

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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001. list	Foster Care - Independent Living Act Meeting 10/14/99 (partial) (1 page)	n.d.	P6/b(6)
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COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Ruby Shamir (Subject Files)
OA/Box Number: 20366

FOLDER TITLE:

Adoption and Foster Care/Independent Living

2012-0565-S

ry1230

RESTRICTION CODES

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

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

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]

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]
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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]

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.

Statement on Foster Care

Foster care statement
what they done or better

We just passed the new program

→ Want into effect on signing
offers hope + promise + \$

intends of what cities do now -
they can do something

have option to provide medical

- Medical extend to age 21

- gave states option to
ILP to give direct time
im'd be assist

Pres proposal for dedicated
cost - but Congress wanted
it

directed state put up
with 21

encouraging kids to go
through college.

medical was option to
states -

Sec sent out letter to
med directors

FY99 program:

Michael Cohen

legally obligate money in later case

→ Alloc to states
w open ended
entitlement

pres signed bill after
budget amount

bill x2 \$

70 mill
+ 140

however bill budget
amount same as
bill not signed yet
at 12/10/98 w prep

300
10.24T
2000

Pol signed director
for HHS
Alison Green

Hillary Clinton: A Leading Advocate for the Nation's Neediest Children

A Record of Accomplishment Adoption and Foster Care

As the Administration's most prominent advocate on foster care and adoption, Hillary Clinton has worked on behalf of the over 500,000 children who live in foster care, and has led this Administration's unprecedented record of promoting the well-being of children in foster care and providing them with permanent, loving homes. Hillary Clinton has promoted the adoption of children living in foster care, worked to break down racial and ethnic barriers to adoption, worked for passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, and worked to provide additional resources to children aging out of the foster care system through the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. These two pieces of landmark legislation reformed our nation's child welfare system by putting considerations of children's health and safety first.

Background

Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997: The Adoption and Safe Families Act helps thousands of children waiting in foster care move more quickly into safe and permanent homes. This overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation was based in large part on the recommendations of the Administration's "Adoption 2002" report, which had the central goal of doubling the number of adoptions to 56,000 by the year 2002. Already, the total number of adoptions rose to 36,000 in 1998 from 28,000 in 1996, on track to meet Administration's goal. This 29 percent increase is the first significant increase in adoptions since the national foster care program was established nearly 20 years ago.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act makes clear that the health and safety of children must be the paramount concerns of state child welfare services. It sets swifter time frames for making permanent placement decisions and terminating parental rights for children. For the first time, states have financial incentives to increase adoptions. Children with special needs and ongoing medical needs are ensured health care coverage. Federal funds continue for programs that work to keep families together when it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Foster Care Independence Act: Nearly 20,000 young people leave foster care each year when they reach age 18 without an adoptive family or other guardian. Without the emotional, social and financial support that families provide, many of these youth find themselves inadequately prepared for life on their own. Studies show that within two to four years of leaving foster care, only half have completed high school, fewer than half are employed, one-fourth have been homeless for at least one night, 30 percent do not have access to needed health care, 60 percent of the women have given birth, and less than one in five are completely self-supporting.

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 provides additional funding to the Independent Living program which offers older youth in foster care educational, vocational and employment training, daily living skills, substance abuse prevention, and connections to dedicated adults as mentors. The bill based on the Administration's plan, enables the program for the first time to include support for room and board, and provide states with the option to offer these young people Medicaid until their 21st birthday. In addition, the bill increases the asset limit and allows youths to have \$10,000 in savings and still be eligible for foster care payments, so that they can save for college, an apartment or other needs that are critical for successful independence. Finally, the bill establishes accountability for states in implementing their programs by requiring data collection and evaluation.

A RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION. With the signing of the new Foster Care Independence Act, the Administration adds to an unprecedented record of promoting the well-being of children and providing them with permanent, loving homes. In 1998 there were a record 36,000 adoptions from foster care, the first significant increase in the history of the program. From 1996 to 1998, the number of adoptions nationwide rose 29 percent -- from 28,000 to 36,000 -- and is on a pace to meet the President's goal of 56,000 adoptions in 2002. Among the President's other steps to improve child welfare and encourage adoption:

Increasing the Transitional Living Program. In the last budget, the Administration secured a 40 percent increase in the Transitional Living program, which provides funds to local community-based organizations for residential care, life skills training, and other support services to homeless adolescents. The program will now be funded at \$20.7 million.

Enacting the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. Based on the Administration's Adoption 2002 report, this landmark law made the health and safety of children a clear priority, provided the first-ever financial incentives for states to increase adoptions, tightened the time frames for making permanent placements of children, and removed other barriers to adoption.

Making Adoption Affordable. In 1996, the President enacted a \$5,000 tax credit for families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the Administration provided more support for families who adopt with a \$500 per-child tax credit. And under the Family and Medical Leave Act, parents can take time with a newly adopted child without losing their jobs or health insurance.

Breaking Down Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption. New inter-ethnic adoption provisions signed into law by the President ensure that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

Giving States Flexibility and Support. This Administration has given 25 states waivers to test innovative strategies for improving state child welfare systems. The Administration has provided states technical support to improve court operations and grants to support local adoption projects, and has also secured federal funding for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program to serve at-risk children and families.

Using the Internet to Promote Adoption. In November 1998, the President issued a directive to the Department of Health and Human Services to expand the use of the Internet as a tool to find homes for children waiting to be adopted from foster care. HHS will develop a national Internet site by the year 2002.

**FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 BILL SIGNING
Q&A**

December 14, 1999

Q: Some have claimed that this bill undermines the goal of adoption, because it pours more resources into the very services that have failed these young people. Is this true?

A: No. This Administration is indisputably committed to promoting adoption, and has taken numerous steps toward that goal. In fact, in 1998 there were a record 36,000 adoptions from foster care, the first significant increase in the history of the program. From 1996 to 1998, the number of adoptions nationwide rose 29 percent – from 28,000 to 36,000 – and is on a pace to meet the President's goal of 56,000 adoptions in 2002. The bill the President will sign today will help those young people for whom adoption will not be possible – those who “age out” of the system by turning 18 without being placed with adoptive parents or another permanent relationship. These young people will benefit from the enhanced access to services that this bill provides. The bill recognizes, however, that young people in foster care, including older teens, continue to need and deserve opportunities for permanent, adoptive families. Therefore, the bill provides independent living services that can be provided concurrent with adoption services.

Q: How does this bill differ from the President's proposal in his FY 2000 budget?

A: The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 is largely based on the President's request in his FY 2001 budget – providing additional funding to the Independent Living program which offers older youth in foster care educational, vocational and employment training, daily living skills, substance abuse prevention, and connections to dedicated adults as mentors. The bill also adopts the President's plan, enabling the program for the first time to include support for room and board, and provide states with the option to offer these young people Medicaid until their 21st birthday. In addition, the bill increases the asset limit and allows youths to have \$10,000 in savings and still be eligible for foster care payments, so that they can save for college, an apartment or other needs that are critical for successful independence. Finally, the bill establishes accountability for states in implementing their programs by requiring data collection and evaluation.

Q: The bill the President is signing authorizes the program at \$140 million, but the budget agreement included only \$105 million. How do you plan to secure the additional resources?

A: The Administration plans to request the \$35 million in a supplemental appropriations bill when the Congress returns.

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Q: What does our nation's child welfare system look like today? How many children are in it and how long do they stay in foster care on average?

A: Today, approximately 540,000 of America's children live in our nation's foster care system [HHS, 3/28/00]. More than 100,000 of these children cannot return safely to their homes and need adoptive families. Our most recent data indicates that nearly half had been in care 24 months or longer. Of the children in care, the average age is 9 years old; 35 percent are white, 45 percent are black and 14 percent are Hispanic. Also, five percent of children turn 18 and leave the foster care system without having a permanent home.

Q: How much funding does the federal government invest in foster care and adoption services?

A: The federal government provides over \$5.5 billion to states to run their foster care, adoption and child welfare programs. The funding provides a variety of supports to states which include: preventive services, investigations of child abuse and neglect, caseworkers and administrators, foster care adoption benefits to families, training, recruitment of foster and adoptive families, demonstration grants to test innovative programs, services for teenagers who are leaving foster care to be on their own, and supports for children with special needs. States must provide matching funds in order to access a majority of these funds.

HCFA	Beneficiaries	Plans & Providers	States	Researchers	Students
Medicare	Medicaid	CHIP	Customer Service	FAQs	Search

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Health Care Financing Administration

Center for Medicaid and State Operations
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

December 14, 1999

Dear State Medicaid Director:

Since the beginning of his Administration, President Clinton has worked hard with Congress to provide health care coverage to more working families and children. As part of this effort, the President proposed new protections for children leaving foster care, and the President was pleased to sign the bipartisan Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 on December 14, 1999. This law makes critical improvements in how we serve older foster care children and in how help them prepare for adulthood.

While the Administration for Children and Families will soon provide your State with comprehensive information on this important law, I wanted to highlight how it gives you the flexibility to provide much needed health care coverage to foster children as they make their transition to independence. The law does this by creating a new optional Medicaid eligibility group. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this new opportunity to provide health coverage to children who have been in foster care.

Children who have "aged out" of foster care face tremendous challenges. They often find themselves fully emancipated and on their own without the family support received by most individuals entering adulthood. Also, the incidence of homelessness, substance abuse, and pregnancy can be high in this population. Clearly, these children continue to need access to medical care. And yet, upon reaching their 18th or 19th birthday, many of these children lose their Medicaid coverage that protected them as foster care children.

However, it is now possible to continue to offer these children access to health care. The Foster Care Independence Act has established a new optional Medicaid eligibility group for children who are in foster care under the responsibility of the State on their 18th birthday. There are a series of options available to your State under the law to help these children, including the flexibility to:

1. Provide eligibility for all these children until they reach age 21 or only until age 19 or 20.
2. Not apply an income or resource test for these children. If the State does apply an income or resource test, then the standards and methodologies used cannot be more restrictive than those used for the State's low-income families with children eligible under section 1931 of the Act.
3. Only make those children eligible who were furnished foster care maintenance payments or independent living services under a program funded under title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Please note that the Congress and the President worked to ensure that these children receive the full Medicaid benefits package. All services, including Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment services, must be provided to all children whom you cover under the new optional group.

Again, I urge you to elect this new option to ensure that children aging out of foster care have the health care that they need. We will issue more technical guidance on this matter through the Medicaid Manual. If you have any questions before then, please contact Cindy Mann, Director, Family and Children's Health Programs Group at 410-786-5647 if you need any assistance in establishing this eligibility group or have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

Timothy M. Westmoreland
Director

cc:
All HCFA Regional Administrators

All HCFA Associate Regional Administrators
for Medicaid and State Operations

Lee Partridge
Director, Health Policy Unit
American Public Human Services Association

Joy Wilson
Director, Health Committee
National Conference of State Legislatures

Matt Salo
Senior Health Policy Analyst
National Governors Association



[Return to Medicaid Professional/Technical Information Page](#)

Last Updated December 16, 1999

HCFA	Beneficiaries	Plans & Providers	States	Researchers	Students
Medicare	Medicaid	CHIP	Customer Service	FAQs	Search



Department of Health
& Human Services

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
AT FOSTER CARE EVENT

Presidential Hall

5:45 P.M. EST

MRS. CLINTON: Welcome to the White House, and please be seated. This is a truly wonderful day. In a few minutes the President will sign into law landmark legislation that will strengthen our foster care system, and give hope and help to thousands of young people struggling to make a safe transition to adulthood and independence.

None of this would have been possible without so many of you in this room. I want to thank Secretary Donna Shalala and her team at HHS, including Mary Burdette and Pat Montoya; and former commissioner, Carol Williams. I want to thank many members of Congress, and particularly those who are here with us today -- Senator Rockefeller and Senator Collins, Senator Chafee, and Representative Cardin.

I want to thank Mayor Williams and his mother, Virginia, who welcomed him into her family when he was 3 years old and authorities were about to declare him unadoptable. They are among the best advertisements for the rewards and possibilities of adoption in America.

I want to thank the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, and all of the tireless child advocates who work to raise awareness about this issue. The Casey Family Program and the Annie E. Casey Foundation have give great support to young people in transition.

And I'd also like very much to thank someone who I'm sure is with us in spirit, the late Senator John Chafee. (Applause.) On the Friday before he died, I called Senator Chafee to wish him a happy birthday. I also managed to do a little lobbying for the Foster Care Independence Act, which had hit a few roadblocks in the Senate. By the end of our conversation, I think we were both feeling reenergized and inspired to work even harder for the young people who were counting on this bill.

I understand that one of his last instructions to his staff was to set up meetings with senators he felt could be swayed to support the bill. We all know that had he lived, John

Chafee would not have rested until he had won all of the votes he needed. So we are very grateful today to be joined by his colleagues and, particularly, his son, Senator Lincoln Chafee.

Since the President took office we have seen a transformation in America's efforts to strengthen our foster care and adoption systems. With the Family and Medical Leave Act, we've helped adoptive parents, and all new parents, take time off to care for their children without fear of losing their jobs or their health insurance. We've put an end to racial discrimination in adoption, prohibiting agencies from denying qualified parents of one race to adopt a child of another.

In 1997, we passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which cut dramatically the amount of time a child can spend in foster care, and set an ambitious goal of doubling the number of annual adoptions by the year 2002. And, as the President was able to announce just a few months ago, in September, we are well on our way to meeting that goal.

But it wasn't long after we passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act that we recognized we needed now to turn our efforts to a new challenge: helping those young people, who never did have the opportunity either to return home or be placed in a permanent family, fulfill their promise in adulthood.

Now, for many Americans, the 18th birthday is an important one. Turning 18 means you can vote. It means you can often go away to get a job or to school. But it should never mean that you're left on your own. For too many young people, turning 18 has been just the beginning of a lonely and sometimes harrowing journey toward adulthood. Just half of all young people who have aged out of foster care complete high school. Fewer than one in three have health care coverage. One in four have been homeless.

Two years ago, I went to California to meet a group of young people who had aged out of foster care. They told me about being forced out of their foster homes on their birthdays; about staying in a cold dorm room alone during the holidays because they had nowhere to go; about getting sick and having no insurance to get any medical care; about having literally no one to call for any kind of help.

They reminded me of the many small things we all take for granted in our own families. One young woman said to me, you know, it's almost Thanksgiving, and I have no one to call and ask how to bake a turkey.

I've been very moved and humbled by the resilience and determination I've seen in the young people I've met. Some of them are standing behind me. One is Joy Warren, who spent all of her teen years in foster care. Yet, she still found the commitment and strength not only to continue her education in college, but to attend the law school and become a powerful voice for foster children around America.

I think of Terry Harak, whom I had the honor of meeting at the White House last January. On her 18th birthday, in the middle of her senior year, she found herself without foster

care, without a job and without a place to call home, because the rule has been you're out of foster care if you turn 18 or you finish high school, whichever happens first.

But Terry didn't give up. She spent the night at teachers' and friends' houses and metro terminals, even in hospital emergency rooms. And every morning she would wake up and get herself to school. And last June she graduated and today she is working and is a student in college.

But for every Terry or every Joy or any of the other success stories behind me, think of all those young people who don't finish high school and who risk slipping through the cracks of our society. That is why, last winter, I was very pleased to unveil a new proposal in the President's budget that would extend the foster care safety net to the young people who have aged out of the foster care system, but still need our help. And today I'm very pleased that that bill is about to become law.

The Foster Care Independence Act recognizes one fundamental principle: All of us must take responsibility for helping these young people build lives worthy of their spirit and potential. From this day forward we say to all Americans, no young person, especially those who have not known the support of a safe, loving, permanent family, should have to make the passage to adulthood alone.

This has been a truly bipartisan achievement. And I want to thank everyone in Congress who helped, the former foster children who stepped forward to make their stories known, the newspapers and television stations that publicized their plight, the researchers who backed up their heartbreaking stories with hard statistics, and the advocates and private citizens who lobbied the Congress. In this season of giving, I can think of no better gift to give our children and our future.

Now I'm very proud to introduce two people who can tell us why this law is so important. Alfred Perez is one of the eloquent young people I met two years ago in California. He will speak first. He will be followed by Kristi Jo Frazier, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Both of them will tell us more about their challenges, and even more importantly, about their capacity to persist, their resilience, and their triumphs.

Please welcome Alfred Perez: (Applause.)

* * * *

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, please be seated. At this moment, about all I can think of is, Merry Christmas. (Laughter.)

Senator Rockefeller, Senator Collins, Representative Cardin, thank you all for being here. And, Senator Chafee, thank you for being here, and with you, the spirit of your father, for all his great work on this.

I want to say a special word of thanks to our Mayor, Tony Williams, and his mom, Mrs. Virginia Williams. He has become America's Exhibit A of the potential for foster care success. He is a good man and she is a magnificent woman, and we thank them for being here. Thank you. (Applause.)

I thank Secretary Shalala and all of her staff. And I thank Alfred Perez and Kristi Jo Frazier, and the other young people behind me, for whom they spoke. They spoke so well and so bravely and so frankly. What they have achieved in their own lives is truly heroic, and we should all be very grateful that they are determined to make that kind of difference in the lives of other young people.

I want to thank the groups that have done so much to champion the cause of foster children -- the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, the Annie Casey Foundation, the Casey Family Program. I want to thank especially -- I won't mention them, but they know who they are -- the people who have come up to me personally and lobbied me on this issue over the last couple of years. (Laughter.)

I've got a cousin that's been a friend of mine over 50 years, all my life; we were little kids together. She runs a public housing program in the little town in Arkansas where we were born. And she came up here to a HUD conference on kids aging out of foster care. And she spent the night with me at the White House. I got up the next morning -- I never know, you know, what's on her mind -- this is about a year ago. And she said, Bill, you have got to do something about these kids that are aging out of foster care. She said, it's a huge problem in New York and California, but believe it or not, it's a problem at home, too. And nobody's doing anything about it. I want to thank all those people, and they know who they are.

And most of all, I want to thank Hillary. (Applause.) When we were in law school, she worked at the Yale Child Studies Center. Her first job was with what became the Children's Defense Fund. When I became governor, in my first term she founded the Arkansas Advocates for Families and Children. She has always cared more about the welfare of all of our children than anything else, and our mutual responsibilities to them. And she challenged us a long time ago not to forget those foster children who leave the system each year with no financial or emotional support, no one to turn to. She put a lot of herself into getting this bill passed.

Hillary likes to quote the Chilean poet and teacher, Gabriela Mistral, about our responsibility to children: "Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his bones are formed, his mind is developed. To him, we cannot say 'tomorrow.' His name is 'today.'"

We are here today because all of you, and especially the members of Congress from both parties, stood as one to say that America's foster children can finally have the name, 'today.'

The Foster Care Independence Act expands access to health care, education, housing and counseling for young people who must leave foster care when they turn 18. For the very first time, states will be able to pay housing costs and health insurance for people under 21.

The bill also gives states more resources and flexibility to help former foster children finish high school and go on to college; to help young people get jobs and vocational training; to provide counseling for young people learning to live on their own -- you've already heard how important that is -- and above all, to make sure young adults leaving foster care know they are not out there alone.

The bill makes \$700 million available to the states over five years under very flexible conditions. I challenge the states to use every penny of it. And I know I can depend upon the advocates here -- (laughter) -- to make sure they do.

You also have to help the states, though -- to design good programs, to implement them so the money will be spent with maximum impact. We simply cannot afford to have our high school students sleeping in metro stations, as some of these young people had to do.

We cannot afford to lose our future entrepreneurs and teachers and lawyers to the kinds of obstacles the young people behind me have faced. We can't afford to give up on the future, and these young people are a big part of our future, and our shared responsibility.

We have tried to help America's most vulnerable children grow up healthy and safe, to make the transition into happy, productive adults. We've tried to encourage adoption so that we can end the sadness of young people shuttling from house to house and never knowing a home. We've made adoptions easier and more affordable, given states more flexibility, passed incentive programs for states to promote adoption. These worked so well we actually ran out of money to reward the states. (Laughter.)

I'm pleased that this bill also authorizes additional funds that program needs, because it is working. Our most recent figures show that adoptions are up 29 percent, the first significant increase in two decades. (Applause.)

Now, when we get to the end of the session, sometimes we have to combine a bunch of things in bills, just to get all our work done. And I want to mention one other thing this bill does that is unrelated to young people aging out of foster care or to adoption. This bill includes a provision to honor and assist veterans from other lands who fought with and as a part of the United States Armed Forces during World War II. It creates a special cash benefit under Social Security for veterans who want to leave the United States and return to their homelands.

We have 10 such veterans, 10 Filipino veterans, who are here with us today. I want to thank them for their service, and I ask them to stand and be recognized. We thank you. (Applause.)

So this bill keeps a promise to our children and a promise to our veterans. It was passed with overwhelming support from both parties, proving that we can put partisanship aside, and when we do, it's good for America.

I hope that we will see more of this in the new year. I hope that we can use the historic millennial year to take the rest of the steps we need to deal with the aging of America, by securing Social Security and Medicare, to give our children health coverage, to raise the minimum wage, to pass the common-sense legislation on gun safety and hate crimes, to do the things that we need to do to support working family, including the patients' bill of rights.

These young people here should give us all a lot of courage -- and a lot of heart. They represent, out of the most difficult circumstances, the very best not only of our country, but of what is at the core of human nature. And in this special season for so many of the world's great religious faiths, we should be very grateful for the gifts they have given us, the gifts they will give us, and the gifts so many other children will be able to give because of this legislation.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Now I'd like to ask the members of Congress to come up here, we'll sign the bill.

(The bill is signed.) (Applause.)

END 6:20 P.M. EST

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First Lady's Office
Ruby Shamir (Subject Files)
OA/Box Number: 20366

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ry1230

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#5. *cannot check with 1st*

Foster Care – Independent Living Act Meeting 10/14/99

[001]

Mary Lee Allen
Children's Defense Fund
**Cannot attend, but will send two people
in her place:**

Heitzi Epstein
National Association of Child Advocates

P6/(b)(6)

Grace Reef
Children's Defense Fund

P6/(b)(6)

Graham Newsome
American Academy of Pediatrics

P6/(b)(6)

Jamila Larson
Children's Defense Fund

P6/(b)(6)

Janis E. Guerney
American Academy of Pediatrics

P6/(b)(6)

She will attend with Graham Newsome

Dan Drolet
Alliance for Children and Families

P6/(b)(6)

Dennis Johnson
Children's Health Fund
**Cannot participate in conference call, but
would still like to be informed about
meeting and follow up.**

Miriam Rollin
National Network for Youth

P6/(b)(6)

Karabelle Pizzigati
Child Welfare League

P6/(b)(6)

Sharon Daly
Catholic Charities

P6/(b)(6)

Liz Meitner
Child Welfare League

P6/(b)(6)

Steve Berg
National Alliance to End Homelessness

P6/(b)(6)

Ellen Battistelli
Child Welfare League
Cannot attend

Patrick Patrong
National Independent Living Association

P6/(b)(6)

Mary Mentaberry
National Council of Juvenile and Family
Court Judges
775-784-4441 - conference call.

Bob Reeg
National Coalition for the Homeless
Cannot attend

Mary Bourdette
690-6311 – conference call

NR. HRC has seen this as undone action of the ASFA

Kobelt. Yesterday there was a hug. Reinforced as sense that there is consensus on legis that ppl want to get it done

Hurdles: → \$ complicated by \$ that has already been provided
→ Sen. ^{working on it} cost of Medicaid. seen as mandate

But the worry put on the record the HC needs of the children

There was/is an opening

There was some concern - Sen Grassley has raised issues around accountability on the part of the states + providers in terms of showing that taxpayer \$ is well spent. If there aren't indicators of success ppl would be penalized

Grace Bell: There are probly 2-3 wks left. Take House bill ^{cutting it out putting it in senate and sending it back.} get clutter to go to grassley + then put heat on Roth

Dan Diller: I was concerned @ Nancy Johnson's statement that the kids will find HC through jobs + therefore potentially remove Medicaid.

WV: we hear you can't we find a way to include Medicaid we should go to N Johnson

MB: Sen is still looking for options
N Johnson is willing to keep incl. Medicaid w/ options

Problem #1 is Medicaid options

MR: What are some state level activities,

Karlshelle: We are generally sign on by folks around the country
The various affiliates have been actually involved + have had their own stories
to go to local reps + senators

Miriam: Delay is really into ^{HR 764} CAPE act. Can we work on a package

CAPE Act's mutual - would increase

Heitzi:

Miriam: Putnam Homless youth act got enacted this wk
we should work to get them into the CR

MB: We have lots of support
get grassly + both to agree to both this vote if they are on bud
lowa + DE price is critical now.

~~How~~ Can we neutralize APHSA opposition

Karlshelle: Some commissioners are feeling good. There had been less concern
voiced. But we have been trying to find folks who can use it
for something worthwhile
Concern w/ 'Hold Harmless'

Grace: Poter voted for Dodd to amend anti-recruit
Carp comes out, maybe he will.

N.R.: [?] Do you have source for us?

Kristalle: POTUS/FLORES mention of it. (m.r.) we wind down session.

Mary Ment: judicial ppl wrote letters
do email

M. Ham: ~~can we~~ can we include in red add

N.R.: This week's topic is N related.
We look for off.s to insert + we will continue to do it.

MB: Have ppl met w/ Poter's person

Kristalle: ^{yes} non-committal mty

Hertz: - get intouch w/ California Youth Connection
- Casey Family Program - non-partisan

Patrick: we have kids

Mary Ment: will focus on laws + DE
Cost

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 24, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
AT ADOPTION EVENT

Presidential Hall

10:00 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, and please be seated. And welcome to the White House for a celebration and a wonderful announcement for so many children and families around our country.

I'm delighted that we've been joined by members of Congress, including Senator Carl Levin and Representative Dave Camp and Representative Nancy Johnson and Representative Tom DeLay and Representative Ben Cardin and Representative Maxine Waters.

This is an issue that has been at the real heart of our efforts in the last several years to do what we could to give every child a chance to have a permanent loving home. And there are many people who have played a role in bringing us to this day. I want to acknowledge Olivia Golden and Pat Montoya, from HHS. I want to acknowledge the Brown, the Manis, the Keane and the Vasquez family. Carol Williams, the former Children's Bureau director and a champion of adoption; the many adoption advocates who are here.

And there's one very special champion of foster children who I would like to introduce to you. She is an eight-year-old girl who heard about how many foster children could not afford to use anything but garbage bags for luggage when they were told they had to move. So she decided to collect suitcases for them, and so far she has collected 1,000. And I'd like to ask MacKenzi Snyder to stand, please. (Applause.)

This summer I saw a photograph that reminded me why the work we're doing to promote adoption in our country is so vitally important. It was a picture of a young woman in a green silk evening gown, with high heels and a lace shawl, and you could see the anticipation and excitement in her eyes. That was a picture of 17-year-old Deanna Collins. It was taken by her parents, her adoptive parents, on the night of her high school prom.

Looking at that picture, it was difficult for me to believe that the smiling, confident young woman was the same girl I had welcomed to the White House just four years ago. Back then, she was 13, and she'd already spent eight years in foster care. With her shoulders slumped forward, and her eyes downcast, she told the audience gathered in the East Room for National Adoption Month about her dreams of living in a place she could call home, with a room of her own and a family she could love.

Not long after that visit, Deanna's dream came true. And it's been my privilege to watch this young woman's life transformed by her adoption. With the love of her parents and the confidence that comes from knowing that, indeed, she always will have a place to call home, no matter what else happens to her in life, she is thriving. She's a senior in high school, now, and plans to go to college and major in social work.

Every time I need inspiration for our fight to strengthen and increase adoption in America, I think of Deanna. I think of so many of the other children whom I've know. I think of the adult adoptees, who are telling us their stories, including Washington D.C.'s own Mayor, Tony Williams, who told us at another Adoption Month commemoration last year how, at the age of three, he was about to be declared unadoptable, and institutionalized by the state, when Virginia Williams opened her arms and welcomed him into her family.

Mrs. Williams is here today, and all of us are grateful for the love you gave that young three-year-old boy, and the second chance you gave to him. And I'd like to ask Mrs. Williams to please stand. (Applause.)

But we can't gather today and celebrate Dianna or Mayor Williams without thinking of the thousands of foster children in America who are still waiting for the same chance, either to go back safely to their own families where they will be given the love and the attention and the discipline that every child needs, or be given the chance in a new family.

For more than 25 years, as an advocate and an attorney, I have tried to work with so many others to address the challenges of foster care and adoption. I've represented perspective parents in court. I've represented foster children. I've worked on behalf of changes in legislation. I've listened to the frustrations that social workers and judges and police officers and parents and others feel about the red tape that so often keeps them from sharing their lives with children who badly need their love.

I've met foster children who have spent childhoods feeling alone and unloved, moving from home to home. Children such as the teenage boy the President and I met in the Oval Office two years ago. When we asked him where he lived, he looked down and he said, "All over Fairfax County."

In many ways, giving more of our children the chance to know the love and support of a family is a personal crusade for us. I know that many of you have been at the meetings and the roundtables and the celebrations of National Adoption Month that we've held here at the White House. And I've been very pleased and grateful to work with so many

advocates like Wendy's founder, or Dave Thomas, who as an adopted child himself has dedicated much of his time and personal resources to promoting adoption.

With each meeting I became, along with all of you, more and more convinced that it was past time to reform our foster care system, to identify and eliminate the obstacles to change the placement procedures so that we could expedite the movement of children either home or into new homes.

We've made a lot of progress. We've helped adoptive parents carve out the time they need to care for their new children. The first bill the President signed into law was the Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows new parents -- including adoptive parents -- to take time off and care for their children without fear of losing their jobs or health insurance.

We've put an end to racial discrimination in adoption. The President signed and strengthened the Multiethnic Placement Act, prohibiting adoption agencies from keeping children of one race from the safe and loving arms of parents of another. We have made adoptions more affordable, putting in place tax credits for new adoptive families. And we're taking steps to use the Internet to help match waiting children with loving homes.

And most importantly, we've crafted legislation to dramatically reduce the amount of time a child spends in foster care. We've said that no child would have to wait longer than 12 months -- down from 18 months -- before the court considered his or her permanent placement. For the first time, we have offered states financial incentives to move more children out of foster care and into permanent homes. And we have given states the flexibility to try new strategies to accomplish that goal.

And we set an ambitious national goal of doubling the number of children adopted annually, from 28,000 to 56,000, by the year 2002. And though there were some moments when it looked like it wouldn't pass, we fought hard to make the Adoption and Safe Families Act the law of the land in 1997. In a few minutes, the President will offer new evidence of our continued success.

But we still have more to do. Two weeks after the President signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act, I went to California to meet with a group of young people, who were aging or had already aged out of foster care. They told me about their struggles -- about being forced out of foster homes on their 18th birthdays; about living in homeless shelters, seeking sleep in emergency rooms while trying to finish school; about getting sick and having no one to turn to for medical care or comfort. These young people are our responsibility. We cannot ignore the potential of any one of these children.

One of the young women I met that day in California is now a student at the Yale Law School. And that's why I was pleased to announce a new proposal in the President's balanced budget, to help former foster children make the transition to independence. And I'm very happy that the House, under the bipartisan leadership of Representative Nancy Johnson and Representative Ben Cardin, both of whom are with us today, has passed the bill that will allow

former foster children to remain on Medicaid until age 21 and will -- (applause) -- and will give them the extra help they need to finish high school, find work and a place to live.

Now I would call on the Senate to take action on the companion bill that is sponsored by Senators Chafee and Rockefeller. There is no reason we cannot pass this bill this year for the good of all of our children. And I hope every one of us here will do everything we can to make sure that the Senate does that, and then we can have, I think, another celebration to sign a bill that will make such a difference in the lives of older children in foster care.

The progress we celebrate today is due to the work of countless people, and many of you are here, and others are working on the front lines around our country and others are caring for children who are newly adopted in their homes.

I remember very well that a few years ago on Mothers Day, we had a roundtable for mothers and their adopted children. And at the end of the discussion, I went around the room asking the children if they had anything else to say, because some of them had not yet spoken up, and I didn't want them to leave and not have been heard. The final boy to speak looked up at the woman sitting next to him and said quietly, "I just want to thank my mother."

With that simple statement, and that adoring look, he summarized what all of us had been trying to say all afternoon. So, to all of those of you who have been the mothers and fathers that have helped move our children into homes, and into a sense of love and security, we say thank you -- for opening your homes and your hearts.

And now it's my privilege to introduce someone who has done just that -- who with her husband, Steven, and her son Sean, have just finalized the adoptions of Sarah and Brian. Please join me in welcoming Dawn Keane. (Applause.)

* * * * *

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. When we have events here in this room, with people who have come to share their experiences, very often I feel like a fifth wheel. I think everything that needs to be said has already been said. (Laughter.) But I want to begin by thanking Dawn Keane for her wonderful statement; her husband, Steve; and Sean, Brian and Sarah. They're beautiful children. They did a good job at the microphone, didn't they? (Laughter.) I want to thank Olivia Golden and Pat Montoya for their work at HHS on this important issue.

I'd like to thank this remarkable bipartisan delegation from the House of Representatives here -- Dave Camp and Nancy Johnson and Ben Cardin and Maxine Waters, Sandy Levin and Congressman DeLay. This may be the only issue all six of these people agree on. (Laughter.) And -- Tom's nodding his head up and down. (Laughter.)

I'll tell you a funny story -- this is a true story. The other day I was reading a profile of Tom DeLay in the newspaper. And I got about halfway through, and he was giving me the devil for something; you know, he's very good at that. (Laughter.) And he started grinding

on my golf game and saying that I didn't count my scores and all this, and I was getting really angry. (Laughter.) And then I get to the next part of the story, and it talks all about his experience and his commitment to adoption and to foster children, and the personal experience that he and his wife had. And my heart just melted. And all of a sudden, I didn't care what he said about my golf game. (Laughter.)

And I say that to make this point: The Keane family -- the Manis, the Brown, the Vasquez families who are behind me today -- they represent what we all know is basic and fundamental about our families and our country -- more important than anything else we can think of. And they open their homes and their hearts to children, and they open our hearts to them -- and to each other as we work for more stories like those we celebrate today.

I'd also like to say a special hello to the Badeau family. Some of you may remember this. Two years ago, almost, Sue and Hector Badeau joined us at the White House when I signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act. They brought 18 of the 22 children they have adopted. Now, you need to know that, as if they didn't have enough to deal with, this summer they also welcomed into their home a family of eight Kosovar refugees. So if you ever need proof that there's no limit to human goodness, you can look at Sue and Hector Badeau.

I'd like for them to stand. Where are they? There you go. They've got some of their kids here. Stand up. (Applause.) Thank you. God bless you. Thank you. (Applause.)

I would also like to say just a very brief word to Hillary. You heard her tell the story of her involvement in this, but when we were in law school together, before we were married, she was talking to me about how messed up the foster care and adoption laws were in the country, how many ridiculous barriers there were. And not long after we moved to Little Rock and I became Attorney General of our state, she took a case for a young couple who had had a child from foster care for three years that they desperately wanted to adopt -- this is over 20 years ago. And together they changed the law in our state so that foster parents could be considered for adoption, something that used to be verboten in most states in the country.

So I've watched her work on these issues now for almost 30 years, and I am very grateful that one of the many blessings of our time in the White House has been the chance to make a difference on these adoption and foster care issues, and I thank her for making it possible. (Applause.)

Finally, let me say, again, I want to say a special word of thanks to the members of Congress in both parties who have come to this event today. We have had a raging, often stimulating, occasionally maddening, debate on what should be the role of government over the last five years in this town. But we have all agreed that government has a role to try to protect children, but to facilitate the most rapid, reasonable, orderly process for both foster care and for transition to adoption.

Hillary said that the House had adopted this provision to let kids coming out of foster care keep their Medicaid until they're 21. I'll just give you one more example of how these issues unify us. Within a 36-hour period, about six months ago, my cousin, who runs the public

housing unit in the little town where I was born in Arkansas -- which has 8,000 or 10,000 people -- came up to a HUD conference. And she spent the night with me and were having breakfast, drinking coffee, and she says, you know, you've got to do something about these foster kids. They keep going out of the -- they come out of the foster homes and they've got no money and they need to do some things. And then the next day, literally within 36 hours, I'm talking to these people from New York City who tell me it's maybe the biggest social problem they have now, with all these kids coming out of foster care.

So this is an issue that spans the experience of America, the whole sweep of it. And I'm very grateful -- I'm grateful that we have this consensus and I'm grateful that they've acted on it. I urge the Senate to follow suit.

Now, you've already heard about the things that we're doing to try to double the number of children we help move into permanent homes. We have new evidence that these efforts are bearing fruit. The Department of Health and Human Services has just given me a report that tracks our progress in meeting our adoption goals. It shows that the number of adoptions from the foster care system increased from 28,000 in 1996, to 36,000 in 1998. That is the first significant increase in adoptions since the National Foster Care Program was created almost 20 years ago.

Now, that's an amazing thing. That's more than -- it's about a 30-percent increase. That's a very impressive increase in two years. And we are well on our way to meeting our goal of 56,000 in 2002, doubling the number. For all of you that had anything to do with that, I say thank you. You should be very proud of yourselves.

Now, if you look at this HHS report -- and I urge those of you who are interested in it to actually get it and scan it, at least -- you will see how much this bipartisan cooperation I talked about and the work that's being done by people in the trenches to clear away the barriers is making a difference -- a stunning example of what we can do when we put our children first. You will see that we have acted on each and every one of the 11 recommendations set forth in the original Adoption 2002 report. Breaking down barriers to adoptions; ensuring accountability, rewarding innovation, supporting adoptive families themselves.

One of the key recommendations we adopted into law in 1997 was to give states, for the first time, financial incentives to help children move from foster to adoptive homes. Under the new bonus system, states are entitled to up to \$4,000 or \$6,000, depending on whether the child has special needs, for each adoption above their previous average.

Today, I have the honor of presenting the first round of these awards, worth \$20 million, to 35 of our 50 states. The good news is that these states did this, using creative new approaches and exceeding their own high goals. Illinois, for example -- listen to this -- the state of Illinois increased its options by 112 percent -- 112 -- yes, you can clap for Illinois. That's good. (Applause.)

Now, the bad news, if you can call it that, is that even though we believed this would work, we didn't think it would work this well this quickly -- (laughter) -- and we didn't put enough money in to give all the states all the money to which they're entitled. So I hope we can

rectify that, because I think we all think that we want to give the states the incentives to figure out how best to do this.

But the fact is, I think all of us are very proud of what these states have done for some of their most vulnerable citizens. And I look forward to working with the Congress to make up this shortfall and get the other 15 states above their goals as well.

Today, I am also awarding \$5.5 million in adoption opportunity grants to outstanding public and private organizations in 16 of our states to help fund research and new ways of increasing inter-state adoptions, and adoptions of minority children. Together these efforts will help to accelerate the remarkable progress we've seen.

Now, again let me say, I think the big goal we ought to have for this legislative session is to get the Senate to follow the lead of the House, and schedule a vote on the Chafee-Rockefeller bill to ensure that the foster children are not cast out in the cold when their time in foster care ends. I hope -- I know if we can get it up and get it on the calendar, it will pass with the same overwhelming bipartisan support that we've seen in the House. So I urge all of you to do what you can to make sure that that is a big priority for the Senate, and I will do my part.

Together, we can help our foster children -- all of them -- first grow up in good homes, and, if they turn 18 as foster children, to make a good transition from transit to independence -- with health care, education, counseling and housing.

Now, ultimately, let me say the credit in all this does not really belong to all of the political leaders, even though they've worked very hard, all of us have together. It does not belong to all the public servants, even though there is a real new attitude, I think, in the organizations, the social services organizations, to try to do the right thing and move this along.

But none of this will work if there aren't good people in every community like the Keanes, the Manises, the Browns, the Vasquezes, the Badeaus, who are willing to give a child unconditional love and a good upbringing. They are the proof of the unlimited goodness of the human heart. All the rest of us are trying to do is to unleash it. And we need to keep right on doing that.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

10:30 A.M. EDT