TO: Mary Smith, Tom Freedman
FROM: David Hochschild
RE: What Non-Profits are Doing re: Family Values Issues
DATE: July 20, 1998

Children's Defense Fund

- *Children's Health.* Last August, the President signed the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 which created the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The program invests $48 billion in child health over ten years. It includes a grant program to help states cover uninsured children in families with incomes too high to qualify for medicare but too low to afford private coverage. The grants, which apparently offer a great deal of flexibility to the states, became available last October. CDF has been spending a great deal of time monitoring how the states implementing the grants. So far, they are finding that most states are doing a good job and, with a few exceptions, are being generally innovative. (Their report is long and detailed. For more info on it, see www.childrensdefense.org/chipcheck_intro.html)

- *Child Care.* CDF is trying to increase the Child Care Development Block Grants. Senators Bond (R-MO) and Kerry (D-MA) sponsored an amendment to the tobacco bill that would have increased funding for child care by five to six billion over five years. Even though the tobacco legislation was pulled, 66 senators are on record supporting an increase in mandatory funding for the CCDGB. This is apparently the strongest child care vote since 1989. So now CDF is trying to find another piece of legislation to attach it to. Their goal is to insure that an increase in child care funds is a part of any budget/tax bill passed before Congress adjourns on October 7.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

- The Center found that increasing the minimum wage in Oregon caused more people to move from welfare to work.. As a result of a successful state ballot initiative, the Oregon minimum wage rose from $4.75 an hour to $5.50 an hour in January 1997 and then to $6.00 an hour in January 1998. Oregon Adult and Family Services Division reports that the share of welfare recipients who found work in 1997 — 7.3 percent in an average quarter — was slightly higher than in 1996 before the state's minimum wage was increased. In 1996, an average of 6.4 percent of welfare recipients found work in an average quarter. The share of welfare recipients finding work rose modestly in 1997 following the increase in the minimum wage. In addition, employment growth in retail trade, the industry most likely to be affected by a minimum wage increase, was positive in 1997 and followed the same pattern as overall employment growth in Oregon. (See http://www.cbpp.org/529ormw.html)

Work and Families Institute

- My phone call was not returned so this information is entirely from their web site (www.workandfamilies.org). The Work and Families Institute had more to offer in the way of findings than in proposals for new policies. They produced the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce which they use to detect trends through comparisons with the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey. Their main conclusions:

    1. The quality of workers' jobs and the supportiveness of their workplaces are the most powerful predictors of productivity--job satisfaction, commitment to their employers, and retention. Job and workplace characteristics are far more important predictors than pay and benefits. To maximize satisfaction, commitment, and retention, employers need to provide high-quality jobs--whatever the employee's occupation--and supportive workplaces--whatever the industry.

    2. The good news: The quality of jobs has improved somewhat over the past 20 years, and workplaces appear to have become a bit more supportive even over the past five years.

    3. The bad news: Jobs have become less secure. They have also become more demanding--more time-consuming and more hectic--making it increasingly difficult to achieve a balance between work and personal life.

    4. Employed married men and women have less time for themselves today than their counterparts did 20 years ago, and less time for oneself is associated with lower personal well-being and greater susceptibility to negative spillover from job to home.

    5. Employees with more difficult, more demanding jobs and less supportive workplaces experience substantially higher levels of negative spillover from work into their lives off the job--jeopardizing their personal and family well-being.

    6. When workers feel burned-out by their jobs, when they have insufficient time and energy for themselves and their families, when work puts them in a bad mood--these feelings spill back into the workplace, limiting job performance. So companies that promote work-life balance have a competetive edge. It is good for both employees and the bottom line.

Center for Policy Alternatives

- The principal family values issue that the Center for Policy Alternatives has been looking at is care for both children and the elderly. They want to improve the quality of care by increasing wages for caregivers and drawing greater attention to the issue from those in state government. They have developed some model legislation for this purpose, the Child Care Loan Guarantee Act, which is geared toward states that want to set up block grants to fund child care. They also advocate expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act to include paid leave and to promote flex-time. (the staff person I spoke to there was high on rhetoric, low on information - the web site was more informative - www.cfpa.org).