

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	Fathers Speech (17 pages)	09/28/1999	Personal Misfile
002. memo	Fathers Speech (5 pages)	09/30/1999	Personal Misfile

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Eric Liu
OA/Box Number: 16240

FOLDER TITLE:

Fatherhood - VP Memos

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]
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INITIALS: uo DATE: 06/04/13 Revised -- October 18, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: Elaine Kamarck

FROM: Bruce Reed Cynthia Rice
Eric Liu Andrea Kane
Paul Weinstein

SUBJECT: Fathers Speech

Overview

Thanks in large part to your leadership, there is growing recognition of the importance of fatherhood across the public and private sectors, and initiatives are springing up around the nation. But there is much more to be done. Promoting responsible fatherhood is a critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do both to address child poverty – since children living without their fathers are five times more likely to be poor than children living with both parents – and to reconnect the 40 percent of children in fatherless households who haven't seen their fathers in at least a year.

We recommend a four-part strategy: (1) welfare reform for fathers as well as mothers; (2) strengthening child support enforcement; (3) promoting marriage; and (4) changing the culture to promote responsible fatherhood, including encouraging more father involvement in children's learning, making workplaces more family-friendly, and challenging all fathers to love and support their children. This strategy will help fathers who want to be responsible but are too poor to do so – the so-called "dead-broke dads" – while cracking down on the deadbeat parents who can afford to pay child support but don't.

You may wish to start your remarks by recognizing the critically important role of mothers, but outlining the continuing social and economic consequences unless fathers do more to help share the responsibilities of parenthood. We propose you outline concrete things that every responsible father should do, including provide financial support, spend time and establish a bond with his children, and treat the mother of his children with respect. You should also salute the millions of fathers who are supporting their children both financially and emotionally.

I. Next Generation of Welfare Reform: Responsible Fathers

As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to dignity of work. Single parents have demonstrated in record numbers that when we reward work and give people the chance to work, they'll choose work over welfare every time. But as we ask more of mothers to move from welfare to work, we must ensure men share responsibility for welfare reform and supporting their families. We were right to end welfare as we know it, but we're never going to end child poverty until we can make men carry their share of the load. Now

that we've transformed the welfare system into a work-based system, the next phase of welfare reform should focus on ensuring strong, self-sufficient families.

A. Require Fathers Who Owe Child Support to Pay or Go to Work

You could propose making it a condition of receiving federal child support funds to have a law requiring all fathers to pay child support or go to work. States would have to have a law requiring work from fathers who owe child support and to help those who are unemployed – the so called “deadbroke dads” – get and keep jobs. States could also provide supportive services to help fathers reconnect to their children. You should call upon states and communities to use funding from their TANF welfare block grants and/or the Department of Labor's Welfare-to-Work program to ensure fathers meet their responsibilities to their children, since promoting strong, self-sufficient families is critical to the success of welfare reform. There is encouraging evidence that such programs are effective: a recent evaluation of a Florida program found it collected \$4.00 in child support for every \$1.00 in program costs. We believe about a million fathers would participate in these programs under this proposal.

Under current law, states simply have to have a procedure in place giving the state the authority to require parents who owe support to work – states do not have to actually require work from parents who owe support; the procedures don't apply to parents of the two-thirds of children owed child support who are not on welfare; and there is no specific financial penalty for states not in compliance. As a result, while currently most states have a procedure on the books, most programs operate on a small scale in a few pilot sites within a state. A few states – Florida, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin – have more active programs, though they apply primarily to fathers of children on welfare.

B. Propose Responsibility Contracts for Welfare Fathers

Under the welfare reform law, most states now require welfare mothers to sign individual responsibility plans outlining what assistance they will receive and what will be expected of them in return. Fathers should do the same. Therefore, you could propose adding personal responsibility contracts for fathers to the welfare law, in which fathers would pledge to acknowledge paternity, work, pay child support, and be involved parents in order to receive help from the TANF or Welfare-to-Work program. The provision should be parallel to that for mothers, which is now a state option in the law.

II. Strengthening Child Support Enforcement

Tougher child support measures enacted by this 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, and the number of fathers acknowledging paternity – the first step in collecting support – has tripled. 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, and in FY 1999 new national databases created by the 1996 law located 2.8 million delinquent parents. But still, only in one in four parents who owe child support actually pay it.

A. Encourage More Fathers to Acknowledge Paternity

At your Family Reunion Conference this June, you reported the good news that nearly 1.5 million men acknowledged paternity in 1998, an increase of 12 percent in one year and three times the 1993 figure of 516,000. As you said that day, a man acknowledging paternity does not make a father, but it is a start, the first step towards committing to a child the emotional and financial support a father must give to merit the name. The dramatic increase in paternity establishment over the last six years is due in large part to the success of an Administration proposal enacted into law in the 1993 budget, which requires hospitals to provide new parents with the opportunity to establish paternity on site. In 1996, this requirement was expanded to state birth record agencies. While we are making progress in establishing paternity for newborns, we need to do more to establish paternity for older children. We recommend you:

1) Call on all fathers to establish paternity, and say every child deserves as much.

2) Propose that programs receiving federal funds such as day care providers, Head Start centers, schools, health clinics, food stamp offices, and WIC programs offer voluntary paternity establishment services to families. The state child support agency – whose costs are funded two-thirds by the federal government – would provide the materials and staff training for these new sites, just as they now do for the in-hospital paternity programs. Currently, such sites may have paternity establishment programs at state option, but neither states nor the programs are required to do so.

B. Streamline Process for Establishing Child Support Orders

Currently, two-fifths of custodial parents do not have child support orders. In the majority of cases, establishing an order, once a non-custodial parent has been located, is a simple, routine matter of plugging income and other numbers into a computer. In a minority of cases, more complicated circumstances require more elaborate procedures. Unfortunately, many states still require a court proceeding before any child support order – even simple, routine ones – can be issued.

To streamline the process for establishing child support orders, you could propose legislation requiring all states to have a simple, administrative process for establishing child support orders that fall within state guidelines for establishing orders. Courts would then handle only more complicated cases which fall outside the routine guidelines.

C. Ensuring More Child Support Goes to Children

Currently, fathers of children on welfare have little incentive to cooperate with the child support system because any child support they pay is kept by the state and federal governments to reimburse the costs of providing welfare to their children. States currently have the option of “passing through” all child support to families on welfare, but they have a disincentive to do so because states must still give the federal government its share of collections. For example, if a father of a child on welfare pays \$200 a month in child support, the state can give that \$200 to the family, but it must use its own funds to send a check for \$100 to the federal government (the federal share varies by state, according to the Medicaid match rate formula, that starts at a minimum of 50%).

We recommend you endorse changing the child support pass through law to ensure families get to keep more of the child support fathers pay. This change would give responsible fathers credit for doing the right thing and paying child support. States, women's advocates, and fathers groups all support allowing more pass through. The cost of such a proposal would vary depending on whether states could pass through all support (which would be more expensive) versus a limited amount (which would be cheaper). For example:

1) Senator Kohl's bill, which has the support of Governor Tommy Thompson, would allow states the option of passing through all or part of child support to the family without paying the federal government a share. While we are verifying information on the costs of all these proposals and will know more early next week, we believe the Kohl proposal would cost at least \$200 million a year. Incidentally, Governor Thompson has already adopted a policy of full pass through, even though his state must still pay additional funds to the federal government to reimburse the federal share.

2) Senator Bayh's bill, cosponsored by Senator Domenici, would allow states to pass through up to \$75 a month in support to the family. Senator Bayh's staff says its bill costs \$150-\$200 million a year (while they have not received a definitive score, CBO staff told them they may score it as high as the Kohl bill).

3) An alternative, allowing states to pass through up to \$50 a month, is expected to cost \$100 million a year.

Prior to the 1996 law, states were required to pass through \$50 in support to families. Currently, 18 states have maintained the \$50 pass through.

D. Challenge Credit Card Industry to Provide No New Credit to Deadbeat Parents

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. We recommend you challenge credit card companies to deny new credit cards or additional lines of credit to parents who owe child support. When it comes to paying child support, the message should be: "Don't leave home without it."

To facilitate this process, the federal government will provide data on parents owing child support to the national credit bureaus. These data will come from a national registry of delinquent parents, put in place as a result of the 1996 welfare law, which is currently used to deny passports, seize bank account, and withhold tax returns of delinquent parents. Currently, states are required to provide data on delinquent parents to credit bureaus which, according to 1992 amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, credit bureaus must include on customer report information. However, this new, streamlined process will ensure the credit bureaus have timely, nationwide data on all parents nationwide.

III. Promoting Marriage

In your speech you can explain how much marriage matters in helping to build strong families and communities and lifting children out of poverty.

A. Marriage Penalty Relief

You can reiterate your support for the marriage penalty relief proposals you have already announced, which include:

1) Raising the standard deduction for married couples by \$1,400 so that a married couple would get the same standard deduction they would have gotten if they had remained single. This proposal would provide \$41 billion in tax relief over ten years.

2) Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for married couples, providing married couples with incomes up to about \$29,000 with an increase of approximately \$500. This policy would provide \$15 billion in tax relief to working families over 10 years.

B. Grants for Marriage Preparation, Mentoring, and Counseling

You could propose grants for community and faith-based organizations to help couples prepare for and strengthen their marriage, become better parents, and reduce domestic violence. You could suggest grants of about \$20 million a year, to match the amount spent on access and visitation (see below). You could also urge states to use the flexibility and resources in the welfare block grants to support these purposes. This proposal is similar to one for fatherhood grants advanced by Senators Bayh and Domenici.

C. Funds to Increase Access and Visitation

To help parents work together in the best interest of their children even if they are not married, we recommend you double the amount of federal funds for access and visitation programs. The 1996 welfare law contained \$10 million per year in funds for states to facilitate non-custodial parents access to and visitation with their children. The provision, strongly supported by fatherhood advocates, funds mediation, counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement, and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements. In FY 1997, these funds served 20,000 individuals.

IV. Change the Culture to Promote Responsible Fatherhood

Fathers who neglect their kids emotionally are just as bad as those who shirk their financial responsibilities. To help fathers increase their involvement with their children, we recommend you launch a national campaign to challenge schools, faith-based organizations, civic groups, employers, sports teams, the media, and the entertainment industry to help more fathers become responsible fathers. At the same time, you should remind fathers that the most important job they will ever have is the job of a parent, and it is up to them to make time for their children. You could propose:

A. Increase Father Involvement in Children's Learning

You should call for more father involvement in children's learning, both in and out of the classroom and at all ages including as part of your proposal for expanding Head Start. Learning to read and reinforcing good reading habits are basic building blocks in educational development, yet new data show that 40 percent of fathers do not read to their children – 55 percent of non-married fathers and 37 percent of married fathers. As a result of your leadership, on October 28th, HHS and the Education Department are jointly sponsoring a nationwide teleconference to give educators and social service providers tools to involve fathers in their children's learning.

B. Urge Employers across America to make Workplaces Parent Friendly

We recommend you challenge private employers to 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 your leadership, federal agencies have implemented many of these policies, and are including fathers in their work/life programs.

You should re-state your support for 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.

C. Call for More Father-to-Father Mentoring

You could call for an expanded campaign of father-to-father mentoring. This would build on the Father-to-Father effort you launched after Family Reunion 3. Part of this effort could include supporting programs, like that in Delaware, where a range of community and faith-based groups including Salvation Army and the Girl Scouts provides parenting classes in prison to help fathers leave prison as better parents instead of better criminals.

D. Fund a National Clearinghouse and Public Service Campaign

You could propose to fund a public service campaign to encourage fathers to embrace their responsibilities and establish a national clearing house where states and local communities can share information and resources, an idea supported by many fatherhood advocates. Senator Bayh's bill proposes \$2 million a year for a national clearinghouse and \$25 million a year for PSAs. You could propose new funds, or, in the case of the PSAs, urge states to use their TANF funds for these purposes. A national paid advertising campaign which purchases air time and reaches its target audience four times a week, such as that run by the Office of Drug Control Policy, costs \$200 million a year.

V. Responsible Fatherhood is Critical to Further Reducing Child Poverty

Thanks to your leadership, we have had the largest drop in child poverty in over 20 years. The child poverty rate fell from 19.9 percent to 18.9 percent between 1997 and 1998 – the lowest child poverty rate since 1980 and the largest one-year drop in child poverty since 1976. There are now 4.8 million fewer people, including 2.2 million fewer children, in poverty than in 1993. In addition, the Earned Income Tax Credit, a tax break for hard-pressed families which is not included in the official poverty rate, lifted 4.3 million people out of poverty in 1998 – that's double the number of people lifted out of poverty by the EITC before this Administration's 1993 expansions.

While we have had much success in reducing poverty, the child poverty rate remains too high. Promoting responsible fatherhood must be a key part of any strategy to further reduce child poverty, since children living without their fathers are five times more likely to be poor than children living with both parents. The proposals outlined here, combined with your proposals to invest in child care, increase the minimum wage, expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, and help parents feed their families, provide a comprehensive strategy to continue your successful fight against child poverty.

September 30, 1999

Frühling

FROM: Bruce Reed Cynthia Rice
Eric Liu Andrea Kane
Paul Weinstein

Overview

You may wish to start your speech by recognizing the critically important role of mothers, but outlining the continuing social and economic consequences unless fathers do more to help share the responsibilities of parenthood. We propose you outline concrete things that every responsible father should do, including provide financial support, spend time and establish a bond with his children, and treat the mother of his children with respect. You should also salute the millions of fathers who are supporting their children both financially and emotionally.

As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to dignity of work. Single parents have demonstrated in record numbers that when we reward work and give people the chance to work, they'll choose work over welfare every time. But as we ask more of mothers to move from welfare to work, we must ensure men share responsibility for welfare reform and supporting their families. We were right to end welfare as we know it, but we're never going to end child poverty until we can make men carry their share of the load. Now that we've transformed the welfare system into a work-based system, the next phase of welfare reform should focus on ensuring strong, self-sufficient families.

A. Require Fathers Who Owe Child Support to Pay or Go to Work

You could propose making it a condition of receiving federal child support funds to have a law requiring all fathers to pay child support or go to work – in the private sector if possible, or in community service if necessary. States would have to have a law requiring all fathers who owed a certain amount of child support to go to work – we could call it “2 months and you’re out.” States and communities could use funding from their TANF welfare surpluses, or the Department of Labor’s Welfare-to-Work program, or other sources of existing funding. We could also propose additional funding – perhaps a total of \$1 billion over 5 years – to reward states that expand their efforts.

Under current law, states are supposed to establish work programs for delinquent parents on welfare. But while most states have provisions on the books, few are statewide and most are not fully implemented. This proposal would strengthen current law, by covering all fathers (not just welfare fathers), and by holding states accountable to enforce work requirements for fathers just as they would for mothers. In addition, we could improve the incentives in the current system by allowing fathers who participate in these efforts to have all the child support they pay passed through directly to their children (currently, states keep child support payments of mothers on welfare as reimbursement for welfare costs).

States such as Florida, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin are actively requiring non-custodial fathers of children on welfare to go to work and are helping them obtain employment and be responsibly involved with their children. There is encouraging evidence that such programs are effective: a recent evaluation of a program operated in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough Counties in Florida by Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Mental Health Services found it collected \$4.00 in child support for every \$1.00 in program costs.

B. Require Responsibility Contracts for Welfare Fathers, and Encourage States to use Welfare Block Grants to Promote Responsible Fatherhood

Under the welfare reform law, most states now require welfare mothers to sign parental responsibility contracts outlining what assistance they will receive and what will be expected of them in return. Fathers should do the same. One of the purposes of the welfare law is to “encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families” and states can use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for a wide range of efforts, including media campaigns, parenting classes, pre- or post-marriage counseling, and school-based programs, serving families of all incomes. These could be carried out by a wide range of community and faith-based groups. The Department of Labor’s Welfare-to-Work program can also be used to help communities place low-income fathers in jobs.

II. A New Crackdown on Deadbeat Parents

Tougher child support measures enacted by this 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. Paternity establishment has tripled over that period. But still, only in one in four parents who owe child support actually pay it. Your speech should emphasize too that it is not just poor fathers who are failing to meet their child support responsibilities.

A. 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. We recommend you propose that any parent who fails to pay child support not be eligible for new credit cards or additional lines of credit from credit card companies. When it comes to paying child support, the message should be: “Don’t leave home without it.” Under the 1996 welfare reform law, the federal government maintains a national registry of delinquent parents, compiled from names submitted by the states. The registry is used to help withhold tax refunds and seize back assets of deadbeats who move from job to job or state to state.

Under this proposal, the registry would provide information on delinquent fathers to the three major credit bureaus. Applications for new credit cards or additional lines of credit would be referenced against this list during the normal credit check process, limiting any new paperwork burden on credit card companies. Credit card companies would be prohibited from issuing new cards or lines of credit to individuals on this list who owe a certain amount of child support. There is no provision under current law preventing parents who owe child support from getting new credit cards. States are supposed to report “periodically” to credit bureaus the names of people who owe support, but the credit card companies are not required to deny credit on that basis.

This policy initiative will meet with considerable resistance from the credit card industry. They will criticize the proposal for creating a large paperwork burden, as a violation of individual privacy, and for imposing an unfunded mandate. We believe that a parent who doesn’t pay child support is a bad credit risk and providing new credit cards to a delinquent parent only increases the likelihood that he or she will not pay child support. In addition, we believe this proposal can be implemented to ensure individual privacy by limiting checks to those cases where persons are applying for new credit cards only (not to all the people to which the companies send solicitations). In the last year, credit card companies have been subject to great criticism by women’s advocates for trying (unsuccessfully) to add a provision to the bankruptcy bill that would have reduced child support collection by putting credit card debt in the same protected category as child support and taxes.

III. Promoting Marriage

In your speech you can explain how much marriage matters in helping to build strong families and communities and lifting children out of poverty.

A. Marriage Penalty Relief

You can reiterate your support for marriage penalty relief including increasing the amount of income a married couple can earn and still receive the full Earned Income Tax Credit.

B. Grants for Marriage Preparation, Mentoring, and Counseling

You could propose grants for community and faith-based organizations to help promote and strengthen marriage and families through marriage preparation, marriage mentors, counseling, and parenting education and contracts. Grants could support efforts such as those launched in May 1998 in Florida under the state's Marriage Preparation and Preservation Act which required relationship education in high schools, encouraged couples to take marriage preparation, and gave all those who applied for marriage licenses information about marital rights and obligations under the law. Marriage mentor programs, typically operated through a local church, make couples who have been married for a long time available as a resource to couples who are engaged, newly married, or having difficulties in their marriage.

Few people ever get much training for the most important job they will ever have – being a parent. Grants could expand parenting education classes for married and non-married couples, which are currently offered in some communities and for some populations. These grants should be conditioned on a strong role for fathers as well as mothers, as fathers are often missing from current programs. You could call on professional organizations and universities to partner with community and faith-based groups to provide free or low-cost counseling and parenting education classes.

IV. Challenge Fathers to Give Children Love and Support, and Helping Them Find Time to Do So

Fathers who neglect their kids emotionally are just as bad as those who shirk their financial responsibilities. Emotional commitment takes time. To help fathers increase their involvement with their children, you could:

A. Urge Employers across America to make Workplaces Parent Friendly

We recommend you challenge private employers to 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 your leadership, federal agencies have implemented many of these policies, and are including fathers in their work/life programs.

You should re-state your support for expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) 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, and for expanding the law to ten million more American workers.

B. Double the Amount of Federal Funds Dedicated to Increasing Access and Visitation

The 1996 welfare law contained \$10 million per year in funds for states to facilitate non-custodial parents access to and visitation with their children. The provision, strongly supported by fatherhood advocates, funds mediation, counseling, education, development of parenting plans,

visitation enforcement, and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements. In FY 1997, these funds served 20,000 individuals.

C. National Campaign To Challenge Fathers and Re-Shape the Culture

You could call for a national campaign to promote father-to-father mentoring and support a non-governmental organization to organize the effort (along the lines of The Welfare to Work Partnership). This would build on the Father-to-Father effort you launched after Family Reunion 3. As part of this effort, you should call for an expansion of programs, such as the one in Delaware, which helps inmates come out of prison as better fathers, not better criminals and would bring together churches, fraternities, civic associations, businesses, and sports teams. In Delaware, a range of community and faith-based groups including Salvation Army and the Girl Scouts provides parenting classes in prison.

You should call for more father involvement in education, including more men in schools as teachers and more participation by fathers in school and PTA activities. You may also wish to stress the importance of fathers' involvement in Head Start, as part of your pledge of making high-quality pre-school fully available to every family, for every child, in every community in America.

Hollywood, the music industry, and sports franchises play a critical role in reflecting and influencing popular culture. You ought to praise those promoting responsible fatherhood and call on these industries to do more. A survey of television shows conducted last winter found that only 15 percent of shows on network prime time television feature a father as a recurring, central character.

Finally, you could propose to fund a public service campaign to encourage fathers to embrace their responsibilities and establish a national clearing house where states and local communities can share information and resources, an idea supported by many fatherhood advocates. A campaign would purchase airtime, as the Office of National Drug Control Policy does for our anti-drug ads, rather than rely on free ads often aired after midnight.

D. Challenge Fathers to Make Time

Employers and government need to make it easier for fathers to not have to choose between work and family. But in the end, that won't do any good unless fathers choose to make time for their children. A recent study found that with all the pressure on working families, many working parents don't take advantage of family-friendly policies because work seems more like home and home seems more like work. That's wrong. The most important job anyone of us will ever have is the job of a parent. That's something mothers have always remembered, and no father can afford to forget.

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- 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]

**DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING**

INITIALS: W DATE: 06/04/13 September 30, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: Elaine Kamarck

FROM: Bruce Reed Cynthia Rice
Eric Liu Andrea Kane
Paul Weinstein

SUBJECT: Fathers Speech

Overview

Thanks in large part to your leadership on this issue, there is growing recognition of the importance of fatherhood across the public and private sectors, and initiatives are springing up around the nation. But there is much more to be done. Promoting responsible fatherhood is a critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do both to address child poverty – since children living without their fathers are five time more likely to be poor than children living with both parents – and to reconnect the 40 percent of children in fatherless households who haven't seen their fathers in at least a year.

We recommend a four part speech: (1) welfare reform for fathers as well as mothers (2) a new crackdown on deadbeat parents (3) promoting marriage and (4) challenging employers and the culture to promote responsible fatherhood and challenging all fathers to provide the love and support their children need.

You may wish to start your speech by recognizing the critically important role of mothers, but outlining the continuing social and economic consequences unless fathers do more to help share the responsibilities of parenthood. We propose you outline concrete things that every responsible father should do, including provide financial support, spend time and establish a bond with his children, and treat the mother of his children with respect. You should also salute the millions of fathers who are supporting their children both financially and emotionally.

I. Welfare Reform for Fathers

As a result of welfare reform, millions of families have moved from the dependency of welfare to dignity of work. Single parents have demonstrated in record numbers that when we reward work and give people the chance to work, they'll choose work over welfare every time. But as we ask more of mothers to move from welfare to work, we must ensure men share responsibility for welfare reform and supporting their families. We were right to end welfare as we know it, but we're never going to end child poverty until we can make men carry their share of the load. Now that we've transformed the welfare system into a work-based system, the next phase of welfare reform should focus on ensuring strong, self-sufficient families.

A. Require Fathers Who Owe Child Support to Pay or Go to Work

You could propose making it a condition of receiving federal child support funds to have a law requiring all fathers to pay child support or go to work – in the private sector if possible, or in community service if necessary. States would have to have a law requiring all fathers who owed a certain amount of child support to go to work – we could call it “2 months and you’re out.” States and communities could use funding from their TANF welfare surpluses, or the Department of Labor’s Welfare-to-Work program, or other sources of existing funding. We could also propose additional funding – perhaps a total of \$1 billion over 5 years – to reward states that expand their efforts.

Under current law, states are supposed to establish work programs for fathers of children on welfare. But while most states have provisions on the books, few are statewide and most are not fully implemented. This proposal would strengthen current law, by covering all fathers (not just welfare fathers), and by holding states accountable to enforce work requirements for fathers just as they would for mothers. In addition, we could improve the incentives in the current system by allowing fathers who participate in these efforts to have all the child support they pay passed through directly to their children (currently, states keep child support payments of mothers on welfare as reimbursement for welfare costs).

States such as Florida, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin are actively requiring non-custodial fathers of children on welfare to go to work and helping them obtain employment and be responsibly involved with their children. There is encouraging evidence that such programs are effective: a recent evaluation of a program operated in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough Counties in Florida by Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Mental Health Services found it collected \$4.00 in child support for every \$1.00 in program costs.

B. Require Responsibility Contracts for Welfare Fathers, and Encourage States to use Welfare Block Grants to Promote Responsible Fatherhood

Under the welfare reform law, most states now require welfare mothers to sign parental responsibility contracts outlining what assistance they will receive and what will be expected of them in return. Fathers should do the same. One of the purposes of the welfare law is to “encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families” and states can use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for a wide range of efforts, including media campaigns, parenting classes, pre- or post-marriage counseling, and school-based programs, serving families of all incomes. These could be carried out by a wide range of community and faith-based groups. The Department of Labor’s Welfare-to-Work program can also be used to help communities place low-income fathers in jobs.

II. A New Crackdown on Deadbeat Parents

Tougher child support measures enacted by this 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. Paternity establishment has tripled over that period. But still, only in one in four parents who owe child support actually pay it. Your speech should emphasize too that it is not just poor fathers who are failing to meet their child support responsibilities.

A. 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. We recommend you propose that any parent who fails to pay child support not be eligible for new credit cards or additional lines of credit from credit card companies. When it comes to paying child support, the message should be: "Don't leave home without it." Under the 1996 welfare reform law, the federal government maintains a national registry of delinquent parents, compiled from names submitted by the states. The registry is used to help withhold tax refunds and seize back assets of deadbeats who move from job to job or state to state.

Under this proposal, the registry would provide information on delinquent fathers to the three major credit bureaus. Applications for new credit cards or additional lines of credit would be referenced against this list during the normal credit check process, limiting any new paperwork burden on credit card companies. Credit card companies would be prohibited from issuing new cards or lines of credit to individuals on this list who owe a certain amount of child support. There is no provision under current law preventing parents who owe child support from getting new credit cards. States are supposed to report "periodically" to credit bureaus the names of people who owe support, but the credit card companies are not required to deny credit on that basis.

This policy initiative will meet with considerable resistance from the credit card industry. They will criticize the proposal for creating a large paperwork burden, as a violation of individual privacy, and for imposing an unfunded mandate. We believe that a parent who doesn't pay child support is a bad credit risk and providing new credit cards to a delinquent parent only increases the likelihood that he or she will not pay child support. In addition, we believe this proposal can be implemented to ensure individual privacy by limiting checks to those cases where persons are applying for new credit cards only (not to all the people to which the companies send solicitations). In the last year, credit card companies have been subject to great criticism by women's advocates for trying (unsuccessfully) to add a provision to the bankruptcy bill that would have reduced child support collection by putting credit card debt in the same protected category as child support and taxes.

III. Promoting Marriage

In your speech you can explain how much marriage matters in helping to build strong families and communities and lifting children out of poverty.

A. Marriage Penalty Relief

You can reiterate your support for marriage penalty relief including increasing the amount of income a married couple can earn and still receive the full Earned Income Tax Credit.

B. Grants for Marriage Preparation, Mentoring, and Counseling

You could propose grants for community and faith-based organizations to help promote and strengthen marriage and families through marriage preparation, marriage mentors, counseling, and parenting education and contracts. Grants could support efforts such as those launched in May 1998 in Florida under the state's Marriage Preparation and Preservation Act which required relationship education in high schools, encouraged couples to take marriage preparation, and gave all those who applied for marriage licenses information about marital rights and obligations under the law. Marriage mentor programs, typically operated through a local church, make couples who have been married for a long time available as a resource to couples who are engaged, newly married, or having difficulties in their marriage.

Few people ever get much training for the most important job they will ever have – being a parent. Grants could expand parenting education classes for married and non-married couples, which are currently offered in some communities and for some populations. These grants should be conditioned on a strong role for fathers as well as mothers, as fathers are often missing from current programs. You could call on professional organizations and universities to partner with community and faith-based groups to provide free or low-cost counseling and parenting education classes.

IV. Challenge All Fathers to Give Children Love and Support, and Help Them Find Time to Do So

Fathers who neglect their kids emotionally are just as bad as those who shirk their financial responsibilities. Emotional commitment takes time. To help fathers increase their involvement with their children, you could:

A. Urge Employers across America to make Workplaces Parent Friendly

We recommend you challenge private employers to 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 your leadership, federal agencies have implemented many of these policies, and are including fathers in their work/life programs.

You should re-state your support for expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) 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, and for expanding the law to ten million more American workers.

B. Double the Amount of Federal Funds Dedicated to Increasing Access and Visitation

The 1996 welfare law contained \$10 million per year in funds for states to facilitate non-custodial parents access to and visitation with their children. The provision, strongly supported by fatherhood advocates, funds mediation, counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement, and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements. In FY 1997, these funds served 20,000 individuals.

C. National Campaign To Challenge Fathers and Re-Shape the Culture

You could call for a national campaign to promote father to father mentoring and support a non-governmental organization to organize the effort (along the lines of The Welfare to Work Partnership). This effort would build on the Father-to-Father effort you launched after Family Reunion 3. You could call on churches, fraternities, civic associations, businesses, and sports teams to join in this effort.

You should call for more father involvement in education, including more men in schools as teachers and more men involved in school and PTA activities. You may wish to stress the importance of fathers' involvement in Head Start, as part of your pledge of making high-quality pre-school fully available to every family, for every child, in every community in America.

As part of this effort, you should call for an expansion of programs, such as the one in Delaware, which helps inmates come out of prison as better fathers, not better criminals. In Delaware, a range of community and faith-based groups including Salvation Army and the Girl Scouts provides parenting classes in prison.

Hollywood, the music industry, and sports franchises play a critical role in reflecting and influencing popular culture. You ought to praise those promoting responsible fatherhood and call on these industries to do more. A survey of television shows conducted last winter found that only 15 percent of shows on network prime time television feature a father as a recurring, central character.

You could propose to fund a public service campaign to encourage fathers to embrace their responsibilities and establish a national clearing house where states and local communities can share information and resources, an idea supported by many fatherhood advocates. A campaign would purchase airtime, as the Office of National Drug Control Policy does for our anti-drug ads, rather than rely on free ads often aired after midnight.

D. Challenge Fathers to Make Time

Employers and government need to make it easier for fathers to not have to choose between work and family. But in the end, that won't do any good unless fathers choose to make time for their children. A recent study found that with all the pressure on working families, many working parents don't take advantage of family-friendly policies because work seems more like home and home seems more like work. That's wrong. The most important job anyone of us will ever have is the job of a parent. That's something mothers have always remembered, and no father can afford to forget.