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001. briefing paper	Talking Points by Al Gore to DLC Conference (5 pages)	10/14/1999	Personal Misfile

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FOLDER TITLE:

Fatherhood - General

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RESTRICTION CODES

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PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Actions to Promote Responsible Fatherhood – 6E
May 1, 2000

Child Support Trust Fund/Account

Child support paid for a child while on welfare would go into a trust fund that would be available – either in a lump sum or monthly payments--once the custodial parent left welfare. This would provide an innovative new mechanism to encourage fathers to pay child support for their children even while on welfare, create an incentive for mothers to leave welfare, and provide additional income during the transition from welfare to self-sufficiency. Like child support pass through, the trust funds would ensure that support paid by the father goes directly to his family, thereby creating an incentive for the mother to cooperate with child support and the father to pay, but this approach is simpler and removes incentives to stay on welfare. There are several options for implementing this approach: a) the Administration could provide guidance to states on how they could implement it with existing TANF funds, b) the Administration could implement a pilot funded with child support demonstration funds, c) the Administration could announce that this idea should be considered for nationwide implementation as part of TANF reauthorization, or d) current child support legislative proposals could be amended to include this option [may need to identify new pay-for implications].

Release Child Support Accomplishments report and new data

Could release report summarizing Administration accomplishments on child support, along with latest data including FY 99 state-by-state numbers; latest financial institution data match hits; new hire hits; passport denials. Final national numbers will likely be slightly higher than the preliminary number of \$15.5 we've been using. Could also highlight role of businesses [and maybe call on employers to do even more?].

Encourage more State investments in promoting responsible fatherhood

We could develop information on how much (or little) states are investing their TANF funds in responsible fatherhood activities, and exhort them to do more by investing available TANF funds in these efforts. Little data is currently available and this would require surveying states. We may be able to convince a private organization to conduct the survey (perhaps a foundation could fund a think-tank or one of the state organizations).

Encourage judges to make greater use of non-custodial parent employment programs

We could work with HHS and DOJ to commission a guide for judges on how to use non-custodial parent employment programs to help deadbroke dads go to work and pay child support. Where these have been implemented (Tampa, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, etc) they are producing promising results and judges are enthusiastic. We could also find ways to disseminate information about these models at judicial conferences, or hold a conference specifically on this topic. Guide should include information on how states are implementing the current child support work requirement for NCPs with children on welfare, and highlight our proposal to expand to all NCPs.

Food Stamp Employment & Training Funds

Direct USDA to provide guidance to states on how they could use FS E&T funds to serve non-custodial parents. We're currently gathering information on whether any states are doing this.

Fathers Matter – Deliverables from HHS/ED Initiative on Involving Fathers in Schools and Early Learning

Could release the following deliverables being produced by HHS and Education:

- Effective Practices Guide for educators, head start providers, and other practitioners. Will include special focus on involving non-custodial parents, as well as fathers who are living with their children.
- Tips for Dads – practical things dads can do to get more involved
- Training materials
- CD Rom to include these deliverables plus research information.

HHS will know by mid-May when these might be available; some pieces may be ready for a fathers day release.

Voluntary paternity establishment

HHS has sent out a video to be used at hospitals, and is now sending to Head Start centers as well. We could direct them to send out the video and other informational materials to a wide array of federally-funded family services programs such as child care centers, schools, health clinics, juvenile and adult correction facilities, courts. We could also direct them to partner with other non-federal entities to disseminate information to places likely to reach fathers who have not acknowledged paternity including sports organizations.

Provide TA for providers on how to work with deadbroke dads

There is evidence that despite a growing level of interest in serving this population, there is a need to build capacity and train staff in welfare, workforce, and child support offices. Some have pointed out that the Workforce Investment Act is an important untapped resources but there is a lack of knowledge/experience in dealing with the population (our Fathers Work/Families Win proposal would help build capacity in the WIA system). DOL is in the process of funding NPCL to do TA effort for WtW and WIA providers: We could explore other funding sources, including building it into the DOJ/DOL re-entry initiative to ensure these programs incorporate responsible fatherhood as part of their efforts.

Incarcerated Fathers

There are a growing number of initiatives around the country focusing on incarcerated fathers but, to date, federal involvement has been minimal. For example, the Mott Foundation will soon be funding a number of state and local projects and there is a large conference scheduled for September. [AK follow-up with DOJ – what is status of federally-funded research?]

HHS speeches (currently not planning any new announcements/deliverables)

- Kevin Thurm and Judge Ross speaking at International Fatherhood Conference in NYC May 30
- Kevin speaking at NFI's 3rd annual Fatherhood Summit, June 2nd in Washington (invite may have been extended to VP).

Require paternity establishment to get food stamps

Not currently required but problems appear to outweigh advantages. Two issues: 1) should a father who has a child living with him have to prove legal paternity and 2) should a father who is not living with his children and is applying as an ABAWD be asked if he has children, and if so, has he acknowledged paternity? This could send mixed messages in terms of promoting food stamp participation.

Require payment of child support as condition of getting food stamps

Under PRWORA, states may disqualify food stamp recipients who are in arrears on child support. USDA says only two states – OK and WI – have elected this option for non-public assistance cases. Ohio has a self-sufficiency contract which makes payment of child support a condition of receiving TANF. Failure to do so will also result in the individual who owes child support losing food stamps. While we don't yet have data on how common this, it is probably most likely to occur in the case of a two-parent TANF family where one parent owes child support to a former wife or girlfriend. USDA believes the reason so few states are doing this is because if the father is living alone, he's probably an ABAWD facing a three month time limit so it's not worth doing. If he's living with a new family, the sanction will reduce food stamps for the new family.

Unemployment Insurance Intercept

We already intercept child support from UI claimants [Eric – have you learned anything more about how this works or how much it generates? What's statutory basis?]

Child Support Demonstrations/Waivers

OCSE will be releasing Special Improvement Grants in late May/early June. These may include grants related to fathers in prison and involving the faith community. Also one related to bringing together women's groups and father groups.

Promising practices in Welfare-to-Work Non-Custodial Parent grants

HHS and DOL have added a component to the WtW evaluation contract with Mathematica to review and produce a report, including case studies, on 7 – 9 Non-Custodial Parent projects currently operating with WtW funds. Site selection is nearly finalized and includes an interesting range of projects (potential sites: Los Angeles, Milwaukee, DeKalb Co (GA), Houston, Yakima (WA), Oglala Lakota Tribal College (Pine Ridge), Minneapolis, Kansas City). Expect to be done in late summer.

Expand partnerships with faith community

OCSE checking on additional partnerships such as United Methodist Church.

FY 1999 Paternity Numbers – not likely to be positive**EITC**

- Still exploring counting child support
- CBPP has proposed giving credit for non-custodial fathers who are paying child support

Explore Blair's initiatives:

Promoting two parent families, fatherhood and families coalition, marriage strengthening, TV shows.

Highlight new research findings

Several recent research reports confirm that child support can be an important tool in fighting poverty, but we need to do more to increase the potential of poor fathers to pay. For example:

- Child support reduces the number of poor children by a half million and reduces poverty among these children by about 5 percent (Sorensen)
- While too many children still do not receive support, it represents an important source of income for those who do – in 1996 (latest available data) children who had nonresident parents and whose families received child support received, on average, 16 percent of their family income from child support. And, the average amount of support received was \$3,795 (Sorensen).
- Child support is even more important for poor children. The average poor child with a nonresident parent and whose family received support received \$1,979 in 1996, which represents over one-quarter of their family income (26%). (Sorensen)

NICHD-funded Fragile Families Research

McLanahan/Garfinkel may soon be releasing release on 6 or 7 site data (while HHS funded, they don't control release). [AK to call].

Two Parents Fair Share Reports – [AK call Ginger Knox to get advance copy and dates]

HHS has two reports on male involvement in teen pregnancy prevention under review. Plan to release as part of 3rd report to Congress on National Strategy to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (need to get more information).

DRAFT

PROMOTING WORK AND PAYMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT THROUGH CHILD SUPPORT TRUST ACCOUNTS

Child Support Trust Accounts (CSTAs) would allow welfare recipients to accumulate child support payments in trust during the period of time that they on welfare. When the recipients left welfare for work the accumulated child support payments would be paid to them. Child Support Trust Accounts would create all the right incentives:

- CSTAs would encourage people to leave welfare for work and self-sufficiency.**
- CSTAs would help people stay off welfare once they have left.**
- CSTAs would create an incentive for noncustodial parents to pay child support.**
- CSTAs would create an incentive for custodial parents on welfare to cooperate with child support enforcement efforts.**

Background

Current welfare rules require that when someone goes on welfare (TANF), they must assign their right to child support payments to the State and cooperate with child support enforcement efforts. This is to help reimburse the State for the assistance provided to the family. Some States "pass-through" some part of the child support (usually \$50) to the welfare recipient and disregard it for purposes of determining the level of the benefit payment. Prior to the 1996 welfare reform law, a \$50 pass-through was required and the Federal government shared in the cost. However, the 1996 welfare reform law gave States much more flexibility and the \$50 pass-through requirement was eliminated. A minority of States have kept a pass-through but the States that choose to do so must now pay the entire cost of it.

There is some interest in Congress, especially on the Democratic side, in restoring the mandatory pass-through of child support. There are two major arguments for the pass-through of child support to welfare recipients:

- 1. Incentive for Fathers to Pay.** There has been an increasing chorus of voices calling for the pass-through of child support as an incentive for fathers, particularly low-income fathers, to pay child support. This has been a hot topic at recent forums and conferences dealing with fatherhood issues. Organizations that work with low-income fathers contend that fathers currently have no incentive to pay child support to a mother on welfare because the money goes to the State and does not benefit the child.
- 2. Incentive for Mothers to Cooperate in Child Support Collections Efforts.** Mothers often know crucial identifying information about a father's location or work. However, for a

mother on welfare who does not receive a pass-through of child support, there is little or no incentive to cooperate in child support enforcement efforts. Indeed, informal support, such as cash under the table, or in-kind support, like providing shoes or diapers, may be jeopardized by pursuing formal child support payments.

The argument against the mandatory pass-through and disregard of child support payments to welfare recipients is that it serves as a disincentive to leave welfare. Giving more money to recipients while they are on welfare simply gives them an incentive to stay on welfare since they can receive child support and still get welfare. And opponents of the pass-through argue that one of the purposes of welfare reform was to ensure that recipients are better off outside the welfare system than on welfare. Therefore, assistance dollars are better spent on those who have left welfare.

How the Child Support Trust Fund Would Work

When a custodial parent applied for welfare she would be required to assign her rights to welfare and cooperate with child support enforcement efforts (as under current law), except that any child support payments collected would be put in a trust fund. The condition of the trust fund would be that the money is payable to the family once the parent left welfare. The payment of the trust fund balance could be in a lump sum, or preferably, in a number of monthly payments. The following is a hypothetical example:

Jane Williams applies for welfare. She is told by her caseworker that welfare is time-limited; she needs to find work and secure child support so that she can become self-sufficient. She cooperates with child support enforcement efforts and the father is identified. She receives \$200 per month child support. The child support payments are placed in a trust fund. After two years, she has \$4,800 in the Child Support Trust Fund. She secures employment and leaves welfare. At that time she begins to receive the balance of the funds in the trust fund in monthly payments (for example, \$200 per month). This is in addition to her wages and any current child support collected. The payments continue until the trust fund is paid to her in full, provided that she continues to support herself off of welfare.

The Benefits of the Child Support Trust Fund

The Child Support Trust Fund has all the benefits of a pass-through without the disincentive effects against leaving welfare. In fact, it would actually encourage people to leave welfare and assist them in making the transition to work and self-sufficiency.

1. **CSTAs would encourage people to leave welfare for work and self-sufficiency.** The enticement of receiving the trust funds could serve as a powerful incentive to leave welfare.
2. **CSTAs would help people stay off welfare once they have left, thereby reducing welfare recidivism.** Research shows that people are the most vulnerable during the period of time immediately after transitioning off of welfare. The receipt of child support is an important factor in ensuring that they remain off of welfare. The Child Support Trust Fund would serve as an additional source of support to help them achieve long term self-sufficiency.

3. **CSTAs create an incentive for noncustodial parents (usually fathers) to pay child support.** The father would have an incentive to pay child support while the mother was on welfare since the money would be put in a trust that would ultimately benefit his child, rather than simply going to the State. CSTAs send the right message that child support is about supporting children, not government reimbursement. And, it may well encourage work on behalf of fathers who would see a more direct link between their work effort and the children's wellbeing. In fact, fathers may well take pride in the fact that they are contributing to a trust fund for the benefit of their child.
4. **CSTAs create an incentive for custodial parents on welfare to cooperate with child support agency efforts to collect child support.** The mother would have an incentive to cooperate with child support enforcement efforts since any child support received would ultimately be paid to her.

The Child Support Trust Fund proposal benefits from being simple to understand and simple to administer. There are a number of ways that it could be implemented:

- The President or HHS could promote the idea through announcements, guidance and technical assistance. States could fund the program through existing State or TANF dollars. (no cost)
- CSTAs could be implemented through a pilot or demonstration project with the Federal government picking up part or all of the cost. (Minimal cost depending upon the size of the pilot or demonstration)
- CSTAs could be proposed as a nationwide program with the funding coordinated with TANF reauthorization. (Cost would depend upon reauthorization level)



cc: Sarah Branch
Jim Miller
Eric Gould
Gene Chagn
Paul Weinstein

THE WHITE HOUSE

Domestic Policy Council

Pat Williams
Gerson

DATE:

4/5

FACSIMILE FOR:

Bruce Reed / Eric Liu / Nancy Hoit / Lauren Spina
6-2878 6-2878 781-749-5638 / 6-6218

FAX:

PHONE:

FACSIMILE FROM:

Andrea Kane

FAX:

202-456-7431

PHONE:

202-456-5573

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6

COMMENTS:

This is a good summary of
the current fatherhood field, w/ all its
complexities, debates, & players

FATHERHOOD MATTERS

BY ERIC BRYANT RHODES

On the campaign trail, Vice President Al Gore recently gave a speech with the following central claim: "Promoting responsible fatherhood is the critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do to reduce child poverty." Five years ago, the question of how important fathers are to the well-being of their children was scarcely on the public agenda. That's changed. The fact that a leading candidate for the presidency delivered a policy speech on the issue is one indication of how much momentum the fatherhood movement has gained.

Great numbers of American children are growing up apart from their fathers. There is a now a wider acknowledgment that fathers ought to play an important part in their children's lives beyond their role as breadwinners. After decades of debate about whether growing up with a single parent is harmful to a child, the key rallying point of the fatherhood movement is the belief that every child needs the love and support of a responsible father.

Interest in fatherhood issues has been bipartisan and wide-ranging. The emergence of the Promise Keepers, an evangelical Christian men's group that draws thousands of men to its rallies in stadiums and sports arenas, is one expression of the religious right's recent emphasis on encouraging men to be better husbands and fathers. Within the social policy research community, the publication in 1994 of Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur's book *Growing up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps* provoked scholars to re-examine the benefit a child receives from having a father present. McLanahan and Sandefur argued persuasively that "growing up with only one biological parent frequently deprives children of important economic, parental, and community resources, and that these deprivations ultimately undermine their chances of future success." Around the same time, David Blankenhorn published *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*. Blanken-

horn, president of the Institute for American Values, advanced a conservative critique that blasted American cultural and social institutions for undermining the father's role in the family and weakening the bond between men and their children.

The progressive Families and Work Institute supports the Fatherhood Project, an initiative designed to examine the future of fatherhood and promote greater involvement by fathers in child rearing. On Capitol Hill, Republican Representative Nancy Johnson reintroduced the Fathers Count bill to the House with the purpose of allowing states to use funds from their welfare block grants to support community-based "responsible fatherhood" initiatives. The bill passed in the House in November and was awaiting Senate consideration early this year.

Differing perspectives on the fatherhood issue have led to uneasy alliances as well as heated debate. The collected volumes *The Fatherhood Movement: A Call to Action* and *Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America* illustrate some points of agreement as well as tensions within the movement. Conservative writers—such as Blankenhorn, David Popenoe, Maggie Gallagher, and Barbara Dafoe

Whitehead—tend to criticize changes in mores and attitudes toward divorce, premarital sex, and out-of-wedlock childbearing as being responsible for family breakdown. They encourage marriage as the best way to promote responsible fatherhood. The notion that the cultural upheaval of the 1960s has enabled adults to indulge in a selfish pursuit of individual happiness that often comes at the expense of children is a familiar refrain of the conservative critique. According to Popenoe, "Large segments of the population have come to regard pure 'self-fulfillment' as their dominant life goal, pushing aside such traditional 'Victorian' values as self-sacrifice, commitment to others, and institutional obligation." The "family values" position is succinctly articulated by Senator Dan Coats, who states in an essay in *The Fatherhood Movement*, "Government policy should communicate a clear, public preference for marriage and family on matters such as public housing, the tax code, family planning, and divorce law. Rewarding intact families is not, as some argue, a form of discrimination. It is a form of self-preservation."

The strong opposition to the Fathers Count bill from the National Organization for Women (NOW) is evidence of how high suspicion of the fatherhood movement runs in some feminist quarters. NOW has labeled the bill "dangerous legislation" and has vowed to "do everything we can to stop it." According to NOW President Patricia Ireland, "At first glance, the Fathers Count Act of 1999 appears to have worthy goals, including helping poor men to be better fathers. Upon closer examination, however, it is clear that this

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WORKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY

Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America, by Cynthia R. Daniels, ed. St. Martins Press, 224 pages, \$24.95.

The Fatherhood Movement: A Call to Action, by Wade E. Horn, David Blankenhorn, Mitchell B. Perlstein, eds. Lexington Books, 352 pages, \$14.95.

Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America. A Statement from the Morehouse Conference on African-American Fathers. Morehouse Research Institute and the Institute for American Values, report, 31 pages.

Fathers' Pair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood, by Earl S. Johnson, Ann Levine, and Fred C. Doolittle. Russell Sage Foundation, 320 pages, \$45.00.

bill would undermine support for "custodial parents, the majority of whom are women." NOW raises the valid concern that, in adverse circumstances, policies that promote marriage may inadvertently increase the incidence of domestic violence. Although the bill's supporters see it as promising legislation that will encourage responsible fatherhood by teaching parenting and employment skills to disadvantaged men, NOW activists fear that the bill could be exploited by men's custody groups to advance their own agenda.

Another point of contention is what the fatherhood movement should offer to fathers who are single, divorced, or separated from their children. While supporters of "family values" are almost exclusively preoccupied with promoting and strengthening marriage, fathers' rights advocates are primarily concerned with reforming divorce and child custody laws, and maintaining fathers' access to their children. They usually work on behalf of men who are divorced but who wish to be supportive fathers. In a chapter in *The Fatherhood Movement*, Ken R. Canfield writes, "Many social commentators have concluded that the most prudent way to promote responsible fatherhood is to promote and restore marriage. This is wise, and it would be naive to fail to consider new strategies which seek to reverse the tide of divorce and strengthen the marriage bond. But a fathering movement must also offer a broad and redemptive view of father-

hood which can help all men, married, divorced, and single to make the best out of their individual situations." For conservative authors, that's secondary at best. On occasion, they betray a mocking attitude toward attempts to support fatherhood outside of marriage. Perhaps they fear that legitimizing greater involvement by divorced and unmarried fathers may divert attention from strengthening intact two-parent families or unintentionally encourage divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing.

Many of the tensions created by competing agendas within the fatherhood movement were evident at the Morehouse Conference on African-American Fathers, held at Morehouse College in November of 1998. Although father absence is a cause for concern for society as a whole, the fact that approximately 70 percent of black children are born to unmarried mothers makes it particularly urgent in the African-American community. The statement released by the conference—whose signatories include David Blankenhorn, Glenn C. Loury, Sara McLanahan, Lawrence Mead, and William Julius Wilson—indicates that participants were divided on whether the principal cause of father absence among African Americans was lack of economic opportunities for black men or changing patterns in cultural norms that

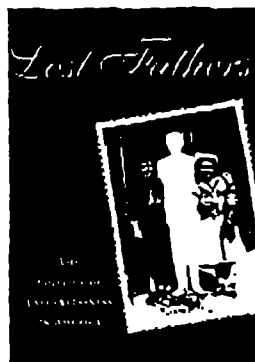
have reduced the social sanctions against out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce. Despite their differences on whether the emphasis should be placed on poor economic prospects or cultural values, the signatories agreed that the two are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

Liberals in this discussion advocate programs and policy changes designed to enhance the employment prospects of fathers at the lower end of the income scale. A key element in the intellectual foundation of the liberal perspective is the "marriageable male pool" hypothesis advanced in William Julius Wilson's 1987 book *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Wilson articulates a theory of family formation that assumes that women in low-income communities will be less likely to marry as the number of

available men in the area with stable employment and earnings declines. Wilson examines long-term trends in the economy that have reduced the demand for unskilled labor and weakened the employment prospects of men without the training and educational credentials that are valued in the new economy. According to his

theory, women consider a man less "marriageable" if he does not hold a stable job. Wilson suggests that low marriage rates and father absence in low-income communities are primarily the consequence of limited economic opportunities. Hence, many of the progressive initiatives that address the problems of fatherless families emphasize job training and placement programs designed to improve the economic prospects of poor fathers and enable them to provide support for their children.

Until recently, fathers were virtually ignored in research on children and families, and government statistics reflected this bias. To overcome the scarcity of reliable data, President Clinton issued a 1995 memorandum to all federal agencies, directing them to



STATE OF THE DEBATE

make a concerted effort to include information on fathers in their research programs where appropriate. Several grant-making foundations are contributing to the development of a database that tracks fathers and families by supporting the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Project. Co-directed by Irwin Garfinkel and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn of Columbia University and Sara McLanahan of Princeton University, the \$12-million study's sponsors include the Ford, Robert Wood Johnson, David and Lucille Packard, and William T. Grant foundations.

In the past few years, foundations have granted considerable resources to community-based "responsible fatherhood" programs. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which operates primarily in the San Francisco Bay area, has created an entire subcategory for "Responsible Fatherhood and Male Involvement" within its family and community development grants. The Annie E. Casey and Charles Stewart Mott foundations have also been supporting a number of fatherhood projects.

The Ford Foundation's Strengthening Fragile Families initiative has been an exemplary strategy for assisting disadvantaged fathers and their children. Ford's initiative, a set of coordinated grants, has been led by Senior Program Officer Ronald Mincy. The term "fragile families" was coined by Mincy to designate a family formed when a child is born out of wedlock to young disadvantaged parents. Within the fragile-families framework, the child, resident parent, and nonresident parent are viewed as a single unit—a family. Since 1994, the Strengthening Fragile Families initiative has supported a set of community-based responsible fatherhood programs across the nation that aim to help low-income fathers build relationships with their children and become more able to provide support. It seeks to rebuild low-income families by bringing fathers back into the equation.

The starting point of this perspective is the recognition that traditional welfare policy, child support enforcement laws, and public housing policies conspire to push young unwed parents



apart. Policies that affect families often contain the built-in assumption that a two-parent family has ended in divorce or separation, and that the father is able—but perhaps not willing—to provide child support. These policies are ill-equipped to provide the support necessary to help unwed and disadvantaged fathers and mothers become more functional parents. In many cases, present policies, which are designed to provide support when a middle- or high-income family ends in divorce, only contribute to hardships faced by poor men and their families. An essay by Ronald Mincy and Hillard Pouncy in *The Fatherhood Movement* summarizes the situation as follows:

Since policymakers continue to develop these systems with traditional family formation in mind, they do not perceive the father as partner in the case of an unwed conception. Income security and family support systems bring resources, however meager, to the mother and child, leaving the father as destitute as he was before conception. He brings nothing to his fragile family and may even

threaten its eligibility for needed public benefits. Because of the focus on the traditional family, policymakers focus on even following marital dissolution such as child support access, and visitation. The policies that emerge create additional hurdles for the fragile family. As result, fatherlessness among groups that conceive in poverty dwarfs fatherlessness among other groups

In addition to viewing father as a possible resource for rebuilding the family, fragile-families framework recognizes the potential relationship between the unwed parents. Preliminary findings from the Fragile Families

Child Wellbeing Project reveal many unwed parents are still romantically linked or cohabiting around time of their child's birth. Although some unwed mothers want nothing to do with the father, most report wanting the father to be involved in their children's lives. When the unwed parents remain involved during the period between pregnancy and early childhood, the relationship can either wither or become more stable and committed. In other words, they are in the midst of a family formation process that is not complete. Under present policies, opportunity to develop the relationship between the young parents is squandered. One aim of the fragile-families initiative is to support the relationship between the parents and enable them to work as a team on behalf of the child

As Mincy and Pouncy write,



to receive cash assistance, an unwed mother must show that her income is below the eligibility standard for cash assistance in her state. Unless the combined incomes of the mother and the father of her child outweigh the sum of Medicaid benefits, child care, food stamps, and cash assistance

tance she and the child would receive, she loses money if the father remains involved in the family. When the father's income is low and unstable, this provides a strong incentive to push him away, which places many fragile families in an income/benefits trap.

They recommend reforming assistance programs so that low-income families in which the father is seeking to be responsible and involved will not be penalized.

One of the biggest obstacles that prevents poor fathers from being more involved in their children's lives is the inflexibility of the child support enforcement system. The system is designed to collect support payments from "deadbeat dads" who are able, but unwilling, to pay. During the late 1970s and 1980s, the child support enforcement system became more punitive and stressed strict compliance. The shift in policy was designed to prevent noncustodial parents who were capable of paying from evading child support orders. These tough new measures, which may be appropriate for middle- and upper-income fathers, often result in child support orders for low-income men that far exceed their ability to pay. The system fails to distinguish low-income fathers as a separate group from more affluent fathers. In some states, low-income men are ordered to pay arrears on pain of imprisonment. Enforcement measures against destitute fathers do little to improve the well-being of mothers and children, but do manage to drive these men deeper into poverty. Ultimately, inflexible child support enforcement policies lead many poor fathers to avoid establishing paternity and further discourage family formation.

Responsible fatherhood programs employ an array of strategies to transform absent fathers into men who are able to take care of their children. Peer group sessions that force absent fathers to confront how their lack of support hurts their children have proven effective at motivating these fathers to change their behavior.

Since joblessness and poor economic prospects are factors that handicap low-income fathers' ability to provide sup-

port for their children, community-based programs attempt to address these problems by providing basic classes and job placement services. Securing jobs for low-income fathers is absolutely critical for enabling them to become responsible parents.

Mediation and conflict-resolution services are also an important component of community-based programs. Although relations between unwed parents are often strained, these programs encourage participants to work constructively with the mothers on behalf of their children. Mincy and Pouncy point out, "This does not require the mother and father to remain romantically involved, but it does require that they get the skills and support they need to work as a team to provide for their child's financial, emotional, and developmental needs." Program practitioners help to manage tensions in order to generate more collaborative behavior between the parents. They recognize that efforts to encourage absent fathers to play a more active role will be successful only if women can be persuaded to allow them to do so.

Mincy and Pouncy also envision community-based responsible fatherhood programs as playing an important role in helping child support enforcement agencies meet the goals of the 1996 welfare reform law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. The act puts greater pressure on states to establish paternity in order to increase the collection of child support. Mincy and Pouncy believe that the reform represents an extraordinary opportunity to rethink welfare and child support policies in ways that help fragile families. They suggest, "Program workers could help fathers document their earnings before child support hearings occur, for example, so courts could set child support orders that are within the father's means. In lieu of cash support pay-

ments, community-based responsible fatherhood programs might monitor in-kind services rendered by fathers who lack stable sources of income." They advocate making child support policies that affect low-income fathers more flexible. Greater flexibility would enable enforcement agencies to take into account the father's circumstances and prevent delinquent payments from piling up.

One of the goals of the welfare reform law of 1996 was to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. The fragile-families framework suggests that community-based responsible fatherhood programs can help achieve this goal in disadvantaged communities. The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families is currently working to build on the experiences of individual programs and disseminate the best practices.

One might fairly ask how effective these programs are at securing employment for program participants and getting absent fathers involved in the lives of their children. These are two of the questions addressed in Earl S. Johnson, Ann Levine, and Fred C. Doolittle's book *Fathers' Fair Share*. Published by the Russell Sage Foundation, the study is an evaluation of a multistate employment and parental responsibility program run

by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

The pilot program examined by the book, called Parents' Fair Share, was authorized by the Family Support Act of 1988 to provide job training services for unemployed fathers whose children were on welfare. The objective of the program was to increase the participants' employment prospects, earnings, and ability to pay child support. In addition to employment services, the program offered partici-

Because 70 percent of black children are born to unmarried mothers, father absence is especially urgent in the African-American community.

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STATE OF THE DEBATE

pants peer support groups, mediation services, and a temporary reduction of their child support orders. Low-income fathers were referred to the program by the courts, and participation was compulsory.

More than anything else, the book impresses upon the reader the enormous obstacles faced by poor men struggling to get a foothold in the mainstream economy. The men in Parents' Fair Share were drawn from the most marginalized of outsiders, whose focus on mere survival did not permit them to look beyond the present moment. Some men in the study sample were so destitute that getting bus fare to commute to the program site posed a significant problem. The authors report, "At one point or another, almost all the men in the sample faced situations where their jobs (potential or actual) and personal well-being hinged on a few quarters or a couple of dollars." For the most part, the men were poorly educated and possessed few marketable skills. The personal histories described in this book are records of constant stress and desperation. Among the multitude of obstacles that prevented participants from finding stable employment were erratic work histories, criminal records, and drug abuse. To make ends meet, many of them had resorted to work in the underground economy.

A segment of the men in Parents' Fair Share were able to establish or renew ties to their children and families. Younger fathers, who managed to forge some semblance of economic independence, were able to reconnect more easily than older fathers who had been separated from their children for a longer period of time. In some cases, participants who were unable to improve their economic situation did manage to learn the skills necessary to rebuild relationships with their children.

Considering the liabilities absent fathers brought to the program, it is not surprising that finding jobs for them that would improve their circumstances proved to be difficult. For some participants, attendance was spo-

radic, and many dropped out. The prospect of finding a stable job lured many participants to the program, and they were extremely disappointed when the program was unable to find them employment. There were success stories, but long-term job placement was rare.

Although the results of the pilot program are somewhat disappointing, the experience of Parents' Fair Share is something community-based responsible fatherhood programs can build on. The biggest lesson learned is that programs designed to assist absent fathers must find creative ways to place participants in jobs that will improve their economic circumstances and enable them to achieve stability in their lives.

Community-based efforts to promote responsible fatherhood in low-income families are just one part of a movement to encourage greater involvement by fathers in the lives of their children. The diversity of perspectives of the many groups addressing fatherhood issues makes it unlikely that a consensus will emerge anytime soon on what policy options will best serve American families. In the 1980s, a consensus among policy makers was reached that punitive measures were necessary to extract child support from fathers who were delinquent in their payments. Today, some foundations and political leaders suggest that helping fathers to become more responsible parents is paramount. When Vice President Gore gave his address on fatherhood issues, he combined the punitive and compassionate approaches by stressing the importance of cracking down on deadbeat dads and promoting promising responsible fatherhood model programs. For too long, conservatives have dominated discussion of family values. Progressive programs, such as the fragile-families initiative, offer the hope of ameliorating the problems of America's most disadvantaged families. If they are to be successful at building a broader coalition, progressive advocates of responsible fatherhood must make sure that the policies and programs they propose also promote equal partnership between the parents. ♦

Writing Fellowships

The American Prospect Writing Fellowship will begin its fourth year in September 2000.

During this one-year program, fellows write short pieces and feature articles for the magazine as well as participate in editorial and reporting seminars with Prospect editors. The fellowship carries a \$20,000 stipend and is intended for recent graduates interested in progressive journalism.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis but must be received no later than March 10, 2000. They should include a 10- to 15-page critique of a recent issue of *The American Prospect*, three to four story ideas, two written recommendations, up to five writing samples, and your resume.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 1999

CONTACT: Kiki Moore
202-263-6141

To Strengthen Families, Reduce Child Poverty, Promote Responsible Fatherhood

AL GORE PROPOSES NEXT STEP IN WELFARE REFORM: HELP FOR RESPONSIBLE PARENTS, CRACKDOWN ON DEADBEATS

Washington, D.C. -- Today, during a discussion at Congress Heights United Methodist Church, Al Gore announced the next step in welfare reform that will strengthen families, reduce child poverty, and promote responsible fatherhood.

"Strengthening America's families means helping parents make time for their children and cracking down on deadbeats who abandon their children. There are simple yet essential things every responsible father should do, providing financial support, spending time with his children, and treating the mother of his children with respect," said Al Gore. "Promoting responsible fatherhood is the critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do to reduce child poverty."

Gore outlined a series of steps to strengthen families and promote responsible fatherhood, including: requiring all fathers who owe child support to pay or go to work; strengthening child support enforcement, including increasing the amount of child support that gets paid directly to poor families; making it harder for parents who owe child support to get new credit cards; fixing the 'marriage penalty'; and increasing the amount of income a married couple can earn and still receive the full Earned Income Tax Credit. Al Gore challenged all Americans to promote responsible and involved fathers including urging employers to make workplaces more 'parent-friendly,' and calling on fathers to be more involved in their children's learning.

"Millions of fathers are supporting their children both financially and emotionally, and millions of single mothers are working hard to raise their children. But our nation will continue to suffer social and economic consequences unless all fathers do more to help share the responsibilities of parenthood, and America does more to support them in this role," Al Gore said. "As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to the dignity of work. This is the next step. We must again call on states, communities, and employers to help move unemployed fathers who owe child support into the workforce."

Washington, D.C. Headquarters:
Gore 2000
P.O. Box 18237
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-263-6000

-more-

Tennessee Headquarters:
Gore 2000
P.O. Box 24387
Nashville, TN 37202
615-341-0230

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(Page 2)

Gore's proposals find their roots in his third Family Reunion Conference in 1994, when he challenged men to become actively involved in their children's lives and to provide emotional as well as financial support. Al Gore is leading the fight for responsible fatherhood.

President Al Gore's plan to encourage and support responsible fatherhood would include:

The Next Generation of Welfare Reform: Responsible Fathers

Promoting responsible fatherhood is the critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do to address child poverty, since children living without their fathers are five times more likely to be poor than children living with both parents. As we have asked mothers to move from welfare to work, all sectors of society have risen to the challenge. Now, we must ensure fathers share responsibility for supporting their families and again call on states, communities, and employers to help move unemployed fathers who owe child support into the workforce.

- Require All Fathers Who Owe Child Support to Pay or Go to Work. As a condition of receiving federal child support funds every state should have a law requiring all non-custodial parents -- mainly fathers -- to pay child support or go to work. The Vice President believes we should require work from fathers who owe child support and help unemployed fathers get and keep jobs. Fathers who need a job in order to pay child support -- so called "deadbroke dads" -- will get help in finding one, help which could be funded through a state's welfare block grant or Welfare-to-Work funds. This proposal would significantly expand upon successful initiatives in some communities, such as Tampa Bay, Florida, which require non-custodial parents of children on welfare who owe child support to work or go to jail.
- Personal Responsibility Contracts. Most states require mothers to sign individual responsibility plans outlining what assistance they will receive and what will be expected of them in return. Al Gore believes fathers should do the same, by pledging to acknowledge paternity, work, pay child support, and be involved parents in order to receive help from the TANF or Welfare-to Work program.

Strengthening Child Support Enforcement

Tougher child support measures enacted by the Clinton-Gore Administration have resulted in a record \$14.3 billion in child support collections in 1998, an increase of \$6.4 billion or 80 percent since 1992. As a result of these reforms, we can make deadbeat parents pay by garnishing their wages, seizing their bank accounts, threatening to take away their drivers licenses, and denying them passports. But still, only in one in four parents who owe child support actually pay it, and millions of deadbeat parents owe substantial amounts of child support. As President, Al Gore will continue this crackdown on deadbeat parents, and he will start by saying:

-more-

- "Don't leave home without it" - No New Credit Cards For Parents Who Owe Child Support. Parents who have a history of not paying child support should not be rewarded with new financial benefits until they meet their responsibilities towards their kids. Al Gore will challenge credit card companies to deny new credit cards or additional lines of credit to parents who owe a substantial amount of child support. To help credit card companies meet this challenge, the Federal government will directly provide timely data on parents owing child support to the credit bureaus instead of relying on state reporting.
- Ensure More Child Support Goes To Children. Fathers of children on welfare have little incentive to provide child support because what they pay goes to the Federal and State governments and not their kids. The Vice President supports increasing the amount of child support that is "passed through" to directly support their kids.
- Encourage More Fathers to Acknowledge Paternity. Last year three times the number of men acknowledged paternity than did so in 1992. But we need to do more. Al Gore will challenge more fathers to establish paternity and propose that programs receiving federal funds such as day care providers, Head Start centers, schools, health clinics, and food stamp offices, offer voluntary paternity establishment services to families.
- Streamline Process for Establishing Child Support Orders. To help children get the child support they need and deserve more quickly, Al Gore would streamline the process for establishing child support orders, proposing states have simple, administrative processes, with strong due process protections, for establishing child support orders. Courts would then handle only the more complicated cases.

Promoting Marriage and Strong Families

Strong marriages build strong families and communities and aid in lifting children out of poverty. Promoting responsible fatherhood is a key part of Al Gore's comprehensive strategy to further reduce child poverty. This initiative – combined with Al Gore's proposals for the largest investment in child care in the nation's history, an increase in the minimum wage, and helping parents feed their children —can help the nation continue its strong success in bringing down child poverty rates.

- Marriage Penalty Relief. Al Gore supports fixing the "marriage penalty" by raising the standard deduction for married couples by \$1,400 and increasing the amount of income a married couple can earn – up to \$29,000 -- and still receive the full Earned Income Tax Credit.

-more-

- Grants For Marriage Preparation, Mentoring, and Counseling. Provide grants to community and faith-based organizations to help couples prepare for and strengthen their marriage, become better parents, and reduce domestic violence. Al Gore is challenging states to use the flexibility and resources in the welfare reform law to support these critical efforts.
- Funds To Increase Access And Visitation. Double the amount of federal funds to facilitate non-custodial parents' access and visitation with their children through strategies such as mediation, supervised visitation, and development of parenting plans as appropriate.

Challenge America to Promote Responsible Fatherhood

To help fathers be more involved with their children, Al Gore will challenge all Americans -- our churches, civic associations, employers, schools, sports teams, the media and entertainment industry -- to play a role in promoting and supporting responsible fathers. Many fathers and mothers are struggling to balance the competing demands of work and families. Al Gore believes that employers and the government need to make it easier for parents to balance both rather than having to choose. But in the end, it is up to fathers to choose to make time for their children. The most important job anyone will ever have is the job of a parent.

- Urge Employers across America to make Workplaces Parent Friendly. Al Gore believes that private employers should enact workplace policies that will enable fathers and mothers to be more involved with their children and supports expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to all firms with more than 25 employees, expanding the law to ten million more American workers. He also proposes allowing workers to take up to 24 more hours of additional leave each year to meet family obligations such as parent-teacher visits and children's medical appointments.
- Fund a National Clearinghouse and Public Service Campaign. Al Gore would launch a national public service campaign to encourage fathers to embrace their responsibilities and establish a nationwide clearinghouse where states and local communities can share information and resources on promising models -- such as the program in Delaware that provides parenting classes to help fathers leave prison as better parents instead of better criminals. This campaign would include a call for expanded father-to-father mentoring and encourage more father involvement in their children's learning.

###

FATHERHOOD PARTICIPANTS

REVEREND SANDRA GREENE, Rector of the Congress Heights Methodist Church. The church prides itself on its active community outreach to single parents, both mothers and fathers, struggling to support their children.

With Reverend Greene:

VERONICA MEEKS, (and her two young children), who has a child in the church Child Development Center. She is a single mother without child support, struggling to make ends meet. The free child care provided by the church has enabled her to work while continuing law school. Abandoned as a child, she is determined to provide a stable home for her children, although it is hard for her to understand why her former husband is unwilling to have any contact with his children.

MICHAEL BERNSTEIN, President and CEO of the Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Mental Health Services, Inc., Clearwater, FL. The agency serves more than 10,000 clients a year in the Tampa Bay area, and is known for its Noncustodial Parent Employment Program serving 2000 parents and 4000 children. This initiative that works to increase child support payments for families whose children are on welfare, and helps to improve the relationship between non-custodial parents and their children.

With Michael Bernstein...

DOUGLAS TOLBERT, Jr. and his son JOHN GOSS, 5 years old.

Douglas was referred to the Non-Custodial Employment Program in August of this year by the Hillsborough County Court because of unpaid child support and unemployment. He is now working and paying child support for his three children and is becoming involved in their lives.

JOE JONES, President of Fathers, Families and Workforce Development in Baltimore MD which includes the "STRIVE" job readiness program. Having personally experienced many of the barriers facing young fathers in urban settings, Joe's determination to reach out to other young African American fathers led him to develop the Baltimore Healthy Start Initiative as Director of Employment and Men's Services. He serves on the Mayor's Commission on African-American Males and several boards including; the Police Athletic League, Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, and the National Practitioners Network for fathers and Families. Joe is married and is the father of three children.

With Joe Jones... the Thomas family.

MALIK THOMAS

Malik and his pregnant wife, Kenya, were working their way through college when they both lost their jobs. They learned about the Men's Services program when they began attending Healthy start prenatal visits, and Malik received support in his job search from other young fathers. With skills gained from a HUD lead abatement program, Malik worked for a contractor, and is now a security guard

with a company whose benefits may allow him to return to college. He still values the experience of being able to share child-rearing experiences with other fathers.

KENYA THOMAS is now a sales manager for a Baltimore hotel, and she and Malik are re-habbing a house in Baltimore. (and 2 year old **MEIKA THOMAS**)

PATRICIA WOOD

To Strengthen Families, Reduce Child Poverty, Promote Responsible Fatherhood
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HELP FOR RESPONSIBLE PARENTS, CRACKDOWN ON DEADBEATS

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"Millions of fathers are supporting their children both financially and emotionally, and millions of single mothers are working hard to raise their children. But our nation will continue to suffer social and economic consequences unless all fathers do more to help share the responsibilities of parenthood, and America does more to support them in this role," Al Gore said. "As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to the dignity of work. This is the next step. We must again call on states, communities, and employers to help move unemployed fathers who owe child support into the workforce."

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Enc. —
latest version of
release, which
campaign co. finalizing
this a.m. (Tues).

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Q & As on Responsible Fatherhood Proposals

Draft as of 10/13 4:30 pm

Work Program for Non-Custodial Parents Who Owe Child Support

Q: How would the employment program for non-custodial parents work?

A: As a condition of getting federal child support funds, Al Gore would require every state to establish an individual work requirement on all non-custodial parents (85% of whom are fathers) who don't pay child support. These parents would need to work or pay – and given the choice, we think most will get jobs and pay. For those who need help getting and keeping a job, states will provide them with employment services, which could be paid for through the states' TANF welfare block grant funds or Welfare-to-Work funds from the Department of Labor. If a state failed to implement this program, it would lose a percentage of its child support funding. The requirement would apply to non-custodial parents who are able to work (e.g. it would not apply to those in jail or who are too disabled to work).

Q: To how many people would this work rate apply?

A: We think about one million would face the requirement. Currently, there are approximately three million low-income non-custodial fathers. Adjusting for those who are already paying child support, those who are already working, those who are in prison, and those who may not be able to work, we estimate that between 1 million and 1.5 million would face this work requirement, and only a subset of those would actually seek employment services.

Q: What results do you expect?

A: By giving non-custodial parents who owe child support a choice of going to jail or going to work, we think most will choose to do the right thing and go to work. Most low-income fathers want to work, and often work intermittently, but often have not accessed traditional employment programs. There is encouraging evidence from places such as Tampa Bay, Florida that court-ordered employment, with resources to help fathers go to work, pays off. This program generates \$4 in child support collections for every \$1 invested in the program. Fathers in the Florida program are going to work at wages above the minimum wage, paying more child support, and being more involved with their children. Employers who have hired fathers through the program have been pleased with the participants and found they were highly motivated to work.

Q: How is this different than current law?

A: Our proposal requires all parents who owe child support to work or pay the support they are owed. This is different from current law in three ways. First, we would create a specific penalty for states – loss of a percentage of federal child support funds – for states that do not comply, making it an enforceable requirement. Second, states would have to impose a specific “work or pay” requirement on noncustodial parents. Third, our proposal would apply to all parents who

owe child support, not just the parents of children on welfare. Under current law states simply have to have a procedure in place giving the state the authority to require parents to owe support to work – states do not actually have to require work from parents who owe support; the procedures don't apply to parents of children not on welfare; and there is no specific financial penalty for states not in compliance. As a result, currently while most states have a procedure on the books, most have not fully implemented them nor do they fully developed employment programs for non-custodial parents in most places. Most programs operate on a small scale in a few pilot sites within a state.

Q: Who is doing this now?

A: About half of the states have some type of employment program for low-income unemployed fathers, but most are on a small scale and limited to a few counties. Among the most developed programs are those in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Florida. There is encouraging evidence from an evaluation of the Florida program (see attached) that court-ordered employment, with resources to help fathers go to work, pays off. This program generates \$4 in child support collections for every \$1 invested in the program. Fathers in the Florida program are going to work at wages above the minimum wage, paying more child support, and being more involved with their children. Employers who have hired fathers through the program have been pleased with the participants and found they were highly motivated to work.

Most states focus on non-custodial parents of children on welfare. In addition, through the Welfare-to-Work grant program that this Administration fought for, the Department of Labor is currently investing about \$350 million in state, community and faith-based programs to help non-custodial parents of children on welfare go to work and support their families. The Administration has proposed investing an additional \$1 billion in this program, with an expanded focus on a broader group of low-income fathers.

Q: How much would it cost and are new funds required?

A: Existing programs typically cost \$500,000 to \$1 million, with average costs of about \$700-\$1,000 for those who participate in the program. A preliminary estimate, assuming that 1 million to 1.5 million fathers are served – and not all those may seek employment services -- is \$1 B - \$1.5 B. We believe existing resources are sufficient in most places: states can use existing welfare reform (TANF) block grant funds, Welfare-to-Work funds (which the Vice President supports extending with an additional \$1 billion investment), workforce development funds, and other funding streams if necessary.

Q: Would it displace existing workers?

A: No. With the over 19 million jobs created in this Administration, employers in most areas are desperate for new workers and we expect most fathers would likely go into newly created private sector jobs. To ensure that there were no displacement, this proposal would include the strong worker protections to those that currently exist for the Welfare-to-Work program administered by the Department of Labor.

Q: What about mothers – why don't they get the same employment services?

A: They can. Mothers on welfare are already required to work. Welfare block grant funds can also be used to help low income working mothers who have left welfare or to prevent them from coming on to welfare in the first place. In addition, the Administration's Welfare-to-Work program helps long-term welfare recipients (mostly mothers) to get and keep a job, as well as helping low-income fathers.

Credit Card Proposal

Q: Doesn't your proposal impose an unfunded mandate on credit card companies?

A: No. This proposal is designed to work within the credit application process that most credit card companies now follow. HHS will provide directly to the three major credit bureaus on a regular basis the names of those parents who owe \$5,000 or more in child support. This information will be providing to credit card companies when they ask for a credit check on these parents, and the credit card companies will be required to deny new credit to those deadbeat parents. This should not place any new financial burden on credit bureaus or credit card companies.

Q: Doesn't this proposal raise serious privacy concerns?

A: No. This information is already collected by the Federal government and is protected with the strictest of safeguards. Already, states are supposed to provide information on deadbeat parents to credit bureaus; under this proposal, we will simply ensure the credit bureaus get more frequent reports, and that credit card companies take that information into account in deciding whether to extend new credit.

Q: Won't this proposal punish fathers who use credit cards to free up funds to pay their child support?

A: We aren't proposing to take away anyone's credit card. But if you owe more than \$5,000 you shouldn't be rewarded with new financial benefits. And you shouldn't be racking up more credit card debt until you make good on your child support. Most parents are meeting their financial responsibilities to their kids, this proposal only targets those parents who are most egregious deadbeats, who are seeking new lines of credit while failing to pay their child support.

Marriage

Q: Is it government's role to promote marriage?

A: We know that strong marriages lead to strong families and communities, and reduce poverty. We should certainly remove disincentives, and promote and support strong marriages wherever possible. We also think it is critical that parents who are not married, or whose marriage ends, continue to work together in the best interest of their children. This is not the place for a big

government program designed in Washington; the Al Gore is calling on states to use the flexibility they have under the welfare reform law to support community and faith-based programs that support marriage and families in ways that make sense in each local community.

Pending Legislation Related to Fathers

Q: What do you think of Senator Bayh's fatherhood bill?

A: We commend Senator Bayh for his leadership and dedication to this issue, beginning when he was Governor of Indiana, and we applaud his efforts to raise the visibility of fatherhood in the Senate in a bipartisan manner. We share many of the same principles and ideas in terms of promoting responsible fatherhood. Given limited resources, the President and Vice President remain committed to helping more low-income fathers work and support their families by reauthorizing and investing additional resources in the Welfare-to-Work program. This program also helps the hardest to serve welfare recipients (mainly mothers) and the communities facing the greatest challenges in moving families from welfare to work. Already, the Department of Labor is investing about \$350 million in innovative fatherhood programs around the nation through the Welfare-to-Work program.

Q: What is the Administration's view of Representative Johnson and Cardin's fatherhood proposal marked up in Ways & Means subcommittee today (October 13th)?

A: The Administration has proposed to promote responsible fatherhood through reauthorization of the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) program, contained in H.R. 1482 and S. 1317, introduced by Representative Cardin and Senator Akaka, respectively. The Administration's proposal would ensure that every state helps non-custodial parents (mostly fathers) meet their responsibilities by using at least \$150 million of their formula funds (20 percent) for job placement and job retention services for fathers who sign personal responsibility contracts committing them to work, establish paternity, and pay child support. Already, the WtW program has invested more than \$350 million in fatherhood employment projects, and investing another \$1 billion will enable at least \$200 million more to be funded.

We commend Representative Johnson for her leadership in focusing attention on non-custodial fathers and welcome her proposal as a complement to the Administration's WtW reauthorization legislation. We also commend both Representatives Johnson and Cardin for recognizing the need to simplify the current eligibility for the WtW program so that the existing funds can more effectively serve both long-term welfare recipients and low-income fathers. However, we continue to believe it is critical to invest additional resources through the WtW program to help individuals and communities who face the greatest challenges in making the transition from welfare to work. We believe it is critically important that both parents contribute to the support of their children, and we look forward to working with Representatives Johnson, Cardin and others to help fathers of low income children find employment and honor their commitments.

GULF COAST JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

14041 Icot Boulevard ■ Clearwater, Florida 33760 ■ (727) 538-7460

Offices in Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough and Polk Counties

Noncustodial Parent Employment Project

The Noncustodial Parent Employment Project (NCEP) was established as a pilot project by the 1995 Florida Legislature in the 6th and 13th Judicial Circuits (Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough Counties). Unemployed and underemployed noncustodial parents who are not making their child support payments, and have children who receive public assistance, are court ordered into the program. Participants are assisted in establishing a pattern of regular child support payments by obtaining and maintaining unsubsidized employment. Major program services include court liaison, job development, supervised job search, job placement, case monitoring, educational and vocational assessment, and support services.

In June 1999 an independent evaluation of the program was issued by Dr. William Blount, Chairman of the Department of Criminology at the University of South Florida. Program outcomes are noted below.

Outcomes

- The Program is strongly endorsed by local judges, the Department of Revenue, and the Clerk of the Courts.
- The Program continued to cost less than the revenues collected by the Department of Revenue (DOR), following a trend noted last year. In the 16 months covered by this report, total dollars collected by DOR from NCEP clients exceeded the costs necessary to serve those clients by \$1.2 million.
- In the first four months of 1999, the program generated \$1.00 of revenue to the State, as recorded by the Department of Revenue, for every \$0.25 spent for the program.
- In mid-November 1998, total child support dollars collected by the State exceeded all total cumulative costs associated with the program. This milestone was reached 31 months after NCEP began. Since then, child support dollars collected have consistently outstripped program costs by an ever increasing margin.
- Long-term work habits are being generated, as 55% of all program-generated child support collections posted by the Department of Revenue are now coming from clients who are no longer in the program, but continue to pay their child support. This total currently exceeds \$1.1 million.
- Noncustodial parents in NCEP are more involved with their children, and report seeing their children about twice as often as before entering the program.
- NCEP's impact on other public assistance programs was positive, as demonstrated by a sample of 140 clients who reported a 73% decline in receiving food stamps, a 24% reduction in custodial parents receiving public assistance, and the removal of 75 children from Medicaid by being added to the noncustodial parent's medical insurance.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. briefing paper	Talking Points by Al Gore to DLC Conference (5 pages)	10/14/1999	Personal Misfile

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Eric Liu
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FOLDER TITLE:

Fatherhood - General

2013-0717-S

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RESTRICTION CODES

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

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

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

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

For Immediate Release
Thursday, October 14, 1999

Contact:
(202) 232-6141

To Strengthen Families, Reduce Child Poverty, Promote Responsible Fatherhood
AL GORE PROPOSES NEXT STEP IN WELFARE REFORM
HELP FOR PARENTS, CRACKDOWN ON DEADBEATS

Washington, D.C.— Today, in remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council conference, Al Gore announced the next step in welfare reform that will strengthen families, reduce child poverty, and promote responsible fatherhood.

“Strengthening America’s families means helping parents make time for their children and cracking down on deadbeats who abandon their children,” Al Gore said today in remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council conference. “Promoting responsible fatherhood is the critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do to reduce child poverty.”

Gore outlined a series of steps to strengthen families and promote responsible fatherhood, including requiring all fathers who owe child support to pay or go to work, denying credit cards to parents who owe child support, fixing the ‘marriage penalty’ and increasing the amount of income a married couple can earn and still receive the full Earned Income Tax Credit, and urging employers to make workplaces more ‘parent-friendly.’ Gore also is calling for a national campaign to challenge fathers and reshape American culture to support responsible fatherhood.

“Millions of fathers are supporting their children both financially and emotionally, and millions of single mothers are working hard to raise their children. But our nation will continue to suffer social and economic consequences unless all fathers do more to help share the responsibilities of parenthood, and America does more to support them in this role,” Al Gore said. “We must again call on states, communities, and employers to help move unemployed fathers who owe child support into the workforce. As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to the dignity of work. This is the next step.”

Gore’s proposals find their roots in his third Family Reunion Conference in 1994, when he challenged men to become actively involved in their children’s lives and to provide emotional as well as financial support. Al Gore is leading the fight for responsible fatherhood.

President Al Gore’s plan to encourage and support responsible fatherhood would include:

The Next Stage of Welfare Reform that Ensures Fathers Share Responsibility

Promoting responsible fatherhood is the critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do to address child poverty, since children living without
(more)

their fathers are five times more likely to be poor than children living with both parents. As we have asked mothers to move from welfare to work, all sectors of society have risen to the challenge. Now, we must ensure fathers share responsibility for supporting their families and again call on states, communities, and employers to help move unemployed fathers who owe child support into the workforce. As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to the dignity of work.

- Require All Fathers Who Owe Child Support to Pay or Go to Work. As a condition of receiving federal support funds every state should have a law requiring all non-custodial parents -- mainly fathers -- to pay support or go to work. Fathers who need a job in order to pay child support will get help in finding one. proposal would significantly expand upon successful initiatives in selected communities, such as Tampa Florida, which require non-custodial parents of children on welfare who owe child support to work or go

A New Crackdown on Deadbeat Parents

passports Tougher child support measures enacted by the Clinton-Gore Administration have resulted in a record \$14.3 billion in child support collections in 1998, an increase of \$6.4 billion or 80 percent since 1992. As a result of these reforms, we can make deadbeat parents pay by garnishing their wages, seizing their bank accounts, threatening to take away their drivers licenses, and denying them ~~support~~. But still, only in one in four parents who owe child support actually pay it, and millions of deadbeat parents owe more than \$5,000 in child support. As President, Al Gore will continue this crackdown on deadbeat parents, and he will start by saying:

- "Don't leave home without it" - No New Credit Cards For Parents Who Owe Child Support. Parents who have a history of not paying child support should not be rewarded with new financial benefits until they meet their responsibilities towards their kids. Any parent who owes more than \$5,000 in child support would be denied new credit cards or additional lines of credit until they fulfill their responsibilities to their kids. This proposal will be implemented to minimize paperwork burden and ensure individual privacy.

Promoting Marriage and Strong Families

Strong marriages build strong families and communities and aid in lifting children out of poverty. Al Gore supports fixing the "marriage penalty" and increasing the amount of income a married couple can earn and still receive the full Earned Income Tax Credit. Al Gore believes that we can do much more, from supporting the efforts of community and faith-based groups to help couples prepare for and strengthen their marriage and become better parents, to reducing domestic violence, to helping parents work together in the best interest of their children even if they are not married. Al Gore is challenging states to use the flexibility and resources in the welfare reform law to support these critical efforts.

(more)

Challenge Fathers to Make Time for Their Children

Many fathers and mothers are struggling to balance the competing demands of work and families. Al Gore believes that employers and the government need to make it easier for parents to balance both rather than having to choose. But in the end, it is up to fathers to choose to make time for their children. The most important job anyone will ever have is the job of a parent.

- Urge Employers across America to make Workplaces Parent Friendly. Al Gore believes that private employers should enact workplace policies that will enable fathers to be more involved with their children, including flexible work schedules and sites; leave programs; part-time employment/job-sharing; telecommuting; employee assistance programs; and on-site child development centers. Under Al Gore's leadership, federal agencies have implemented many of these policies, and are including fathers in their work/life programs. Al Gore supports expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to all firms with more than 25 employees, expanding the law to ten million more American workers, and to allow workers to take up to 24 more hours of additional leave each year to meet family obligations such as parent-teacher visits and children's medical appointments.
- A National Campaign To Challenge Fathers and Re-Shape Our Culture to Support Responsible Fatherhood. All of us -- through our churches, civic associations, businesses, sports teams, the media and entertainment industry -- have a role to play in promoting and supporting responsible and involved fathers. Al Gore would launch a national public service campaign to encourage fathers to embrace their responsibilities and establish a nationwide clearing house where states and local communities can share information and resources on promising models.

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Fathers Outline
9/14/99

FALCONHEAD
- General

The speech should address a broad range of fathers -- fathers of all economic levels and living arrangements, including those who are living with their children (whether married or single parent) and those who are not (whether divorced, never married, or in prison).

1. Men must share responsibility for welfare reform and supporting their families

a) welfare reform is working -- millions more (mostly moms) are working and lifting their children out of poverty. But to end poverty, we must do more to promote work, personal responsibility, and marriage.

b) all fathers who owe child support must pay, go to work, or do community service -- we'll help fathers with employment if they pay child support. Challenge states and communities to make full use of flexibility and resources under welfare reform to help fathers work and support their kids.

c) hold grandparents responsible for support of children of teen fathers [need to research]

d) help more committed low income fathers in every state increase their employment and support their children through our Welfare-to-Work proposal.

e) support strategies to get more of the child support paid to children on welfare directly to those families (pass-through).

2. Continue the Crackdown on Deadbeat dads

a) build on our record -- denied driver's licenses, seized bank accounts, paternity establishments have tripled and collections are up 80%.

b) don't leave home without it -- no new credit cards to fathers who owe child support

3. Fathers Need to Provide More than Financial Support -- They Must Spend Time with Their Kids and Be Involved in their Lives.

Fathers who don't live with their kids need to spend more time with them, and fathers who do live with their kids need to spend more time and be more involved. Fathers who neglect their children emotionally are just as bad as those who shirk their financial responsibilities

a) father-friendly workplace policies

b) family leave

c) challenge fathers to pledge to get involved in children's education, health, development [may want to make a numeric challenge] and announce commitments from key groups (mayors, PTA, AFT, NEA) to involve dads in their children's learning

d) make father involvement part of making pre-school available to all families, and expand father involvement in Head Start

e) help prisoners to be better fathers not better criminals

4. We must change the culture to promote responsible and involved fathers

a) expand father to father mentoring, including reaching out to new fathers. This can be done through community and faith-based groups, and builds on the Vice President's challenge at Family Reunion 3.

b) public service campaign

c) challenge media and sports teams to promote image of responsible fatherhood

5. Marriage matters - it builds strong families and communities, and helps lift children out of poverty

a) Restate support for marriage penalty relief, including the EITC.

b) support parenting contracts (after divorce and for never-married parents)

c) marriage preparation, marriage mentors, community and faith-based strategies

Lay out 3 - 5 concrete things that every responsible father should do, such as:

1) financial support

2) emotional support/spend time

3) take responsibility for your children

4) treat their mother with respect

5) reach out to and support other fathers