

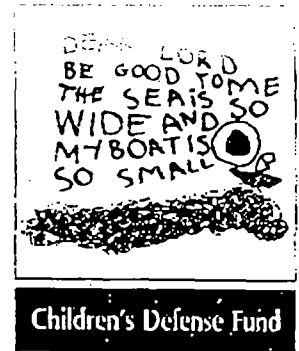
MEMORANDUM

TO: Frank Raines, Gene Sperling, Josh Gotbaum, and Chris Jennings

FROM: Marian Wright Edelman

DATE: July 18, 1997

RE: Increasing the Visibility of the \$24 Billion Senate Child Health Coverage by the President and Vice President



I am delighted that the White House is committed to assuring that the basic structure of the child health insurance program -- benefits, affordability, maintenance of effort and accountability -- works well for children. We are too. But I would reiterate two other points:

- \$24 billion for this program is achievable. The President and the Senate both are on record supporting it, but now it requires the President's and Administration's consistent public and private leadership fighting for the tobacco tax and \$24 billion for child health. \$24 billion is essential to reach half the uninsured children and make this program work. A tobacco tax is popular and a great second boost to child health. The President has much to gain and little to lose by putting this out as a marker.
- The President and Vice-President can and must elevate the child health coverage issue in the hours and days ahead, through events, speeches and radio addresses (this Saturday would be perfect to tie into the NCHS report), in the same way they have recently elevated other reconciliation issues that are important to them.

We just heard that Frank will be on This Week Sunday with Representative Archer. This would be a wonderful opportunity to speak up aggressively for the \$24 billion. We have been working Texas media and grassroots hard (with help from the Texas Medical Association), and even Archer hasn't yet come out against the tobacco tax. If the Administration's spokespeople are speaking on child health -- like Frank this weekend or McCurry in press briefings -- it would be disastrous to have anything less than an emphatic bottom line insistence on a minimum \$24 billion downpayment for children's health insurance.

Let's keep working together to make a sound \$24 billion child health insurance program a reality and provide a solid foundation for covering every child.

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