

December
Events
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

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FROM: BRUCE REED

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following is a list of possible DPC announcements the President could make during the months of November and December.

CRIME:

November 22 **FBI Crime Statistics**

The final 1997 FBI Unified Crime Report data will be released on Sunday, November 22, demonstrating further that crime has decreased dramatically under the President's watch. The President should issue a written statement on that Sunday. **(Ready)**

December **Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative**

The President could highlight the success of his innovative Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII), which has been ongoing for two years in 27 cities, by announcing: (1) the release of the second annual report on the YCGII, which will provide new data on guns used in crimes and demonstrate the success of the YCGII; (2) the availability of funds to hire new ATF agents to investigate gun trafficking in these 27 cities; and (3) a proposal to dramatically expand the YCGII to 20 new cities which was just provided for in the recent omnibus appropriations bill. **(Ready in early December)**

November or December **Brady/NICS Launch**

At the end of this week, the Attorney General will publish the final regulation implementing the Brady National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Under the NICS, which will go into effect on November 30th, the FBI and/or state points of contact will conduct computerized background checks of **all** prospective guns purchasers (not just handguns). The President could announce on November 30 -- or sometime that week -- the official implementation of the NICS, which is a huge victory

for the President. The President not only fought hard for the Brady Bill's passage in 1993, but he has continued to fight against efforts to undermine Brady's implementation and for funds to improve state criminal history records. **(November 30th or later)**

November **"Zero Tolerance" for Drugs in Prisons**

The recently passed omnibus appropriations bill includes an important provision that would allow states to use up to 10% of their prison funds to drug test and, if necessary, treat prisoners and parolees. This policy change, which the President called for in a directive to the Attorney General last January, was strongly opposed by Republicans and represents another victory for the President in the recent budget battle. To highlight this accomplishment, the President could join the Attorney General, General McCaffrey and perhaps group of Governors in issuing new guidelines to ensure that the states use their funds to promote this new "zero tolerance" policy. **(Ready)**

WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES:

November **Title IX Executive Order**

The President could sign an executive order as early as next week prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in education programs conducted by the federal government. This includes schools operated by the Defense Department for military dependents, schools operated by the Department of the Interior for Native Americans, and numerous training and educational programs run by federal departments. This is a follow up to an Executive Memorandum the President issued last year asking the Department of Justice to lead an effort to identify all federally-conducted education programs and to recommend appropriate action to end discrimination. **(Ready)**

November or **New Child Care Data**

December The President could announce new data on the number of children served with child care assistance through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The data is expected to indicate that approximately 1.8 million children of the 10 million eligible for assistance have been served through the block grant. This is the first data to examine the block grant, which was created in the 1996 welfare reform bill, and it will highlight the need for increased investment in the block grant. **(Ready)**

November or **Adoption Registry**

December The President could call for an internet-based national registry of children in foster care waiting to be adopted. Prospective adoptive parents will be able to visit the site and meet these waiting children. The registry, to cost between \$1-2 million, will be funded through the Adoption Opportunities Grants, which are a part of the President's Adoption 2002 Initiative -- an effort to double the number of children adopted from the public child welfare system by the 2002. In addition, the President can announce new adoption data which will show that adoptions have increased in FY 1998. Also, the President could announce the HHS Adoption 2002

Awards, which he called for by executive memorandum in 1996. November is National Adoption Month, and is exactly one-year since the President signed the landmark Adoption and Safe Families Act. The First Lady is very interested in holding an event on adoption during November, preferably at the end of the month before Thanksgiving.

December **Family Report**

The President could announce the findings of a new report by the CEA detailing changes in the last thirty years in family life. The report will show the increased numbers of women in the workplace, and detail the diminished amount of time families have to spend with their children. (mid-December)

HEALTH:

December **Asthma Initiative**

The President could announce a concerted fight against asthma, which has become a national epidemic impacting the lives of 15 million Americans. The initial goals of this program will be to halt the increase in asthma, reduce by half the number of children who die or suffer activity limitations because of this disease, and limit the disproportionate impact of asthma on minority communities. The President could announce new FY2000 budget proposals to expand programs that have had demonstrated success on a pilot basis in preventing, managing, and understanding asthma. The President could also release an interagency report on best practices and strategies to address asthma. **(Requires budget decision.)**

December **Meeting with Presidential Task Force on People with Disabilities**

The President could meet with the Presidential Task Force on People with Disabilities and formally announce his endorsement of the Kennedy-Jeffords Work Incentives Improvement Act --the disability community's top health priority. The President could also possibly announce at this time new budget proposals effecting people with disabilities, including possibly a tax credit for people with disabilities returning to work or a bridge program to help people with disabilities go to work. **(Ready -- certain components pending budget decisions).**

WELFARE:

November **Food Stamp Fraud Directives**

The President could sign three directives to crack down on food stamp fraud: (1) The President would direct the Social Security Administration to share its death records with the Food Stamp agency to ensure that Food Stamp recipients who die are immediately removed from the rolls; (2) The President would direct USDA to develop a plan to create an interstate matching system to ensure Food Stamp recipients are not receiving benefits in multiple states; and (3)

The President would direct Treasury to collect (through offset of federal payments and other means) unpaid fines owed by retailers that have violated Food Stamp rules, such as exchanging Food Stamps for cash. The first two directives will build on the Lugar legislation that passed at the end of the session. **(Ready)**

December **Work Participation Rates**

The President could visit a welfare-to-work program and announce: (1) new state work participation rates, showing that almost all states are meeting the welfare law's single-parent requirements, but some are failing to meet the law's separate two-parent requirement; (2) new caseload data showing continuing declines; and (3) new data on the number of people who were on welfare in 1997 and working in March 1998. **(Expected to be ready in early December.)**

December **Welfare to Work Housing Vouchers**

The Congress approved in the VA/HUD appropriations bill full funding for the President's request for 50,000 welfare-to-work housing vouchers. The President could hold an event announcing the opening of the first competition for these vouchers. This is the first time ever that housing vouchers will be linked to welfare reform, and represents an improvement in the way welfare, employment, and housing agencies can work together. **(Ready in December.)**

EDUCATION:

December or **Afterschool Grants**

January The Congress fully funded the President's request for \$200 million for afterschool programs. Anytime after November 4, the President could announce the release of the first \$40 million in 21st Century Learning Center Grants for over 100 school districts throughout the country. **(Ready)**

December **Teacher Quality Report**

The National Center on Educational Statistics at the Department of Education has conducted a rapid response survey of teachers as well as an analysis of state efforts to improve the quality of the teaching force that will be included in the Department's first biennial teacher quality report. The President would announce the release of this report and possibly announce new budget and legislative proposals to improve teacher quality. **(Ready late December or January.)**

December **Social Promotions Report**

The President could announce a new Education Department report on best practices for ending social promotion. This would be an opportunity for the President to renew his call made this year to end social promotion. **(Ready late December or January.)**

November **AmeriCorps**

The President could reschedule the ceremony for him to swear-in the 100,000th Americorps member. At this event the President would also announce: (1) new grants to support 500-1000 Americorps Promise Fellowships to support the goals set at the Presidents' Summit; (2) the recipients of the President's Service Awards, the nation's highest volunteer service award; and (3) the recipients of the President's Student Service Awards. **(Ready)**

EMPOWERMENT ZONES:

December Empowerment Zone Awards

The President could announce the winners of the nationwide competition for the second round Empowerment Zones. Twenty communities will win designations as new EZs -- 15 urban and 5 rural. Like the first round, each EZ will receive a mixture of tax incentives and flexible grants to leverage private, non-profit, and state and local government resources to promote business development and job creation in some of our country's most distressed communities. The EZ statute requires that these designations be made by January 1, 1999. The EZ program is one of the cornerstones of the President's and Vice President's Community Empowerment Agenda. **(Ready in December.)**

Other likely initiatives as part of State of the Union Rollout, December - January:**December Nationwide Crackdown on Food Safety**

The President could announce a new \$87 million budget proposal to crackdown on food safety nationally and a proposed legislative package to give authority to USDA to issue recalls of unsafe food and impose civil fines. In addition, the President would urge states to adopt his model food code for retailers, providing incentives and disincentives for states to adopt to the code. **(Ready, depending on budget decisions.)**

December Long-Term Care Tax Credit Package

The President would announce a proposal to provide a \$1,000 tax credit to people with long-term care needs or their care givers -- which we expect will help about 2.3 million people. At the same time, the President could call for the Federal Employees Health Benefit plan to offer long-term care insurance to federal employees, underscoring that a model employer should promote high-quality private long-term care insurance policies to its employees. OPM estimates that 300,000 people would buy these policies. This long-term care tax credit does not currently have offsets. However, pending budget decisions, this policy could be ready to go in December. **(Pending budget decisions.)**

December Superbug Initiative

Recent reports have indicated that resistance to anti-biotics is becoming a major public health crisis, causing prolonged illnesses and even death. For example, pneumonia, which impact over 500,000 Americans each year, is becoming resistance to most antibiotics and staph, the most common hospital-based infection, is now only responding to the strongest drug available and some people are even starting to show resistance to this drug. Experts believe that this critical public health problem is on track to affect more and more viruses. To reduce this problem, the President could: (1) launch a new budget initiative to enable experts to obtain critical information about which viruses are likely to become resistant and why; (2) launch a major education campaign to inform health providers and professionals about how to prescribe drugs more appropriately and increase the use of vaccines to reduce the likelihood that diseases will become resistant; and (3) fund community-based demonstrations to examine how best to implement prevention efforts. **(Pending budget decision.)**

December Expansion of Values-Based Crime Prevention Initiative

Recognizing the important role that civic, community, and faith-based organizations can play in reducing crime, this past July the President announced a \$2.2 million in grants available for 16 community-based collaboratives, including religiously-affiliated organizations, to target youth violence, gangs, truancy, and other juvenile problems by

promoting common-sense values and responsibility. To build on this effort, the President could commit to a series of new grants to support values-based crime prevention efforts, and urge Congress to endorse and increase federal funding for such programs. The President could also highlight the efforts of Rev. Eugene Rivers of Boston, who inspired the President to develop this initiative and has organized a National 10-Point Leadership Foundation to mobilize 1,000 black churches in 40 cities to help at-risk kids in the 50 worst neighborhoods. **(Pending budget decisions.)**

December Family/Child Care Package

The President could announce a "families agenda" that will include proposals to: help working families pay for child care through subsidies and tax credits; give a tax credit to help parents who wish to stay at home to care for their children; provide paid parental leave for families with newborn or newly adopted children; provide funding for home visiting and other parenting skills programs for parents with very young children; and increase support for after-school programs. Also, the President would propose expanding family medical leave so that it would cover employers with 25 employees or fewer. **(Pending budget decisions.)**

January No-Social-Promotions Initiative

The President could announce a new \$300 million dollar budget initiative to help local school systems around the country follow Chicago's example and end social promotions. This would be a competitive grants program through which the federal government would pay for the cost of mandatory summer school and after-school to help students meet promotion standards, if the school district agrees to end social promotion. **(Pending budget decisions.)**