THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 23, 1999

ADOPTION EVENT

DATE:	September 24, 1999
LOCATION:	Presidential Hall, OEOB 450
BRIEFING TIME:	9:15am – 9:30am
EVENT TIME:	9:35am – 10:35am
FROM:	Bruce Reed, Mary Beth Cahill

I. PURPOSE

To announce significant increases in the national rate of adoption, award the first adoption bonus awards to 35 states, as well as Adoption Opportunity grants, and receive an HHS national progress report on adoption.

II. BACKGROUND

Today, you and the First Lady will announce bonus awards of $20 million to 35 states that have increased the number of children adopted from the public foster care system, and $5.5 million in grants to innovative programs that remove barriers to adoption. You will also unveil a national progress report on adoption that documents the success of the Administration's strategy. 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 your goal of 56,000 adoptions in 2002. This is the first significant increase in adoptions since the national foster care program was established nearly 20 years ago.

Incentive Awards Succeed In Increasing Adoptions. In the Administration's Adoption 2002 proposal and the adoption law of 1997, you created the first-ever financial incentive for states to increase adoptions of children from the foster care system. Today, you will release $20 million in bonus awards to 35 states that in 1998 had exceeded their average adoption rate from 1995-1997. The $20 million in bonuses provide for up to $4,000 per adopted child, and $6,000 for each child with special needs. In fact, the states' performance in 1998 entitled them to an additional $22.5 million.

Innovative Grants Reduce Barriers To Adoption. You will also announce $5.5 million in new awards under the Adoption Opportunities program. This program provides grants to public and private organizations to eliminate barriers to adoption, particularly for children with special needs. This year's grants reward a variety of initiatives, including efforts to increase adoptions of minority children, targeted field research, and awards for collaborative planning to increase adoptions across jurisdictional lines.

Report Shows Clinton Administration Strategy Is Working. Since taking office, you have championed efforts to make foster care work better, to find and assist adoptive families, and to break down barriers to adoption. Today you will receive a progress report from the Department of Health and Human Services that documents the effectiveness of the Administration's strategy.

- **Reforming the Child Welfare System.** In 1997, you signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act. This landmark law was based largely on recommendations from the Administration's Adoption 2002 report, which you requested by executive memorandum in order to meet your goal of doubling adoptions by 2002. The law expedited permanent placement decisions for children, ensured health insurance coverage for all special-needs children in subsidized adoptions, and created the bonus awards released today.

- **Making Adoption Affordable for Families.** The Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, you signed in 1996, provides a $5,000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a $6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This provision helps middle class families for whom adoption – particularly of children with special needs – might have been prohibitively expensive.

- **Giving States More Flexibility and Support.** The Administration has granted waivers to 20 states and the District of Columbia to test innovative strategies for improving child welfare systems. In addition, it has secured new funds to support state implementation of the 1997 law and has, through the Adoption Opportunities program, supported local initiatives to promote adoption and provide post-adoptive services.

- **Using the Internet to Make Adoption Easier.** In 1998, you directed HHS to develop Internet tools to link children in foster care more quickly to possible adoptive families. Secretary Shalala reported that HHS will launch a national web site by September 2001 to break down geographic barriers to adoption.

- **Removing Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption.** New inter-ethnic adoption provisions, passed as a part of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, help ensure that the adoption process is free of delays and discriminatory practices driven by race, culture and ethnicity. They do so by strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which you signed in 1994.

- **Providing Supports for Child Protection and Adoption.** The Family and Medical Leave Act, which you signed in 1993, enables working parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance coverage. The 1996 welfare reform law you signed also maintains child protection and adoption guarantees.

Now Is The Time To Take Important Next Steps. To follow through on this record of achievement, today you and the First Lady will urge Congress to provide new support for young people leaving foster care. Under the current system, federal financial assistance for young people in foster care ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. Your FY 2000 budget request increases funding by nearly $300 million to help these youth secure health care, life skills training, and educational opportunities. With the Administration's strong support, the House has already passed bipartisan legislation to address these needs. Today you will urge the Senate to take prompt action on the companion measure and to safeguard the interests of vulnerable young people leaving foster care.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing Participants:
The First Lady
Bruce Reed
Melanne Verveer
Mary Beth Cahill
Nicole Rabner
Lowell Weiss

Stage Participants:
The Manis Family

John and Brenda Manis recently adopted 3-year-old Mackenzie, and have been foster parents for 10 years. They have two biological children, Christopher, age 19, and Lindsay, age 16.

The Brown Family

Adrienne and Gilbert Brown adopted two children, Christopher, age 14, and Rodney, age 11, in 1994. They are also currently in the process of finalizing the adoption of Joshua, age 12.

Program Participants:
YOU
The First Lady
The Keane Family

Dawn and Steven Keane finalized their adoption of siblings Sarah, age, 8, and Brian, age 11, in May 1999. They located Sarah and Brian through an Internet site sponsored by the National Adoption Center in Philadelphia. They have one biological son, Sean.

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- **YOU** and the First Lady are announced, accompanied by the Keane family, onto the stage.
- The First Lady makes remarks and introduces Dawn Keane.
- Dawn Keane makes remarks and introduces Sean, Brian, and Sarah Keane.
- Sean, Brian, and Sarah Keane introduce **YOU**.
- **YOU** make remarks, work a ropeline, and depart.

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by speechwriting.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

-Chart of state-by-state adoption bonuses
-HHS Adoption Progress Report

FY 1998 ADOPTION INCENTIVE BONUSES

State	3 Year Adoption Average (FY 95-97)	FY 98 Adoptions	% Increase	Bonus
Arkansas	138	251	82%	$280,320
California	3,287	3,958	20%	$1,841,837
Colorado	417	560	34%	$419,540
Connecticut	207	229	11%	$41,390
Florida	987	1,549	57%	$1,290,603
Georgia	493	672	36%	$449,642
Hawaii	85	297	249%	$518,311
Illinois	2,200	4,656	112%	$6,869,733
Indiana	495	774	56%	$842,843
Iowa	350	517	48%	$371,566
Maine	108	112	4%	$11,288
Maryland	342	420	23%	$317,947
Massachusetts	1,116	1,137	2%	$39,508
Michigan	1,905	2,254	18%	$942,554
Minnesota	258	427	66%	$480,684
Mississippi	114	169	48%	$187,194
Missouri	557	616	11%	$110,999
Montana	115	144	25%	$54,559
New Hampshire	45	50	11%	$9,407
New Jersey	621	755	22%	$409,193
New Mexico	147	197	34%	$94,067
New York	4,716	4,822	2%	$199,423
North Dakota	47	83	77%	$67,728
Oklahoma	338	456	35%	$280,320
Oregon	445	665	49%	$586,980
Pennsylvania	1,224	1,494	22%	$592,624
South Carolina	256	465	82%	$500,438
South Dakota	56	58	4%	$3,763
Texas	880	1,365	55%	$1,350,806
Utah	225	250	11%	$47,034
Vermont	75	116	55%	$100,652
Washington	607	759	25%	$291,609
West Virginia	182	211	16%	$60,203
Wisconsin	467	589	26%	$301,015
Wyoming	15	30	100%	$28,220

Source: HHS Administration for Children and Families

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to take this opportunity to report on the notable progress that we have made in the past few years to increase the number of children moved from our nation's foster care system into adoptive and permanent homes.

In December of 1996, you laid out ambitious goals for the adoption of vulnerable children. You also called on the Department of Health and Human Services to devise ways to make adoption easier and faster, to move more children out of the foster care system and into safe, permanent and loving homes. Central to these efforts was the enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, designed both to remove barriers to adoption and to provide incentives to the States for increasing the number of children adopted each year. The Department responded with the Adoption 2002 report, which outlined specific recommendations on how to achieve the goals that you laid out for the country's child welfare system. We are happy to report that we are already seeing significant results from the implementation of those recommendations.

Because of your strong commitment to these goals, the unwavering dedication of the First Lady, diligent work here at the Department, bipartisan congressional leadership and truly outstanding efforts by State and local adoption agencies, we are well on our way toward meeting your goal of doubling the number of adoptions and permanent placements for these children by 2002. In fact, the total number of adoptions rose to over 36,000 in 1998 from 28,000 in 1996. We are especially pleased to announce today that thirty-five States earned adoption incentive awards for their exceptional achievements.

While we recognize and applaud these successful efforts, it is also important to underscore that more work needs to be done. The Department is committed to continuing to work in partnership with the States to promote adoption and improve our child welfare system, giving our nation's most vulnerable children what every child deserves – a safe, stable home and a loving family environment.

Sincerely,

Donna E. Shalala

INTRODUCTION

This report follows up on the Department of Health and Human Services's (HHS) 1997 report to the President entitled ***Adoption 2002***, which provided a bold blueprint of recommendations for reaching the President's ambitious goal of doubling the number of adoptions from the nation's child welfare system in the year 2002. Today, just two years later, the Department is delighted to report that:

- The number of adoptions from the public child welfare system nationwide has already increased from 28,000 in 1996 to 36,000 in 1998, fully on track for the President's target of 56,000 in the year 2002.
- The President signed into law the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA), bipartisan legislation that incorporates many of the critical recommendations from the 1997 blueprint.
- Across the country, with leadership and support from HHS, States, courts and adoption agencies are moving rapidly not only to implement the national legislation but also to develop creative ways to overcome barriers and move children to loving permanent homes as rapidly as possible.
- Adoption is more accessible and affordable to families, because of the Family and Medical Leave Act and the investments in adoption assistance and in adoption tax credits made under this Administration.

These results are especially impressive because, like the ***Adoption 2002*** report, this report focuses on a specific group of the nation's most vulnerable children: approximately 110,000 children in the nation's public foster care system who cannot return safely to their own homes and need adoptive families if they are ever to experience a safe, loving, permanent home. Many of these children have "special needs", that is, characteristics which have historically made them more difficult to place in adoptive homes. For example, they may be older children rather than infants, children who are part of a sibling group, children of minority heritage, or children who have physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities. Yet in response to the call by the President and the Congress for a clear commitment to permanent, loving homes for all children, we are proud to report that the response across the nation has been extraordinary.

The remainder of this report outlines the four strategies that we believe lie behind the results reported here:

- Aiming high and ensuring accountability for results;
- Reforming national and State legislative frameworks to remove barriers to adoption;
- Supporting and rewarding innovation; and
- Making adoption more accessible and affordable for families.

In addition, the appendix provides a detailed chart of the recommendations from the ***Adoption 2002*** report with their completion dates.

AIMING HIGH AND ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

The President set an ambitious goal for this Administration: to increase the number of children adopted out of the public child welfare system to 56,000 adoptions in the year 2002. Each year since the national commitment to the goal, the number of adoptions has risen. In 1997, the total number of adoptions rose to 31,000 from 28,000 in 1996. In 1998, we are pleased to announce that States achieved 36,000 adoptions. This represents an unprecedented 29 percent increase in the number of adoptions nationwide over a three-year period (FY 1996-FY 1998).

As recommended in ***Adoption 2002***, the Department followed up on the national goal by working with State partners to develop individual State goals that would add up to a national doubling of adoptions. For many States, the outcome focus has become a central part of their own approach to adoption. Iowa, for instance, has put in place a system to track key measures for the adoption program on a monthly basis and to closely monitor progress towards outcome goals. This outcome focus, a renewed utilization of adoption specialists and other targeted efforts, has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of adoptions in Iowa.

In addition, the enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) provided an extraordinary new tool for focusing the nation and individual States on adoption outcomes. As a result of the commitment of the President and strong bipartisan Congressional leadership, ASFA included the first-ever outcome-based financial award in the child welfare field: an incentive to States to increase the number of adoptions for children waiting in the foster care system. The bonuses -- up to $4,000 per child and $6,000 for each child with special needs -- are awarded for States that exceed the number of children adopted compared to the previous year. States are to use these awards to further improve services, including post-adoption services, that are provided to children and families in the foster care system.

In FY 1999, 35 States will receive a share of the $20 million in adoption incentive awards based on their FY 1998 performance. The numbers of adoptions have increased so dramatically, that, as specified in the law, we have made prorated adjustments in the awards to States. In this first award of bonuses, the 1998 numbers are compared to a 3-year average baseline. The 35 States are Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. The following table indicates the increases in adoption by State.

REFORMING NATIONAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

In order to create the broad-based changes that were needed to support the President's goal, the Administration and a broad bipartisan majority in the Congress, made significant changes in the legislative framework that undergirds the child welfare system. In 1997, President Clinton signed into law the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997, a legislative milestone for child welfare reform. The key provisions of the Act closely followed the central recommendations of ***Adoption 2002*** to ensure that children's safety is paramount in child welfare decision-making, that foster care is a temporary setting and not a place for children to grow up, and that the speed of decision-making in the child welfare system respects a child's developmental needs and sense of time. Key provisions in the law shorten the time frame for making permanency planning decisions, establish a time frame for initiating proceedings to terminate parental rights, clarify reasonable efforts, and call for every State to ensure that its laws and regulations comply with the new provisions, so that children in the State's child welfare system are able to move to permanent placements or adoptive homes more quickly. To date, 49 States and Puerto Rico have made the required changes.

As States move to reform their own legislation, policy, and practice to come into compliance with ASFA and meet their adoption goals, the Department has played a forceful role in both holding States accountable for the rapid change called for in ASFA and supporting them, through hands-on assistance, information, and expertise. For example:

- To provide State policy-makers in general and State legislators in particular with information that would help them reform their own State legislative frameworks, the Department convened a cross-disciplinary group of experts who produced Guidelines for Public Policy and State Legislation Governing Permanence for Children. The guidelines are a technical assistance tool reflecting the best thinking of child welfare administrators, lawyers, judges, advocates and front-line workers. This document offers guidelines and model legislation that are intended to help those at the State and local levels examine their current processes and consider new directions to promote permanency.
- To help local and State experts share information and solutions, the Department convened ten technical assistance conferences across the country focused on ASFA implementation.
- To help States work on the implementation of ASFA, the Department increased training and technical assistance to States regarding ASFA implementation through the Adoption Information Clearinghouse and the Child Welfare Resource Centers.

Another key element of these reforms is the elimination of racial and ethnic barriers to adoption required by the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA), and the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provisions (IEP), enacted as a part of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996. These laws ensure that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity. In order to support the success of the provisions, the Department has issued guidance and provided training and technical assistance that has helped the States in the implementation of this legislation. The Children's Bureau and the Office of Civil Rights at HHS have worked closely at the national and regional levels to help States examine their legislation and administrative practices to make sure they are in compliance with these laws.

SUPPORTING AND REWARDING INNOVATION

The Department recognizes that broad-based reform must happen at all levels – in federal legislation and policy, in State legislatures, in local court systems, and with public and private child welfare agency managers and line workers around the country. Creative leaders and programs throughout the country are working to ensure that foster care is a short-term safe haven for children as they move into a stable, permanent home. The Department has worked to spark new models by giving States the flexibility to test new practices through its child welfare waiver system and by funding innovations through its grant programs and specialized technical assistance. We have captured the spirit of the success stories and promoted their replication through our Adoption Incentives Bonuses and Adoption Excellence Awards.

The Administration also forged partnerships with States to launch child welfare waiver demonstration projects, which allow States to test and evaluate child welfare service delivery and financing strategies. The Department approved seventeen child welfare waiver demonstrations in FY 1997 and 1998 and will expect to approve up to eight by the end of FY 1999. The Department encouraged States to focus on adoption and post-adoptive services, to ensure that adoptive placements are successful and prevent re-entry into the foster care system. Maine, for instance, will provide training on special-needs adoption to mental health and other professionals that work with adoptive families, adoptable children, and public and private adoption providers, and subsequently provide post-adoptive services.

The Department also has provided financial support to stimulate innovation in State and private child welfare agencies and with other key child welfare partners, including court systems.

- The Adoption Opportunities Program, increased by $10 million in FY 1998, funds a variety of service innovations that seek not only to increase the number of adoptions, but also to support the success of adoptive placements. In FY 1999, the Department is awarding grants to recruit more minority adoptive families; to test new innovations in the placement of sibling groups, children with disabilities, and adolescents; and to provide post-legal adoptive services to prevent adoption disruptions. The Program also funds work to improve the system for interstate placement of children.
- The Promoting Safe and Stable Families program (formerly known as the Family Preservation and Support Services), signed into law in 1993, was revised to allow States to use the funds to promote and support adoptions.
- The Department's Court Improvement Program (CIP) provides funding to State courts to improve the handling of foster care and adoption proceedings. The CIP has strengthened the focus on judicial decision-making and the key role that courts play in attaining safe, permanent homes for children.
- In response to the President's request to recognize the numerous changes in policy and practice that bolster adoptions, the Department established the annual Adoption Excellence Awards. For the past two years, the Department has honored those States, organizations, businesses, individuals and others who have demonstrated excellence in providing adoption and other permanency outcomes for children in foster care. Winners have exhibited tireless commitment and creativity in recruiting adoptive families and moving children to permanent placement more quickly. Eight winners were recognized in 1998 and thirteen in 1997.
- The 1998 winners were: Tim O'Hanlon, Ohio North American Council on Adoptable Children, OH; Governor James and Brenda Edgar, IL; Georgia Department of Human Resources, GA; Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; Hope for the Children, Inc., IL; Three Rivers Adoption Council, PA; Kansas Association of Broadcasters, KS; and Judge Max Baer, PA.
- The 1997 winners were: North American Council on Adoptable Children, MN; Resources for Adoptive Parents, MN; Athens County Children's Services, OH; National Adoption Center, PA; Jack Williams, Senior News Anchor for WBZ-TV 4, MA; Sherry Coy, Adoptive Mother, NV; The Badeau Family, PA; The Scott Family, AZ; The Neal Family, NC; Wendy's International and Dave Thomas Foundation, OH; South Carolina Families for Kids; and Lucas County Children's Services, OH.

Finally, at the President's request, the Department is exploring innovations in the use of technology to increase adoptions. In 1998, the President directed HHS to develop a plan to expand use of the internet to share information about children who are legally free for adoption in order to shorten the time needed to find them adoptive families. An effective national registry will help to break down geographic barriers to adoption and assist in meeting the President's adoption goal. HHS will launch a national web site by September 2001, working with States, some of whom have already launched internet registries, to reach all children who need a home and eliminate the delays in interstate adoptions.

MAKING ADOPTION MORE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

The Administration has taken a several steps to make adoption more affordable for families and to support the formation of adoptive families. In 1993, President Clinton acted to help new adoptive families through the Family and Medical Leave Act, which enabled parents to take time off to adopt a child without fear of losing their jobs or health insurance coverage. The Administration also has secured important financial support for adoptive families. In 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, which provides a $5,000 tax credit to families adopting children and a $6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This provision has alleviated a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive, and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs. Since President Clinton took office, the number of children with special needs who were adopted with federal adoption assistance has risen by over 60 percent. In addition, adoptive families are eligible to receive the $500 per-child tax credit, which President Clinton enacted in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

ON TRACK TO MEET OUR GOALS:

The early progress of the ***Adoption 2002*** Initiative is an example of the way that an ambitious, common goal can galvanize a system to create widespread change. The challenges in the child welfare system are daunting. More than 520,000 of America's children live in our nation's foster care system. Our most recent data indicate that the average time that these children are in out-of-home care is 2 years and 9 months. These sobering statistics underscore the need to continue the significant progress that has been made to date to move our country's most vulnerable children into safe, permanent, and loving homes more quickly.

The Administration also is working with Congress on another critical front to protect children for whom the child welfare system is not able to secure adoption and permanency. The President's Independent Living proposal aims to help the nearly 20,000 young people who leave foster care each year, having reached the age of 18 without an adoptive family or other permanent relationship. The Independent Living Program, run through the States, assists older foster care children with the transition to independence by helping them earn a high school diploma, participate in vocational training or education, and learn daily living skills, like budgeting and securing housing and employment. Bipartisan legislation to increase funding for the Independent Living

Program, and provide health coverage for these young people to the age of 21, is moving through the 106th Congress.

The President recognized the critical importance of this issue when he challenged us all to undertake the ***Adoption 2002*** Initiative, with a goal that was bold enough to require fundamental changes throughout the child welfare system. In response, all of the partners in the system have demonstrated a commitment which has put the country confidently on track to meet the President's goal of our target of 56,000 adoptions in 2002. At the federal level, we have exercised leadership by creating a policy framework for child welfare reform, promoting and rewarding innovations at all levels, and providing financial assistance to individual families who choose to adopt. States and localities have responded by taking advantage of federal flexibility to design and implement policies that support permanence and adoptions and services that recruit adoptive families and provide ongoing support for adoptive placements. Moreover, non-profits and foundations have served as important partners in working to promote permanency, serving as contractors for the States, independent advocates for children and families, and sponsors of critical activities such as research for the National Adoption Exchange. Together, we have made tremendous progress in ensuring the safety, permanence, and well-being of our most vulnerable children.

APPENDIX A: ACHIEVEMENT OF ADOPTION 2002 RECOMMENDATIONS

Adoption 2002 Recommendations	Actions Completed	Description
Increase the Number of Adoptions	√	Numerical targets leading to a doubling of adoptions over five years were set at the National and State levels. Adoptions are up 38% from FY 1995 to FY 1998, keeping us on track to reach our goal of 56,000 adoptions in 2002.
Provide Technical Assistance to States and Communities	√	Ten regional conferences were held in 1998, as well as technical assistance on drafting the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) State legislative requirements. The eight Resources Centers funded by the Children's Bureau, including the Resource Centers on Permanency Planning and Special Needs Adoptions, have provided critical information and expertise to the States.
Provide Financial Incentives	√	In September 1999, $20 million was awarded to 35 States that successfully increased adoptions in FY 1998.
Implement the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA)	√	Guidance was issued in June 1997 and significant training and technical assistance was provided by the Children's Bureau and Office of Civil Rights to at least 40 States. The Office of Civil Rights has reviewed all State policies and practices for MEPA compliance and continues to work with States to ensure the appropriateness of any law changes in this area.
Track the Progress of States	√	Through the Adoption Incentives component of ASFA, the Department is collecting data through the Adoption and Foster Care Automated Reporting System and reporting on State progress.
Recognize Successful States	√	The Department initiated the Adoption Excellence Awards in 1997 to honor States, organizations, businesses, and individuals who have demonstrated excellence in providing adoption and other permanency outcomes for children in foster care. Eight winners were recognized in 1998 and thirteen in 1997.

Promote Permanency for Children who Cannot Return Home	√	The enactment of the ASFA of 1997 was a major achievement in promoting permanency for children. As of September 1999, 49 States and Puerto Rico have passed legislation to comply with ASFA. With $10 million in additional funding for the Adoption Opportunities program, the Department has increased training and technical assistance to the States, and has supported new initiatives to achieve increased adoptions of children in foster care, provide post-legal adoptive services and build effective collaborations for timely adoptions. Finally, ASFA extended the Court Improvement Program for an additional three years. The Department has supported State efforts, and in early 1999, the Department issued a program instruction to help clarify elements of the program.
Address Permanency Planning Earlier Through Timely Hearings	√	The Department's proposed regulation (published September 1998) expands on the provisions in ASFA that called for immediate permanency planning and shorter timeframes for hearings. The Children's Bureau also convened a group of experts from throughout the field to draft *Guidelines for Public Policy and State Legislation Governing Permanence for Children*, which were published in June 1999.
Clarify "Reasonable Efforts" and Other Federal Policies Related to Permanency and Safety	√	Both the ASFA legislation and the Department's proposed regulations have clarified "reasonable efforts" and other elements of promoting permanency.
Set Standards for Securing Permanency	√	The ASFA legislation and subsequent Department proposed regulations require "reasonable efforts" to secure a permanent home for a child in foster care and clarify that plans for reunification and for alternate permanency options can be concurrent. The Department also encouraged States to use the Federal Parent Locator Service through the publication of an Information Memorandum in January 1999.
Examine Alternative Forms of Permanency	√	Seven states and the District of Columbia have waivers to examine assisted guardianship/kinship permanence. In addition, a group of experts has convened several times in 1999 around kinship care issues and a report to Congress is pending.

9.10.99

Adoption Event

— adoptions have increased in the near term

List, pgm, substance

Cap: 160, East room, time TBD

List

old list: 35 grps
4 state - expand list
30 HHS

Adoption appointees
grps
States
admin
cong'l list -
Families: trying to adopt or y'? we finalized this past yr

real person - family sphrs →

~~Keith~~

M@ next wk - lists by tuesday

Program

Pres
FL
real person
Cong'l person?
advocate?
~~Kath~~
admin person? → Olivia Golden

bi-part. bill on hill, passed list is sitting in Senate. use this evt to push sen xn.
The Pres + FL will do that in their rmks.
We will invite lots of hill folks, but
① part of what we're celebrating is success of ASFA
Chafee Rockefeller Camp Kennelly
② is it too complicated - who?
maybe we could have them on the stage
Chafee Rockefeller Cardin + Johnson

Report → state by state
→ narrative w/ sec letter to cover
Fact Sheet
↳ add adoption ops
↳ if more $ than we can ... many

<u>Substance</u>

- #s, ↑s State by State + awards incentives
  $19.8 ~~...~~ million alongside trust
  (nearly 20 million)

  They met the qualification under the incentives
  States

  adoption ↑ in 34 states → is what the incentive dollars refer to
  over the baseline

  some states didn't ↑ over baseline
  " " " ↑ at all

  we should think @ how we want to talk about the ↑

- we have good info on what some states did, that was successful

  alongside the put out the $ + the #s, we're interested in this
  doing a progress report:
  ~~here's what we were~~
  ~~" the strategy~~
  ~~" how it worked~~

  #s, state by state #s
  what we've done
  what we're celebrating
  how it worked - how we got there

  93 signed MEPA
  Tom presents bill

  96 ... MEPA
  tax credit

- include what this has done
  adoption opportunities. approx $5 mill
  awardees from this round, + description of them
  in our fact sheet we list + describe what we're
  announcing for this round

Mary: governor, commissioner
HHS IGA to think about recommendations

- feed by COB Tuesday
- draft of report next wk
-

Karen to figure out by person

Westchester Harrogland

CHIP - N day - NY

NV

Adoption
- 35 advocate
- 4 e WAdmirs
- 8 states reps (cab secs, govrs, child welfare admin rs, mayors)
- 53 cab secs
ny admrs
govrs
9:35 am mayor
- 30 / 14 memb staff
- 33 govrs
- 18 family members

+ 18

9.21.99

Adoption

ASFA
state govt: 54

outside: 54

Cong'l: 40

- bonus grants to states who have exceeded ~~their~~ the baseline
  1st of the bonuses
  35 states getting them. exceeded baseline.
  pres goal of 2xing # of kids adopted by 2002

- $5.5 mill in adoption opportunities grants to further & encourage adoption
- HHS is going to give POTUS a report
- legis piece in FY2000 ... includes - almost $300 mill ↑ for foster kids who age out of foster system
  Jan. FL released this bud request since then HS passed foster care independence act, the Sen had intro'd companion measure but there was been no action
  Want Sen to pass legis that would support kids who age out.

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room 450

8:45am

935 - 1035

~~ASFA~~ - Golden?
- HHS to present report

state or Social Worker?
- Governor commenting on success on local level (Vilsack)
- Real person

(4) . POTUS - announcements

(1) . FL her experience on this issue

press
Mark needs families

DRAFT—DRAFT—DRAFT
PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES FIRST ADOPTION BONUS AWARDS TO STATES
July 28, 1999

Today, the President and First Lady announced the first adoption bonus awards to 34 states for increasing the number of children adopted, as part of the President's Adoption 2002 initiative included in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The total number of adoptions rose to more than 34,000 from 28,000 in 1996, keeping on track to meet the President's goal of 56,000 children adopted in the year 2002. This 23 percent increase is the first significant increase in children adopted since the national foster care program was established nearly 20 years ago.

Adoption Incentives Succeed in Increasing Adoptions. In the Administration's Adoption 2002 proposal and the new adoption law of 1997, the President introduced the first-ever financial incentive to states to increase adoptions of children waiting in the foster care system. The bonuses -- $4,000 per child and $6,000 for each child with special needs -- are awarded for states that exceed the number of children adopted compared to the previous year.

Building on a Strong Record. Today's announcement builds on a deep commitment by the President, the First Lady, and the Administration to facilitate adoptions and improve the child welfare system. Since taking office, President Clinton has championed efforts to make foster care work better for the children it serves, to find and assist adoptive families, and to break down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations:

Achieving Landmark Legislative Reform. On November 19, 1997, the President signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act, reforming our nation's child welfare system and making it clear that the safety and well-being of children must be the paramount concerns of state child welfare services. This landmark legislation was based in large part on the recommendations of the Clinton Administration's *Adoption 2002* report, which the President requested by executive memorandum on December 14, 1996, to meet his goals of doubling adoptions and permanent placements by the year 2002 and moving children more quickly from foster care to permanent homes. The Act tightened time frames for making permanent placement decisions for children, and ensured health insurance coverage for all special needs children in subsidized adoptions. Also, it created new financial incentives for States to increase adoptions, and continued funding for services to keep families together when it is appropriate and safe.

Making Adoption Affordable for Families. In 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, which provides a $5,000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a $6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This provision has alleviated a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs. Since President Clinton took office, the number of children with special needs who were adopted with Federal adoption assistance has risen by over 60 percent. In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, President Clinton ensured more support for families who adopt children with the $500 per-child tax credit.

Giving States Flexibility and Support. To test innovative strategies to improve state child welfare systems, the Clinton Administration has granted waivers to 19 states and the District of Columbia, giving them more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. In addition, the Administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations. The President secured $10 million in FY 1999 in new funds to support state efforts to implement the new adoption law, and has, through the Adoption Opportunities program, supported state and local innovative demonstration projects to promote adoption, provide post-adoptive services, and build new public-private partnerships.

Breaking Down Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption. New inter-ethnic adoption provisions, passed as a part of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, ensure that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity by strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994.

Creating an Internet Registry to Meet the President's Goals for Adoption. In 1998, the President directed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop a plan to expand use of the Internet to share information about children who are legally free for adoption in order to shorten the time needed to find them adoptive families. HHS estimates that approximately 100,000 children in our nation's foster care system cannot return to their birth families and need families to adopt them. An effective national registry will help to break down geographic barriers to adoption and assist in meeting the President's adoption goal. HHS Secretary Donna Shalala reported to the President that HHS will launch a national web site by September 2001, work with states to reach all children who need a home and eliminate the delays in interstate adoptions.

Providing Supports for Child Protection and Adoption. In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act, enabling parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform legislation signed by the President maintained the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and did not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, and foster care and adoption services.

FY 1998 ADOPTION INCENTIVE BONUSES

State	3-yr average baseline	Adoptions	Bonus
Arkansas	138	251	$292,657
California	3,287	3,958	$1,922,897
Colorado	417	560	$438,004
Connecticut	207	229	$43,211
Florida	987	1,549	$1,347,403
Georgia	493	672	$469,430
Hawaii	85	297	$541,122
Illinois	2,200	4,656	$7,172,072
Iowa	350	517	$387,918
Maine	108	112	$11,785
Maryland	342	420	$331,940
Massachusetts	1,116	1,137	$41,247
Michigan	1,905	2,254	$984,036
Minnesota	258	427	$501,839
Mississippi	114	169	$195,432
Missouri	557	616	$115,884
Montana	115	144	$56,960
New Hampshire	45	50	$9,821
New Jersey	621	755	$427,201
New Mexico	147	197	$98,207
New York	4,716	4,822	$208,199
North Dakota	47	83	$70,709
Oklahoma	338	456	$292,657
Oregon	445	665	$612,813
Pennsylvania	1,224	1,494	$618,705
South Carolina	256	465	$522,462
South Dakota	56	58	$3,928
Texas	880	1,365	$1,410,255
Utah	225	250	$49,104
Vermont	75	116	$105,082
Washington	607	759	$304,442
West Virginia	182	211	$62,853
Wisconsin	467	589	$314,263
Wyoming	15	30	$29,462

Source:
HHS Administration for Children and Families

Adoption Qs and As--DRAFT
7/26/99 3:17 PM

Q What are you announcing today?

A Today, we are announcing the first award of adoption bonuses to states for increasing the number of children adopted from the public foster care system. In the President's Adoption 2002 plan, he proposed these bonuses to states to encourage states to place more foster care children in permanent homes, and to reach his goal of doubling the number of children adopted by the year 2002. The bonus, along with other measures to reduce the barriers to adoption, became part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. With our announcement that over 34,000 children were adopted in 1998, we are well on the way of meeting our goal of 56,000 adoptions [and permanent placements??] by 2002.

Q Not all states received bonuses. Why has there been a decline in the number of adoptions in some states?

A We believe that some of this decline is a result of the still developing reporting system, especially in those states that are implementing new computer systems. The changeover to the new systems may be having an impact on the accuracy of the reporting. In addition, some of the decline may be a result of normal variation in the number of adoptions finalized in the states. As states gear up to implement the new adoption law, we expect their number of adoptions to increase.

Q When you first announced the goal, you said you wanted to double the number of children adopted or permanently placed from 27,000 to 54,000. Now you say there were actually 28,000 children adopted in FY 1996, and the goal is now 56,000. Why the change? And is the numerical goal just for adoptions, or for adoptions and permanent placements?

A When the President announced the adoption goal in February 1997, we used the best available data we had at the time, which showed 27,000 adoptions and permanent placements. We now know that there were 28,000 adoptions in FY 1996, and therefore have revised our goal upward to meet the goal of doubling adoptions to 56,000 by FY 2002. And, with the data we are releasing today showing that in FY 1998, there were more than 34,000 adoptions, we know we are well on the way to meeting our goal.

Q What did the ASFA Act do?

A The Act helped to ensure that foster care is a short term solution, not a long term situation, by making clear that the child's safety and well-being must be the paramount concern when decisions are made about the removal of children from their homes or the reunification with their families. It set swifter time frames for making permanent placement decisions and terminating parental rights for children. And, for the first time as we announced today, states have financial incentives to increase adoptions. They must provide health insurance coverage for all special needs children in subsidized adoptions. The new law also eliminates obstacles to adoptions and develops new measures to track the success of states and good results for children.

Q How much are the bonuses awarded to states? Which states will receive the bonuses?

A As specified in the law, states will receive $4,000 for each child adopted and $6,000 for each child with special needs adopted, that is an increase from the base year set in the law. The 34 states which qualified for the bonus are: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington State, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Q Reports say that the states did so well, the number of adoptions will exceed the amount of money set aside for the bonuses. What does the Administration propose regarding the shortfall in adoption incentive funds for adoptions finalized in FY 98?

A We are very encouraged that the adoption incentive program has been a powerful tool in refocusing states' attention on adoption to help so many more children get permanent homes. States did so well that they did exceed the $20 million appropriated by Congress for bonuses. The law specifies that in any fiscal year in which the total amount of the incentive payments that would otherwise be paid to the states exceeds the authorized limit, the awards will be pro rated for each state to stay within the cap. The pro-rated adjustment has been made and those funds will be distributed to the appropriate States. Even with this cap, these are very substantive bonuses.

The Administration is supportive of the effort to make sure that states will be able to get their full bonuses for their 1998 efforts to increase the number of adoptions. The House has approved legislation to do so, H.R. 1802, and the Administration will work closely with Congress to achieve a bipartisan solution to the shortfall problem.

Q What was the "Adoption 2002" report?

A In response to a 1996 Presidential directive signed by President Clinton, HHS issued the "Adoption 2002" report. The report took its name from of the President's central goals -- to at least double by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. "Adoption 2002" outlined a new action plan to set and meet urgent new adoption targets. We are very pleased that Adoption and Safe Families Act signed by the President in November 1997 was based on the report.

Key among the actions outlined is the commitment to clarify the reasonable effort standard - which governs whether and when to remove a child from his or her family. Additionally, the report recommended offering states sensible financial incentives to increase adoptions and permanent placements; and providing technical assistance to states, courts and communities to help move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes.

Q **What else has the Administration done to promote adoption?**

A The Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. Since taking office in 1993, the President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations.

These steps include signing into law a $5000 tax credit to families adopting children and a $6000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs; enacting and strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which helps to ensure that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity; and signing into law the Family Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. Also, as part of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, the Congress included the President's $500 per-child tax credit.

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 520,000 of America's children live in our nation's foster care system. More than 100,000 of those 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; and five percent of children turn 18 and leave the foster care system without having a permanent home.

Q **Will you meet your goal of doubling the number of children adopted from**

foster care by 2002? How close are you?

A We have seen a very positive response by states to meeting the goals of doubling the number of children adopted from foster care by the year 2002. States are investing resources, training staff, expanding outreach and recruitment efforts and setting tough year by year goals. HHS is collecting better statistics from states that show states are making progress. From 1996 to 1998, states increased adoptions by 23 percent -- from 28,000 to more than 34,000 -- the first significant increase in the history of the program.

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.

Q Is the number of adoptions you are reporting all the adoptions that occurred?

A The number of adoptions reported today qualified to be counted for payment of adoption incentive funds. These numbers record nearly all adoptions finalized by the states of children from the public foster care system in FY 1998. There may be some more adoptions where the state was involved but did not qualify for incentive payments, for example where they provided one time non-recurring legal costs or adoption assistance for a child with special needs. We do not have a firm count of these additional adoptions. As the reporting of adoptions by the states improves with new computer other data collection systems, we are confident we'll be capturing all the children adopted from the state child welfare systems.

Q The North American Council on Adoptable Children has reported that more than 36,000 children will be adopted in 1998. Your number is slightly lower. Where do they get this figure? Which number is more accurate?

A The Council called each state to collect this information. In compiling the official numbers for the adoption bonuses, HHS worked with the states to remove duplicate cases and clean up discrepancies in their earlier data. We believe these numbers are more accurate based on the subsequent review with states.

Ellen Dahl <edahl@os.dhhs.gov>
07/27/99 01:29:18 PM

Please respond to edahl@os.dhhs.gov

Record Type: Record

To: Nicole R. Rabner/WHO/EOP

cc: Mary Bourdette <mbourdet@os.dhhs.gov>
Subject: fwd: Adoption Opportunities

Nicole--
On the draft one-pager, we have a correction. Sorry for the confusion.

Ellen

Original Text
From: Michelle Ganow@ASMB.BUDG@OS.DC, on 7/27/99 1:25 PM:
To: Ellen Dahl@ASPA@OS.DC

Ellen -

ACF provided clarification. The $10 million in new funds was provided in FY 1998. In FY 1999 Congress provided an additional $2 million (for a total of $23 million), and the President has requested $27.4 million in FY 2000 (an increase of $2.4 million).

Michelle

Original Text
From: Sharon McCarthy@OLAB@ACF.WDC, on 7/27/1999 1:21 PM:
To: Michelle Ganow@ASMB.BUDG@OS.DC

Adoption Opportunities: Ten million dollars in new funding was provided in conference action on the FY 1998 appropriation. An additional $2 million was provided in FY 1999.
---------- Original Text ----------

From: Michelle Ganow@ASMB.BUDG@OS.DC, on 7/27/99 1:07 PM:

Original Text
From: Ellen Dahl@ASPA@OS.DC, on 7/27/1999 1:04 PM:
To: Michelle Ganow@ASMB.BUDG@OS.DC

Giving States Flexibility and Support. To test innovative strategies to improve state child welfare systems, the Clinton Administration has granted waivers to 19 states and the District of Columbia, giving them more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. In addition, the Administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations. The President secured $10 million in FY 1999 in new funds to support state efforts to implement the new adoption law, and has, through the Adoption Opportunities program, supported state and local innovative demonstration projects to promote adoption, provide post-adoptive services, and build new public-private partnerships.

DRAFT

Options for Providing Full Funding of Adoption Incentives

July 6, 1999

Background:

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89) amended the Social Security Act to authorize the payment of Adoption Incentives to States that are successful in increasing the number of children who are adopted from the public foster care system. Specifically, Section 473A of the Social Security Act authorizes $20 million for each of fiscal years 1999 – 2003 to pay States incentives, based on the number of children adopted in the previous fiscal year. The law specified that amount appropriated for the Adoption Incentive payment, up to the $20 million authorized, was to be treated as outside the caps on discretionary funding under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

The amount of the payments to States is based on increases in the number of children adopted from the foster care system in a year, relative to a baseline number. For each additional child adopted over the baseline number, a State is eligible to receive $4,000. For each such child with special needs (i.e. children who have a title IV-E adoption assistance agreement), the State is eligible to receive an additional $2,000. However, the law specifies that in any fiscal year in which the total amount of the incentive payments that would otherwise be paid to the States exceeds the authorized limit, there is to be a pro rated adjustment in the awards to States.

As a result of the passage of ASFA, as well as State, local and private initiatives focusing attention on the needs of children in foster care awaiting permanent adoptive families, the country is seeing unprecedented increases in the number of children adopted from foster care. Therefore, the authorized limit of $20 million for Adoption Incentive payments is well below the amount needed to pay the full per-child amounts specified in the statute and anticipated by the States. Awards to States will need to be reduced dramatically unless additional funds are made available.

We do not yet have final figures on the number of adoptions for FY 1998 (the data upon which FY 1999 Adoption Incentive awards will be based), or the proportion of those adoptions that were title IV-E eligible. However, based on the data we do now have in, we have developed some preliminary estimates on the additional amounts that would be needed to provide full incentive payments, as follows:

FY 1999	$23 million
FY 2000	$19 million
FY 2001	$13 million
FY 2002	$24 million
FY 2003	$18 million

Options for Addressing the Shortfall:

We have reviewed several possible approaches for addressing the shortfall.

Reprogramming Funds -- We have been advised that, under appropriations law, it would not be legal to reprogram other funds to cover the shortfall in the Adoption Incentives program.

Discretionary Funding -- As currently written, the funding for the Adoption Incentive Program is on the discretionary (rather than the mandatory) side of the budget. The program is authorized at $20 million a year, and that is the amount of funding that was appropriated for FY 1999. (That is the amount requested in the President's FY 2000 budget, as well.) While the existing $20 million is excluded from the budget caps, any additional money appropriated would be subject to the caps. In addition, any attempt to increase funding above the authorized level through the appropriations process would be subject to a point of order. Therefore, a request to increase the appropriation should be accompanied by a legislative proposal to increase the authorization level (perhaps to "such sums," to allow for shifts in the amount of funds needed each year.)

Given the status of the legislative and appropriations cycles, it would probably not be until FY 2001 that we could put forward appropriations and legislative requests to address the shortfall. At that point, such a proposal might only cover the shortfall for FY 2001 – 2003, not the earlier two years.

Mandatory funding -- Another option to address the shortfall would be to move some or all of the funding from the discretionary side of the budget to the mandatory side. It should be noted, however, that if the total funding were moved from discretionary to mandatory, then the $20 million currently excluded from the caps would be "lost," in that the exemption from the caps would not apply to any other use of the money. Of course, any additional request for funding on the mandatory side would need to be accompanied by an offset, as well.

Recent Legislative Activity

One possibility that was and may still be under consideration by the House Ways and Means Committee majority staff is using mandatory/entitlement funds to pay for the shortfall only (i.e., any amount exceeding the $20 million appropriation) for either FY 1999 or FYs 1999 and 2000. Prior to the full Committee markup of H.R. 1802, the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (the independent living bill), staff from the Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee had drafted an amendment to provide $41 million in mandatory dollars to make up the shortfall for FYs 1999 and 2000. However, when a proposal to reduce Federal financial participation for genetic testing (to determine paternity), originally included in H.R. 1802, was dropped from the bill, the offset to cover the Adoption I ncentive proposal was lost and the amendment on Adoption Incentives was not offered at full Committee markup.

Just before the independent living legislation went to the House floor, Ways and Means Committee staff attempted to include a similar Adoption I ncentive provision (this one providing an additional $23 million to make States whole for FY 1999) as part of the manager's amendment. Under this provision, the additional $23 million would have been discretionary money outside the caps (similar to treatment of the original $20 million). House Budget Committee staff apparently objected to tinkering with the discretionary caps. As a result, the provision was modified to increase the authorized level to $43 million for FY 2000, with no adjustment to the caps. The additional funding, if any, would still be used to ensure that States receive their full FY 1999 awards (i.e., those based on FY 98 performance). Since the additional $23 million would not be excluded from the discretionary caps, this money would have to come out of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee allocation. The provision may have been intended as a placeholder, to keep the issue on the table as the independent living bill headed over to the Senate.

Conclusion:

We will advise DPC and OMB when we have final figures for the number of adoptions in FY 1998 and the amount of the incentive awards earned by the States, to be paid in FY 1999. We look forward to further discussion of options that would make it possible to provide full Adoption Incentive awards to the States.

This Facsimile is from the

Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20447

Date: 7/22/99
This Transmission consists of this cover plus 1 pages

To: Nicole	From Terrill
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Fiscal Year 1998 Adoption Assistance Payments

456-
6687

State	Payments Through 7/22/1999 (1)
Alabama	1,812,488
Alaska	2,046,074
Arizona	8,014,013
Arkansas	2,734,508
California	84,010,903
Colorado	6,515,881
Connecticut	2,919,642
Delaware	457,110
District of Columbia	3,211,836
Florida	23,797,471
Georgia	8,813,147
Hawaii	1,392,762
Idaho	941,133
Illinois	26,295,632
Indiana	9,515,316
Iowa	9,129,649
Kansas	1,609,616
Kentucky	3,511,055
Louisiana	14,384,623
Maine	4,064,674
Maryland	5,246,846
Massachusetts	10,145,821
Michigan	42,709,369
Minnesota	6,126,404
Mississippi	3,036,717
Missouri	6,569,441
Montana	1,056,003
Nebraska	2,306,728
Nevada	1,514,261
New Hampshire	516,080
New Jersey	13,746,036
New Mexico	3,516,664
New York	63,626,109
North Carolina	6,892,764
North Dakota	674,597
Ohio	48,632,620
Oklahoma	4,888,521
Oregon	6,787,067
Pennsylvania	21,528,982
Rhode Island	2,281,691
South Carolina	4,943,365
South Dakota	755,675
Tennessee	2,878,098
Texas	18,561,081
Utah	2,988,325
Vermont	2,494,743
Virginia	3,118,879
Washington	5,215,661
West Virginia	870,418
Wisconsin	45,932,923
Wyoming	99,294
State Total	554,838,716

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Source:
HHS Administration for Children and Families

Selected "High Percentage Increase" States

Arkansas

Arkansas increased their number of finalized adoptions by using several simple strategies: First they identified barriers to finalizing adoptions; then they worked to resolve these barriers. Specifically, they increased recruitment activities for waiting children using Television advertisements and booths at conferences and other special events. They established a web site with a focus on adoption. In addition, they increased the number of Adoption Specialists in heavy workload areas, and developed an emphasis on finalizing adoptions by establishing special work projects to finalize adoptions of children who had been successfully placed with families.

FLORIDA

Several different kinds of activity have contributed to the success of the Florida Department of Children and Families in increasing the number of adoptions. Among these are:

1. The personal commitment of former Governor Chiles and his family (his daughter was adopted). Governor Chiles made adoption a statewide initiative and spent considerable time speaking publicly about increasing opportunities for adoption. Governor Bush has continued to "carry that banner" and has made child welfare a top priority in his administration.
2. Additional adoption staff, particularly staff who have specialized expertise in assisting children who are often the most difficult to place. Extra attention and support has been given to "special needs placement."
3. Adoption subsidies are continued until the child reaches age 18.
4. New legislation in Florida allows for the waiver of college fees for youth who have been adopted.
5. DFCS has developed adoption performance objectives for staff.
6. *One Church, One Child* and an Adoption Information Center have contributed significantly to increasing public information around children and youth awaiting adoption.

HAWAII

The significant increase in Hawaii's adoptive placements has been due to Hawaii's concentrated efforts in providing safety and permanency for children in out-of-home placement. Some of the activities and efforts that have resulted in providing homes for children include the following:

Streamlining the adoption process – Family Court and Department of Human Services (DHS) have worked closely to reduce the paper work and shorten the time frame required to finalize an adoption.
Contracting with private agencies - Private agencies have been used to assist in the recruitment of foster and adoptive families and to complete home studies for prospective adoptive families.
Collaboration with private and public agencies – The "Adoption Connection" is a private/public collaboration, which includes organizations like Child and Family Services, the Casey Family Program, the Foster Parent Association, Family Court and the Department of Human Services (DHS). The Governor's wife is the chairperson of this committee. The Adoption Connection's goal is to recruit and find homes for special needs children who are waiting for families. Two of the recruitment efforts are: (a) TV campaigns featuring adoptive families who have adopted and children waiting for families and (b) an Adoption Fair which will be held in September.
Adopting and utilizing the OHANA Conferencing Model – OHANA is a Hawaiian word for family. OHANA Conferencing is a family conferencing model that involves the whole family in making permanency decisions for the child in out-of-home placement. Family members are involved in finding and identifying the best alternative permanent placement for the child.
Changing emphasis through revised State Statute – As the result of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Hawaii revised their State statute to emphasize safety and permanency for children.
Revising Hawaii Rules to include difficulty of care payment – Currently, Hawaii only provides difficulty of care payment for special needs children who are in guardianship placements. This is not provided for adoption cases; therefore, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is presently revising its rules to provide difficulty of care payment for adoptive families.

ILLINOIS

The changes that led to the record increase in the number of adoptions began in the early 1990's due to innovative recruitment programs, including Project HEART (Helping to Ease Adoption Red Tape), Help Me Grow and the Corporate Partnership for the Recruitment of Adoptive Families. The Corporate Partnership is a collaborative effort between DCFS, private child welfare agencies and corporations to recruit in the workplace for adoptive parents. Also, the leadership demonstrated by the current DCFS Director, Jess McDonald, and the Honorable Nancy Sidote Salyers, Presiding Judge in the Child Protection Division of Cook County Juvenile Court, and other stakeholders has led to many concrete reforms in court and agency procedures that have facilitated the adoption process.

IOWA

Iowa's achievements in adoption are the results of the high priority assigned to adoption and a number of important steps the State has taken over the last 5 years.

About 5 years ago -- as a downsizing move -- Iowa shifted from the use of adoption specialists to generic workers and almost immediately suffered a dramatic decline in placements (138 in '93). The Governor's office took this issue on and organized a committee, chaired by the lieutenant governor, chartered to improve the adoption program. Among the action steps taken were:

1. Return to the use of adoption specialists -- now a specialist in each of the 6 Regions of the State is responsible for the child from the point of termination of parental rights (TPR);

2. Legislative appropriation for a statewide recruitment program called KidSake delivered through contract with a coalition of agencies. The legislature increased its appropriation last session. Among other things, KidSake has dramatically improved the way DSS presents its waiting children though photo listings, etc. This year, Iowa is planning to develop a WebPage and to connect to Faces of Adoption.

3. DSS believes among the most important steps it has taken is to focus its work on specific outcomes for the adoption program and track and closely monitor progress towards these outcomes through key measures (i.e. complete child study

within 30 days) on a monthly basis. These outcomes and measures resulted from a strategic planning process started several years ago. As a result, DSS sees itself now asking itself and the field the right questions about adoption.

4. DSS believes that ASFA is playing a very significant role in helping the State make even greater progress in adoptive placements -- increasing TPRs; focus on courts etc.

MINNESOTA

In 1997 the Regional Office and the Minnesota Department of Human Services entered into a partnership agreement to increase adoptions. The Department's implementation of these goals included 1) proactively securing the leadership of counties, 2) securing legislative changes that support adoption, 3) increasing recruitment efforts, 4) contracting for the first time in 1998 with private agencies and 5) obtaining positive publicity for all of the above mentioned efforts.

NORTH DAKOTA

The North Dakota State agency contracts with two private agencies to provide adoption services for all of the waiting children in the public child welfare system. These agencies, Lutheran Social Services and The Village, have accredited programs and professional staff who are specifically trained in all aspects of adoptions. The State agency indicates that little change has been made to the program of services, but that the State agency and the two contractors focus on child specific recruitment, assertive collaboration and good case management to enhance the adoption of special needs children. North Dakota has a small caseload, and this intensive focus on the specific needs of children is paying off in terms of achieving permanent homes for waiting children.

OREGON

In the spring of 1997, the Oregon Legislature passed a Department of Human Resources sponsored bill (SB689) to decrease the time to achieve permanent homes for children and increase the number of adoptions. This legislation provided for additional funds to hire legal assistants and staff to do home studies, recruitment, training, and mediation. A Legislative Task Force was also formed to explore issues and improvements in the permanency/adoption service delivery system; The Task Force met until June of 1998.

Oregon also developed targets to increase the number of adoptions. They audited existing child case files and the state office monitored activities and progress of the field offices in moving the waiting children to permanency. Through the systems approach and with legislative and fiscal support, Oregon has been able to exceed the targets they established to increase adoptions and shorten the time children stay in foster care.

Having focused on these activities in the spring of 1997 allowed Oregon to be thinking and planning for increased adoptions prior to implementation of the Federal *Adoption 2002* Initiative. This initiative was announced by the President in December 1996 with Federal legislation and policy following in mid-1997.

TEXAS

Texas was able to increase its number of finalized adoptions by organizing and implementing several major initiatives statewide, beginning with the "Swift Adoption Teams" that were established in response to State legislation enacted in September, 1995. These special Teams were charged with responsibility for expediting the process of placing children under State jurisdiction for adoption. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services was required to report back to the legislature on the results of these Team efforts in expediting administrative procedures and reducing the length of time required to place children for adoption. The Teams were organized to focus staff resources on the particular tasks that were most needed within each region. The policies developed and implemented by these Teams were published in the Child Protective Services Handbook, and have had a significant impact on removing barriers to adoption for many children.

Building on some of the recommendations in the 1996 report to the legislature on the Swift Adoption Teams, the efforts of the Governor's Task Force, and the Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care, additional State legislation focusing specifically on permanency was passed in 1997. The new Texas Family Code provisions provide tighter time frames governing legal processes for children in foster care and include additional grounds for termination of parental rights. Focus groups with agency staff were held to discuss required changes in State practice, training on the new law has been provided for judges and attorneys, and Permanency Planning Directors have been appointed to oversee State efforts to achieve permanency for children. The State has also contracted with private child placing agencies to assure the quality of adoption services.

In addition, recommendations from the Court Improvement Project, which have increased cooperation between the agency and the courts, have helped to bring early resolution to many adoption cases. Lastly, the State agency has been quite proactive in facilitating adoptive placements using photolistings of children on the Internet through the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange. Texas is the first adoption exchange to provide adoption staff statewide with access to the National Adoption Exchange database. Staff can actually conduct searches for a family at their computer workstations.

VERMONT

Vermont did not have a specific adoption "campaign" per se, but the State agency put forth a solid effort to work more closely with their probate courts to identify kids waiting to have their adoptions finalized, from either the court or agency side. As a result, they were able to substantially reduce the backlog by finalizing the "adoptions in waiting". In addition, the State hired “adoption assistants” to help caseworkers with the paperwork associated with finalizing the adoptions.

WYOMING

The Wyoming State agency has promoted adoption of special-needs children in the public system through a multi-faceted approach to permanency for all children. Three specific pilot projects have impacted this success:

1. One Assistant Attorney General has been dedicated exclusively to the movement of children into adoptive placement. This individual has developed case management guidelines and checklists and has provided training to workers to enable expedited movement of cases through the court system. Results of this pilot project have been implemented throughout the State.

Development of a training module on permanency for children. This effort, undertaken by the State agency has provided training for casework staff on case planning, identification of barriers and the basic steps necessary to finalize adoptions. This has increased staff competence and resulted in more timely achievement of permanency by children awaiting adoption.

Three pilot projects financed with Federal monies made available under the Safe and Stable Families Act, title IV-B (2), have developed improved procedures and practice that enhance permanency. These include concurrent planning, mediation services and the development of improved guidelines for use by workers in filing termination of parental rights petitions.