
accountable for
their results. And I
will expect them to
show results.
Schools that fail to
show improvement
will be subject to
corrective action by
the state, and that
includes
reconstituting the
school or reopening
it as a charter.

Some people say we
cannot hold Title I
schools to such high
standards, as we do
our more prosperous
ones. But I say that
when we don't expect
much from our
children, they don't
expect much from
themselves. We do
them a terrible
disservice when we
expect them to fail.

Let me tell you a
story. Wrigley
Elementary school in
Kentucky sits in the
foothills of
Appalachia. Last
year, Brittany, one
of the school's
third graders, lived
in a car. But she
wasn't much poorer

than her classmates,
8 of 10 of whom
qualified for
federal school
lunches.

Brittany's teachers
didn't think that
because she lived in
a car she couldn't
learn. Listen to the
school's principal,
Sandra Pelfrey: "I
often hear educators
excusing both
themselves and their
students for low
performance because
the families they
serve have no
running water and no
electricity. I don't
believe that
nonsense for a
moment. I tell my
teachers that if a
student can walk
through the door, we
can teach them to
read and write."

Wrigley Elementary
school -- a poor
school full of very
poor children -- is
the third highest
performing school in
Kentucky in reading
and the seventh
highest in the state
in writing, far
outstripping
hundreds of more
affluent schools.
Why? Because the
teachers of Wrigley
Elementary school
expect the world
from their children,
and they get it.

But Wrigley is not
alone. While there
is a significant
correlation between
poverty and lower
achievement, there
are hundreds of poor
schools around the
country like Wrigley
where students
excel. These

children do not
benefit from lower
standards and lower
expectations -- for
such expectations
become a
self-fulfilling
prophecy.

As president, I will
expect great things
from all our
children.

We must do more to
help rebuild aging
schools in this
country. Every
morning, children
who walk into
schools with
crumbing walls and
peeling paint
receive a message
that they don't
matter. We must
continue federal
support of school
construction, and my
focus on school
accountability will
allow states to
concentrate on
construction.

And we must do all
we can to bridge the
digital divide. Over
90 percent of our
schools are wired,
but only 50 percent
of our classrooms
are. We must finish
job. But more than
that, even in
classrooms that are
wired, computers
often collect dust
because teachers do
not know how to use
the new technology.
My Teach to Reach
scholarship program
each year will get
10,000 teachers who
are familiar with
the technology into
high-need rural and
urban classrooms.

My proposals on

education are not
some isolated set of
little programs from
Washington but are
part of my
integrated approach
to making sure our
children are ready
to succeed in a
changing, knowledge
based world. For I
believe education is
not preparation for
life, as John Dewey
liked today, but
life itself.

It begins when life
beings, takes place
in and out of the
classroom, before
and after school,
and for the whole of
one's life.

That is why I've
invested in \$2
billion a year to
communities for
early education and
childcare to ensure
that our youngest
citizens get the
best possible start
in life.

That is why I've
also proposed
increasing Head
Start by 400,000
children over the
next four years so
that nearly every
child who is
eligible can go.

That is why I've
proposed support for
2000 Beacon centers,
which are
after-school
learning centers.

That's why I've also
proposed stipends
for seniors who
volunteer in our
schools and
neighborhoods to
assure the presence

of caring adults in
the lives of our
next generation.

That is why I will
also invest \$2
billion over five
years for our
community colleges,
which will help
people go back to
school to get
themselves ready for
this new economy.

That is why my other
proposals in this
campaign -- to
provide access to
affordable health
care for all, to
reduce child
poverty, to get
common sense gun
control, and to
bridge the racial
divide -- are part
of education policy
as well.

There isn't a
politician in
America who doesn't
talk about
education.
Politicians read
polls and it's at
the top of the list
of voter concerns.

But education is not
a new cause for me.
In the Senate, I was
guided by the same
core principles that
I have repeated over
and over on the
campaign trail: that
education must begin
at birth, extend
through life, and
include everyone.

In 1993, I proposed
residential houses
for young,
disadvantaged
mothers so that
their babies could
get the right

stimulation from the
earliest ages.

That same year I
also developed an
innovative form of
educational
financial aid:
Self-Reliance Loans.
The idea is that
everyone should be
able to borrow money
for education and be
able to pay that
money as a percent
of their future
income, so that
repayments are not
backbreaking. The
Administration has
not done enough to
publicize this, and
I say that it ought
to be the chief way
people get and repay
their education
loans in this
country.

But to really change
education in this
country, you must
first change
politics in this
country. You must be
willing to go up
against established
power; you must be
more than just a
custodian of the
status quo.

That's why I'm
fighting in this
election, because
I'm the one Democrat
who can win in
November.

The one Democrat who
can change the way
Washington works.

The one Democrat who
John McCain can't
beat like a drum
over fundraising.

The one Democrat who

will be able to fix
our schools and
shore up our future.

The last seven years
haven't exactly
brought
revolutionary
changes to
education.

On Al Gore's watch,
children's test
scores stayed
basically flat. He
tried to portray
mediocre reading
scores as great
gains, when in
reality small gains
since 1994 simply
raised scores to
their 1992 level.

On Al Gore's watch,
the Administration
won funding for new
teachers but didn't
include strict
provisions to make
sure those teachers
were highly
qualified.

On Al Gore's watch,
the Administration
suffered what one
review panel called
"a massive failure
of will and nerve"
when it came to
holding states
accountable for
raising achievement
for disadvantaged
children.

When you look at
cold hard results,
we still have too
much mediocrity, too
much failure, and
too much status quo
in our schools.

Education is too
important to
tolerate anything
but excellence. I'm

not willing to
settle for anything
but excellence for
all our children.
Robert Kennedy once
said that you
measure the success
of a society by how
it treats its
children. By that
standard, we must do
better. We must lift
up all of our
children. All of
them must have an
equal chance. We
must not settle for
anything less than
that. Our future
depends on it. The
strength of our
nation depends on
it.

--XXX--

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- cost

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Domestic Policy Council
Bethany Little
OA/Box Number: 18398

FOLDER TITLE:

Child Poverty [1]

2013-0371-S
ms658

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P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
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b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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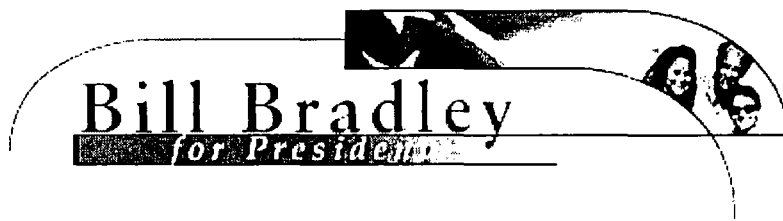
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Speech by Bill Bradley on Education

*University City High School
University City, MO
February 9, 2000*

Fifty years ago the Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal was unconstitutional when it came to race and education in America. I'm here today to say that we have separate and unequal when it comes to the quality of education in America.

A good education is an American birthright. While millions of children are getting such an education, there are far too many children who are trapped in failing schools. Education may be the great equalizer, but when schools are unequal -- when poor children get an inferior education to wealthy children, when minorities get a worse education than non-minorities -- we are often preparing them for a life of failure. That is unacceptable.

I went to a public school in Crystal City, Missouri, the small town where I grew up only 35 miles south of here. My senior high school class had 96 students in it. My teachers prepared me not only for the next grade, but for a lifetime of learning. That is what schools today must do for all our children. Because in this new age, it is not so much knowledge but knowing how to learn that is important.

But we are not just creating an educated workforce for the 21st century, we are creating something even more important: citizens. Children must learn how to spell, but they also must learn the meaning of tolerance, of free speech, of community and responsibility, so that we strengthen our democracy for this new age.

I believe we need to create a new politics in this country -- because only when we have a new politics can we accomplish the big things we need to do, like fixing our education system. All campaigns are about the future, and there is nothing more critical to our future than lifting up our education system.

To do that, I am proposing a few simple but big ideas:

All teachers must be qualified.

All schools should be held accountable for making sure their children learn.

All parents should have information about their child's school.

And all students must have the option of leaving a poor public school for a better public school.

These ideas are my core convictions about education in this

country and if they are achieved -- as they must be -- they will help launch our children into the 21st century.

But these basic things -- things I think we can all agree on -- are not happening in America today. During the past seven years, we've heard a lot of talk about education, but too often the rhetoric hasn't been backed up by action. We have a minimum of 250,000 teachers in America that the Secretary of Education says are unqualified -- "warm bodies," he called them. That means up to 6 million children don't have a qualified teacher.

The Dow Jones has been soaring to record heights, but our children's test scores in reading, writing, math and science have stayed essentially flat.

The educational divide in this country is not just digital. The achievement gap between minority and non-minorities, between poor and non-poor remains unacceptably large. Yes, we do have laws on our books to hold schools accountable for making sure their children learn, but those laws are not enforced. In far too many schools in this country, there is what amounts to educational malpractice.

But in America, we can't afford to lose any of our children. We can't afford to leave anyone behind.

I believe every child, every child in this country, must have the opportunity to achieve his or her potential. All across the country, we see schools in every type of neighborhood, where children are achieving results that defy predictions. Academic success is possible for all children. All poor children. All white children. All Black children. All Hispanic children. All immigrant children.

All children in this country, whether they live in Greenwich, Connecticut, or the barrios of East L.A., deserve and must get the same quality public education. That is the promise of America. And that is a promise we must always keep. Only when every child lives up to his or her potential as an individual will we be able to achieve our full potential as a nation. That's the American equation.

Right now, we give the states \$8 billion a year to increase student achievement, but we ask for almost nothing in return -- and do not even bother to find out whether students are achieving. That is unacceptable and I will end that.

And I will do it in three ways.

First, how many of you in this room have had your lives changed by a teacher? Raise your hand.

I know how teachers can change a life. My mother was a fourth grade teacher. My aunt was a seventh grade teacher. They changed my life and hundreds of others. They not only taught history and reading, they imbued their students -- and me -- with abiding American values: honesty, hard work, persistence, and looking after your neighbor. They believed that teaching was not only about imparting knowledge but molding character.

Yes, I know how teachers can change a life.

I believe there is nothing more important to education than a qualified teacher. Research shows that one of the strongest predictors of how students perform on national tests is not class size or per pupil spending, but the presence of a qualified teacher, a teacher who was fully certified and had majored in the subject he or she taught.

That is why I will require that schools that receive federal money

will have to ensure that their teachers are fully qualified. "Warm bodies" are just not good enough for our children, millions of who sit down every day in classrooms before teachers who do not meet the minimum requirements for teaching in a public school.

Finally, I've already proposed a plan that will put 600,000 new teachers in high need classrooms over the next decade by offering scholarships and loan forgiveness to those who wish to take up this noblest of professions. I will set aside money for schools to give teachers signing bonuses and merit bonuses for outstanding performance.

Second, I will require that schools be held accountable for results. Schools that receive federal money must make measurable progress in closing the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students, and between poor and non-poor students. And in raising the achievement level of all students so that they are performing at grade level.

Third, if a school is not meeting a child's needs, I will give parents a choice to send their child to a better public school and give them the information they need to make that choice. Each school must then issue a report card to parents on the qualification of their children's teachers. Parents must be able to monitor whether their children are getting what they deserve.

Children who attend failing schools must not be trapped there. They must have the freedom to choose something better. As a condition of receiving federal aid, states must allow students to transfer out of a low performing public school into a better public school, including charter schools.

To do all this, I will double our investment in Title I, which is the program that helps educate our poorest children. That's exactly \$8 billion more than the Vice President is proposing for increases in Title I.

Yes, I'll give schools that money, but I'll tell you, there are strings attached. Money from Washington should no longer be a one way street, with money going out and then being forgotten. I will hold those schools that receive federal money accountable for their results. And I will expect them to show results. Schools that fail to show improvement will be subject to corrective action by the state, and that includes reconstituting the school or reopening it as a charter.

Some people say we cannot hold Title 1 schools to such high standards, as we do our more prosperous ones. But I say that when we don't expect much from our children, they don't expect much from themselves. We do them a terrible disservice when we expect them to fail.

Let me tell you a story. Wrigley Elementary school in Kentucky sits in the foothills of Appalachia. Last year, Brittany, one of the school's third graders, lived in a car. But she wasn't much poorer than her classmates, 8 of 10 of whom qualified for federal school lunches.

Brittany's teachers didn't think that because she lived in a car she couldn't learn. Listen to the school's principal, Sandra Pelfrey: "I often hear educators excusing both themselves and their students for low performance because the families they serve have no running water and no electricity. I don't believe that nonsense for a moment. I tell my teachers that if a student can walk through the door, we can teach them to read and write."

Wrigley Elementary school -- a poor school full of very poor children -- is the third highest performing school in Kentucky in reading and the seventh highest in the state in writing, far