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# cofo memo

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COFO is a new coalition of four national family organizations listed above. COFO MEMO is a quarterly Washington newsletter written and edited by the Washington representatives of the four organizations: Steven Engelberg for AAMFC and NCFR; Patricia Langley for FSAA; and Barbara Warden for AHEA. This is the third issue. We would appreciate your comments



WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

Plans for the upcoming White House Conference on Families, scheduled for December 13-16, 1979, are grinding along slowly. Officially, Wilbur Cohen, formerly Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and now the University of Michigan's Dean of the School of Social Welfare, has been announced as the Conference Chairman. Unofficially, Patricia Fleming, a former special assistant to Secretary Califano will be the Executive Director. The Deputy Director and other senior staff positions have not yet been filled; and other nominations to the Advisory Council are still being considered.

Prior to working with the Administration, Ms. Fleming served as legislative assistant to Representative Augustus Hawkins of California and Shirley Chisholm of New York. She also held a key staff position with Congressman Andrew Young when he was a member of the Rules Committee.

Wilbur Cohen is expected to be in Washington as of the first of July, and serious Conference planning should begin at that time.

In the meantime, representatives of the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families (to which all four COFO organizations belong) have had several meetings with Conference staff members during the month of April. The staff has agreed to brief Coalition representatives on a monthly basis, with the next briefing scheduled on May 22, 1978. In addition, Coalition representatives plan to meet with Wilbur Cohen and members of the staff in July, 1978.

WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE

From April 19 through April 21, 1978, the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families, in cooperation with the Johnson Foundation, sponsored a meeting at Wingspread, the conference center of the Johnson Foundation located in Racine, Wisconsin.

The meeting brought together a group of scholars, religious leaders, and representatives of various national organizations, and the conference sessions examined family-support systems such as extended families, neighborhoods, voluntary and social service organizations, as well as factors affecting diverse family lifestyles such as regional differences, social class, and religion.

A major purpose of this conference was to focus on the strengths of American family life--which have tended to receive less attention than signs of family disintegration. The participants at this conference also assessed government policies affecting the self-help and mutual aid aspects of family life, and attempted to formulate recommendations for the White House Conference on Families.

Robert Rice, FSAA's Director for Policy Analysis and Development, and an organizer of the Wingspread Conference, will provide a fuller summary of this conference in the next edition of the COFO MEMO. Furthermore, the comments and results will soon be published by the Johnson Foundation, and those of you interested can obtain a report from the Johnson Foundation as soon as it is available.

WELFARE REFORM - An Update

The Winter-Spring issue of the COFO MEMO analyzed the Administration's Welfare Reform bill, H.R. 9030, as amended by the Special House Welfare Reform Subcommittee. At that time, the Senate Finance Committee had not begun hearings, and the outlook for passage of a welfare reform bill was not encouraging. In addition, Chairman Ullman of the House Ways and Means Committee had introduced an alternative bill (H.R. 1011) to the one sponsored by the Carter Administration.

Recently, new developments have slightly improved the outlook for passage of some type of welfare reform legislation. It is unlikely, however, that the Carter Administration's bill (H.R. 9030) will be the one to pass the Congress. The Senate Finance Subcommittee began its hearings on April 17. It quickly became apparent that a bill intro-



duced in March by Senators Howard Baker (R.-Tenn.) and Henry Bellmon (R.-Ok.) which, like the Ullman bill, was incremental in approach, was getting serious attention from the Subcommittee. The \$20 billion price tag of the amended Administration's bill has made many politicians in Washington uneasy--especially in an election year. Thus, the Baker-Bellmon proposal (at \$10 billion) is being given serious attention as a less costly and less controversial alternative. The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to begin hearings on the Ullman proposal when it concludes its work on the tax reform legislation. And the Carter Administration has indicated a willingness to accept a compromise package in order to achieve welfare reform this session. However, it is not clear how far the Administration will compromise, or what type of bill it will support.

Briefly, the main provisions of the Baker-Bellmon incremental bill would:

- Require states to award benefits to families with unemployed fathers.
- Provide fiscal relief by increasing the federal share of welfare to around 90% by 1982.
- Allow states the option of determining eligibility based on income received thirty days prior to application or anticipated income for the calendar month in which the application is made.
- Give employers the option of tax credits or wage subsidies for employing certain eligible workers.
- Create a new program to provide adoption subsidies for low-income families adopting hard to place children.
- Provide pilot projects to test possible changes in the existing system, such as cashing out food stamps.

Generally, any bill that passes the Congress is likely to bring "reform" in some areas where there is now consensus. All pending bill would extend cash assistance to two-parent families; establish a national standard for a minimum benefit; simplify rules and eligibility standards; simplify administration; provide a jobs program for poor families; increase the earned income tax credit; and work toward phasing out food stamps.

Solid opposition in the Congress seems to

surround the provisions in the Administration bill which would (1) fold in food stamps and other cash benefits into a single cash grant program and (2) extend welfare benefits to childless couples and individuals. (See COFO MEMO, Winter-Spring issue, p. 3)

All the bills before the Congress would increase the cost of welfare. As indicated above, H.R. 9030 would be the most costly at about \$20 billion. The Baker-Bellmon bill would add approximately \$10 billion in costs; and the Ullman bill is expected to add between \$5 and \$9 billion.

Should the incremental bills or H.R. 9030 fail to move through the Congress quickly enough to reach floor votes, there is a good chance that Senator Russell Long, Chairman of the Finance Committee, may turn to H.R. 7200, the Public Assistance Amendments of 1977, as a vehicle for welfare reform. As indicated in the past issues of the COFO MEMO, this bill has passed the House and is ready to move to the Senate floor. Should the Senate Finance Committee leadership succeed in using H.R. 7200 for passage of welfare reform in the Senate, the bill would then go to Conference with the House version of that bill, which contains no such welfare provisions.

The timetable now is not clear in either the House or Senate. The Senate Finance Subcommittee held six days of hearings in April. No further hearings are scheduled. The House Ways and Means Committee is very much involved in the Administration's tax bill, and it is not clear when it will be ready to move to hearings on the Ullman incremental proposal.

#### H.R. 7200 THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AMENDMENTS OF 1977

There has been no further action on the bill which passed the House last year, and was reported out of the Senate Finance Committee in November, 1977. Many interested groups expect the Senate Finance Committee leadership to use this bill as a vehicle for welfare reform. The future of this legislation remains unclear at this time.



## NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

During the last Presidential campaign, President Carter committed himself to supporting legislation for National Health Insurance. There has been a great deal of pressure on the White House to introduce such legislation.

This Administration has stated publicly that a bill will be introduced in this session of Congress. Even if that deadline is met, there will be little time for hearings in this session of Congress--and no one expects rapid Congressional action on this complex issue.

The Administration's proposal will be very significant, however, since it is likely to establish the parameters for the lengthy Congressional debate over national health insurance. It appears that the Administration will attempt to develop a plan which is considered "fiscally responsible;" it also appears that the Administration's proposal will continue some role for private health insurance carriers. Beyond this speculation, very little is known about the details of the Administration's proposal.

In the meantime, the Administration's hospital cost containment legislation -- which the Administration considers an essential first step prior to enactment of any National Health Insurance plan -- still faces major obstacles in the Congress.

## DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS

Another 4 year re-authorization of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) has been favorably reported out of the House Education and Labor Committee and the Senate Committee on Human Resources.

In both the House and Senate Committees, the Displaced Homemaker amendment introduced under Title III of the bill did not fare as well as had been expected. Title III is "Special Federal Responsibilities", and authorizes the Secretary of Labor to fund programs and activities to meet em-

ployment-related needs of particularly hard to employ persons such as young people, single parents, displaced homemakers and older workers.

The original displaced homemaker amendment designated age 40 as the minimum age for participation in the program and specified a set aside in funds of at least 1% of the total Title III allocation. Both House and Senate subcommittees rejected the age eligibility and set aside of money, on the grounds that CETA programs have been criticized for overcategorization. Age restrictions could exclude younger displaced homemakers, and specific money set aside could encourage other special groups to demand similar preferred attention. The House Subcommittee, however, adopted language that was also accepted in the full Committee, allowing the Secretary of Labor discretionary authority to reserve up to, but not to exceed 2% of the total Title III allocation. In reality, this means that the Secretary can recommend any percentage of program funding between 0-2%, with no guarantee of a specific amount.

In the final minutes of mark-up in the Senate Committee, a spokesman for the Labor Department said that a letter had been sent to Gaylord Nelson (D.-Wisc.), Chairman of the Employment Subcommittee, guaranteeing at least \$5 million to develop model training programs for displaced homemakers.

The House and Senate staffs will now write Committee Reports, and it is possible that the report language may recommend priority for the special needs of the older displaced homemaker.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Under pressure from national women's groups, family organizations, professional groups and community-based shelters throughout the country, Senate and House Subcommittees held hearings in March to learn about the extent of the problem of domestic violence, particularly as it affects women; in addition,



these hearings considered the need for federal legislation strengthening efforts to prevent family violence, and offering immediate assistance to agencies and communities providing shelter and services to battered women.

On March 8, Sen. Alan Cranston of California heard statements by the Administration, members of Congress (including Reps. Barbara Mikulski and Newton Steers, and Senators Edward Kennedy and Wendell Anderson), professional organizations, and service providers urging greater direct federal responsiveness to the needs of abused women.

On behalf of COFO, Dr. Suzanne Steinmetz testified at the hearings. She is a member of the National Council for Family Relations, and teaches in the Department of Individual and Family Studies at the University of Delaware. Her statement discussed the spectrum of violence within families, including references to child abuse, marital violence, violence among siblings, and abuse against the elderly. Her data showed that "marital violence" is not selective but rather a "widespread, all pervading phenomena." Steinmetz agreed that there must be short term measures to provide refuge for family members in jeopardy, particularly battered women and children, with respite care or supportive services for families under stress.

But she stated that the federal government must look beyond these programs to long term, preventive mechanisms to reduce family violence, such as attitudinal changes through education and new curriculum, improved training for police and members of the judicial system, "and long term basic research and evaluative research for monitoring the problem of family violence as well as the success of existing programs."

The following week, the House Subcommittee on Select Education, chaired by George Miller of California, reviewed similar testimony by government representatives and other public witnesses. Dr. Harold Feldman, a professor from Cornell University, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, and part of the visiting scholar program at the American Home Economics Association Center for the Family, re-inforced earlier statements about the

need for immediate help to families and urged the expansion of family life education as a program to enhance individual and family development from early age through adulthood.

#### Congressional Action:

The House Education and Labor Committee adopted Miller's bill, which differs sharply from the Cranston bill approved by the Senate Human Resources Committee.

Miller's bill establishes a Federal Council on Domestic Violence and a Program Administrator in the Secretary's office at HEW. The Council's primary responsibility is to approve grant applications for direct federal funding to existing community shelters and programs serving abused family members. The Senate bill, on the other hand, establishes national and regional centers, as well as state citizen panels, an apparatus that would siphon off at least 10% of annual appropriations. Although 85% of the annual appropriations would be designated grants to the states, only 15% of the state grants are direct monies to community based programs.

Both bills would establish a five year authorization for funding, although the Senate version is more generous with an annual authorization of \$30 million. The House bill recommends funding for FY 79 at \$15 million increasing to \$30 million by FY 81.

The major criticism of the Miller bill is that it does not define clearly the relationship between the bureaucratic structures created by the bill. As to Senator Cranston's bill, the major question is just how much money will filter down to communities given that bill's cumbersome bureaucratic structure.

The House took up the Miller bill on May 23, under suspension of the rules, and the vote was 201-205 opposed. After the Memorial Day weekend, Hill staffers and outside organizations will re-group to consider the next strategy.



EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

During its mark-up on May 4, 1978, the House Subcommittee on Labor-HEW Appropriations voted to restore the \$7 million cut from the current level of funding for Consumer and Homemaking Education, bringing the total back up to \$40.9 million. The Senate Subcommittee will start its mark-up during the week of May 22, and it looks as though the Senate will not only follow the lead of the House, but may even increase funding for this program. Senator Birch Bayh (D-Ind) introduced an amendment to restore the \$7 million, and Senator Quentin Burdick (D-ND) proposed an amendment for funding at \$50 million for FY 79. Whatever the final outcome, the COFO mailgrams supporting consumer and homemaking education helped convince key legislators to restore funds for this modest but important program.

ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY BILL

After months of investigation by an HEW task force studying the serious problem of teenage pregnancy in this country, the Administration introduced legislation to provide project grants to public and private non-profit agencies; the purpose of these grants is to encourage coordination of existing community programs and services for pregnant adolescents and teenage parents. The "Adolescent Health, Services and Pregnancy Prevention and Care Act of 1978" would authorize \$60 million to build upon and expand programs "such as family planning, maternal and child health, community health centers, education and HEW-funded research" and to "link these expanded services together into effective and comprehensive networks at the local level." Although the bill's title includes preventive and maternal services, the bill itself focuses more on assistance to the pregnant teenager.

Congressional Action:

On April 13, 1978, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) introduced the Administration's bill, S. 2910, co-sponsored by Senators Harrison Williams (D-NJ), William Hathaway (D-Maine), and Jacob Javits (R-NY). The Senate Human Resources Committee plans hearings on the bill on June 14.

On the House side, Rep. Paul Rogers (D-Fla) introduced the bill (HR 12146), but he appears reluctant to hold hearings at this time. Rogers believes that some of the major objectives of the bill are already part of existing family planning programs under Title X of the Public Health Act.

He has reservations about other aspects of the Administration's bill. For example, Rogers believes the bill is not specific about which age group of adolescents would be eligible for services. In 1976, 11 million teenagers, ages 15-19, were sexually active, and over 1 million became pregnant. During that same year, approximately 375,000 girls under 15 were also sexually active. The Administration bill does not specify how the money would be concentrated to give priority to the needs of different adolescent age groups. And while the bill aims at prevention of second pregnancy, Congressman Rogers believes there needs to be strong emphasis upon prevention of initial pregnancies.

The Administration bill is also vague about agencies that would be eligible for project grants, and which of the existing community programs would be defined as necessary services. The bill states "...services which may be included in such projects include, but are not limited to: family planning services, sex education, parenting education, nutrition, health, vocational education and employment counseling."

Funding:

The bill would fund projects for five years, with an authorization of \$60 million for the first year. By comparison, a model comprehensive service program for teenagers at Johns Hopkins Medical Center spends \$2000 per mother per year on pre- and post-natal programs. Andrew Cherlin at the Johns Hopkins Department of Social Relations says that: "Even if the entire \$60 million in the Administration's bill went to Centers like the one at Hopkins, only 30,000 girls could be assisted. But in 1977, 600,000 teenagers gave birth, and 250,000 of those births were out of wedlock."

Admittedly, the bill is at a very early stage of the legislative process, and the bill will emerge from committee hearings and mark-up in a different form from the original proposal. However, many health professionals believe that unless the budget and programmatic commitment of the Federal government are substantial enough to reduce pregnancy among teenagers, the country will pay the price in other serious problems of high infant mortality, greater health risks and complications to teenage mothers, and greater economic dependency for young women with limited education and employment opportunities.



## IMPACT OF INCOME MAINTENANCE ON FAMILY STABILITY

According to researchers from the Stanford Research Institute, in testimony presented to the Senate Finance Subcommittee on May 1, 1978, the study of a government income maintenance experiment plan shows that rates of divorce and family dissolution sharply increased after a government program guaranteeing a minimum income to poor families was instituted.

Robert Spiegelman, of the Stanford Research Institute, testified that black families participating in the Seattle-Denver income maintenance experiment averaged 61% more marital breakups than similar families in a control group; among white families, the average was 58% more breakups than in a control group of white families.

This study, financed by HEW, is designed to determine how a guaranteed income effects "the work habits, family status, and other behavior of those who receive it."

According to Spiegelman's testimony, the study involved families of different sizes, and those families were provided with government income guarantess of 90%, 125%, and 140% of the poverty line (\$6,200 for a family of four). Participants in the plan were not required to work, but if they chose to do so, their subsidized income was reduced by a certain percentage.

## EXPERIMENTS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN ALTERNATIVE WORK PATTERNS

In 1973, at Senate hearings about American families, Dr. James O'Toole, an Assistant Professor of Management from the University of Southern California, contended that the definition of work in America was a narrow and inflexible one, and that only those who worked 8 hours a day, forty hours a week in paid employment were considered workers. He was quick to point out some ironies created by this limited definition; for example, work in the home was not taken seriously until it became paid employment in someone else's home. Throughout his testimony, he emphasized the relationship between work (or the lack of work) and the quality of life in America.

His ideas helped stimulate the debate about the need to examine and change existing work patterns. Over the past four years, young people, women, minorities, the elderly and the handicapped have called attention to their job needs, and the Carter Administration, as well as members of Congress, are now proposing ways of alleviating pressures on families through re-arranged work schedules.

At least two kinds of alternative work patterns have been tried in Federal agencies: flexitime and permanent part-time. Flexitime scheduling for Federal employees began in a limited way, as early as 1972, with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1974, the Social Security Administration in Baltimore experimented with changing work patterns for working mothers with baby sitter problems, sick children, and doctor's appointments.

Flexitime generally is defined in two ways: either more flexibility in starting and quitting time, or compressing the forty hour week into four ten hour work days, with a three day weekend. Neither arrangement reduces the forty hour week. Currently, there are about 141,000 federal employees on flexitime work schedules. Although this experiment is very limited and involves the Civil Service Commission, the Treasury Department, the Internal Revenue Service and some Defense Department agencies, these offices have found that modifying traditional work schedules has been an important benefit to families -- by helping them meet their need to work, as well as to participate more satisfactorily in their family life.

Permanent part-time employment requires fewer than forty hour a week, and there is no clear minimum working time requirement. One of the difficulties in part-time employment has often been the absence of fringe benefits. However, Federal part-timers receive full health and retirement benefits, pro-rated on the basis of the number of hours worked. Currently, there are about 40,000 Federal employees in regularly scheduled part-time jobs.

For persons who cannot work a full time schedule, even with flexitime, permanent part time jobs expand employment opportunities; this is vitally important to the handicapped, the elderly, single parent families, and other families who have to reconcile family obligations with the need for employment.

In the next COFO MEMO, we will review the progress of legislation that will enable the Federal government to continue and to expand its experiments with alternative work patterns.

WOMEN ARE NOW 41% OF THE LABOR FORCE



PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

On April 27, 1978, the President's Commission on Mental Health, chaired by Mrs. Carter, issued its final report to the President.

This report contained the first nationwide study and recommendations in the mental health field since the report of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, created by Congress in 1961. Among other things, the Commission's report called for increased research efforts into the causes of mental illness, expansion of community-based delivery systems, greater attention to the mental health needs of such special groups as the elderly, children, and minorities; and for an effective national health insurance plan, with broad mental health coverage.

A debate over the effectiveness of the Commission's work occurred at the Groves Conference in Washington, D. C., at a panel discussion on April 29, 1978, consisting of family policy experts and other individuals who had participated in the work of the Commission. Some participants on the Groves panel argued that the report breaks no real new ground, and makes no substantial recommendations to deal with the underlying causes of mental health problems in this country; other panel participants criticized the report for failing to recognize the importance of family therapy. On the other hand, those supporting the Commission's work argued that the report will play a major role in improving government policies affecting mental health care in this country.

The Commission issued four volumes -- Volume I, containing the Commission's report, and Volumes II, III, and IV, appendices containing special study and task panel reports submitted to the Commission. Members of COFO organizations may be particularly interested in Volume III, which contains a report on the mental health of American families, submitted by several task panels.

Those interested in obtaining any of these volumes should write to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 20402, and request a brochure outlining the cost of each of these volumes, and the appropriate procedures for ordering them.

FAMILY IMPACT SEMINAR

The Family Impact Seminar has recently published its Interim Report, sharing its findings to date. The Seminar is exploring the possibilities of developing a process to assess the impact of public policies on families and is a three-year project of George Washington University's Institute for Educational Leadership.

The report is available from the Publications Coordinator, Institute for Educational Leadership, Suite 301, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C. 20036. Please send a check or purchase order for \$2.00 made payable to George Washington University.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS**

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