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# cofo memo

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## PRESIDENT CONVENES WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

On January 30, 1978, President Carter announced that he was convening a White House Conference on Families in Washington, D.C. from December 9-13, 1979, "in order to help stimulate a national discussion of the state of American families."

The long awaited Presidential statement was released shortly before a Congressional oversight hearing on the proposed Conference began. On February 2 and 3, 1978, the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development, chaired by Senator Cranston of California, and the House Subcommittee on Select Education, chaired by Representative Brademas of Indiana, held joint oversight hearings on the Administration's proposal to convene a White House Conference on Families. The Coalition for the White House Conference on Families, to which all four of the COFO organizations belong, testified at these hearings, along with other organizations representing various constituencies interested in the White House Conference on Families.

The testimony on behalf of the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families reviewed the Coalition's formation, and expressed the frustration in attempting to get the Administration to make some basic decision concerning the budget, timing, and scope of the White House Conference on Families.

Most observers agree that the primary purpose of these hearings was to prod the Administration, in order to expedite the decision making process for the Conference. Apparently, this basic purpose was accomplished with the Presi-

dential statement.

While it is now clear that the White House Conference on Families will not be merged with the White House Conference on Children and Youth, other basic decisions regarding the scope and format of the Conference have not been announced. HEW officials are actively evaluating candidates for the Conference's Executive Director, and they are planning to create a National Advisory Commission to assist in the planning of the Conference.

But at least the Administration has now formally announced the date of the Conference, and further details should be announced in the near future.

The text of the President's statement is as follows:

"Families are both the foundation of American society and its most important institution. In a world becoming more complex every day, our families remain the most lasting influence on our lives.

I am confident that the American family is basically sound, and that we can and will adjust to the challenges of changing times. Yet American families confront growing problems. Two out of five marriages now end in divorce. One child in eight is born outside of marriage. A million young Americans now run away from home each year. In the face of these difficulties, I am encouraged by the increasing interest in the state of the family by people from all walks of life.

The main purpose of this White House Conference will be to examine the strengths of American families, the difficulties



they face, and the ways in which family life is affected by public policies. The Conference will examine the important effects that the world of work, the mass media, the court system, private institutions, and other major facets of our society have on American families.

This Conference will clearly recognize the pluralism of family life in America. The widely differing regional, religious, cultural and ethnic heritages of our country affect family life and contribute to its diversity and strength. Families also differ in age and composition. There are families in which several generations live together, families with two parents or one, and families with or without children. The Conference will respect this diversity.

The work of this Conference, in conjunction with our current efforts to implement family-oriented government policies, can help strengthen and support this most vital and enduring social resource. I look forward to participating in the work of the Conference and receiving its report."

#### HR 7200: THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AMENDMENTS OF 1977

This legislation, which was discussed in the Fall issue of the COFO Memo, amends several sections of the Social Security Act. It passed the House in June of 1977. Generally, the House bill had wide support and few problems. The difficulties occurred in the Senate Finance Committee, which added amendments to the House version of HR 7200 (mostly welfare related) considered so undesirable that the Administration withdrew its support from the bill and threatened to veto it if the Senate version passed the Congress.

Late in 1977, Senator Russell Long (D-LA) and the Senate Finance Committee attached some of the undesirable amendments in HR 7200 to HR 9346, the Social Security Financing Bill. Those provisions related to: 1) Fiscal relief for states and localities; 2) Increased use of projects in AFDC programs; 3) Changes in AFDC earned income disregard; 4) Financial rewards for reduction of AFDC overpayments; and 5) State welfare agency access to social

security and unemployment insurance records for AFDC purposes. The first, second and fourth amendments were modified at the House-Senate Conference on HR 9346, the third was rejected by the Conferees, and the fifth was accepted as passed by the Senate.

Meanwhile, HR 7200 was reported out of the Senate Finance Committee on November 1, 1977. This bill, as reported, is a complex package of provisions affecting SSI, AFDC, and child welfare services. It has become, in fact, a welfare bill designed to accomplish some of the objectives of Chairman Russell Long and other members of the Finance Committee. This is particularly important since the Administration's Welfare Bill is highly unlikely to pass the Congress in 1978.

There is much concern among child and family advocates about the fate of this legislation. If the bill continues to be used as a vehicle for undesirable welfare legislation, the Administration and many advocate groups may be forced to mobilize forces to defeat the bill. This would make it almost impossible to pass any child welfare legislation this year. COFO will keep you posted on further development concerning the fate of this important legislation.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION'S WELFARE REFORM PROPOSAL: THE BETTER JOBS AND INCOME ACT - HR 9030

In the fall issue of the COFO Memo, a summary was provided of the President's proposed welfare legislation. There have been some important developments since that time.

On December 5, 1977, "markup" of the Administration's bill, HR 9030, began in the House of Representatives by a 29 member special Welfare Reform Subcommittee. The special Subcommittee, established to expedite House consideration and passage of HR 9030, consists of members from the Committees on Ways and Means (public assistance), Agriculture (food stamps), and Education and Labor (jobs). Major philosophical differences exist among these three Standing Committees concerning such basic issues as whether food stamps should be "bashed out" into one



public assistance payment; how a jobs program should be structured; and what level of income should be guaranteed and to whom.

#### Summary of Developments

Early in December, supporters of the Administration's bill succeeded in getting the Subcommittee's agreement to extend coverage for federal cash assistance to needy, intact, two-parent families, single individuals, and childless couples. If passed by the Congress, this provision would guarantee, for the first time, federal cash assistance to all the poor, regardless of category. The Subcommittee also agreed to nationally uniform eligibility rules for federal cash assistance.

The Subcommittee also voted to establish into a single consolidated federal cash program the two major cash grant programs: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The Subcommittee also agreed (by a vote of 16-12) to go along with the Administration's recommendation to "cash out" food stamps. However, the food stamp program was not repealed; a small number of non-welfare recipients would still be eligible for food stamps.

The Subcommittee accepted the Administration's proposed federal benefits -- \$4,200 for a family of four with no member expected to work, and \$2,300 for a four person family with a member expected to hold a job. For the SSI population, the levels are \$2,500 for a single person and \$3,700 for a couple. The benefit levels would be increased each year to reflect increases in the Consumer Price Index. Such indexing now takes place in SSI, but not in the AFDC program.

With regard to financing of the new welfare program, the Subcommittee accepted the Administration's plan. States are required to pay 10% of the basic federal benefit, with the federal government paying 90%. States must maintain their support at 90% of their past effort for the consolidated programs. If a state raises its benefit levels above those guaranteed in this legislation, the federal government will share in these supplemented expenses at the rate of 75% of the first \$500 a year and 25% of \$501 to the poverty level for the former AFDC

population. (For the aged, blind and disabled, supplementation is at 25% federal sharing up to the poverty level.) Furthermore, when any state now provides welfare assistance above the poverty level, the federal government will supplement to that level at 25%. Administration of the SSI program will remain federalized. For AFDC, states will have the option of administering all or part of the program.

The accounting period on the basis of which eligibility and benefits amounts are computed will be only a one month retroactive period, not six months as recommended in HR 9030. This allows those persons with irregular earnings to be covered. However, if the person goes back into the work force, the benefits paid will be recouped by making the benefits received taxable.

The Subcommittee voted to accept the work requirements proposed in HR 9030. All able-bodied recipients who are not caring for an incapacitated person or who do not have children under six are required to work. For those with children, ages 7-13, part time work will be required, but only if it allows the mother to care for children after and before school hours. An amendment to delete the work requirement for mothers with children ages 7-14 was defeated by a substantial margin.

The Subcommittee also voted to continue a foster care welfare grant program for needy children placed in foster care. The Subcommittee liberalized the current law by including the provisions of HR 7200 as passed by the House.

One of the most controversial questions to be tackled to date relates to the issue of welfare assistance for single persons in the age group 18 to 25. HR 9030 provides benefits for single adults who do not live with their parents. The dilemma facing the Subcommittee results from the fact that youth unemployment in the inner cities is at the crisis stage. On the other hand, members of the Subcommittee were concerned about providing coverage in such a way that the average college student would suddenly become eligible for public assistance. The Subcommittee therefore voted to limit participation by young adults. By a vote of



18 to 10, the Subcommittee provided that a single person under age 25 who was not blind or disabled and had no children would be required to file with their family if they wanted cash assistance, even if they did not live with their family.

The very difficult issue of how to create jobs for the poor in a weak economy has not yet been addressed. When the Subcommittee met in late January, it voted to require that persons who take public sector jobs or public subsidized jobs (under the jobs program) must be paid a salary equal to that paid to any other employee in a similar job. The Subcommittee is expected to conclude its mark-up by the end of February.

#### The prognosis at this time

This legislation has already seen some close votes that bode trouble in the weeks ahead. For example, the vote on whether to cash out food stamps passed by a narrow margin of 21-16. The design of an acceptable plan to create 1.4 million new jobs will be even more controversial and difficult. And once the Subcommittee concludes its work and produces a final bill, it will be referred back to the three Standing Committees for further consideration, where more difficulties are expected.

Within the full Committee of Ways and Means, for example, there is a major philosophical difference between Subcommittee chairman James G. Corman (D-CALIF) and full Committee chairman, Al Ullman (D-ORE). Corman has supported the design of HR 9030. Ullman, however, has publicly made it clear that he prefers an "incremental alternative." Ullman does not support the integration of AFDC, SSI and food stamps, and under his plan, there would be no jobs requirement. He believes there should be an expansion of public service jobs provided by the WIN program, which would be placed under state control. Any welfare paid to persons whose federal tax liability exceeds \$600 would have to be repaid to the government by the recipient. It is not clear at this point how much support exists for the Ullman proposal.

Within the Agriculture Committee, there is likely to be resistance to the decision

to cash out food stamps. In the Education and Labor Committee, there is opposition to elimination of CETA jobs to provide money for the new jobs program.

After each of these three Standing Committees has taken action on the bill approved by the Corman Subcommittee, a clean bill will have to be sent to the Floor of the House for a vote. Very close cooperation by the staffs of the three Committees will be required for any bill to reach the Floor this year. And since this is an election year, and since welfare reform is not considered a popular vote issue, few Congressmen are going to press hard to get a welfare bill passed this year.

It is not clear when the Senate will begin serious consideration of HR 9030. To date, the only scheduling by the Senate Finance Committee is for Administration witnesses to appear on February 7 and February 9. As reported in the Fall COFO Memo, HR 7200 suffered many undesirable alterations when it reached the Finance Committee. This same Committee has jurisdiction over HR 9030. Clearly, the future for HR 9030 does not look too promising. We will keep you informed about this important legislation as it wends its way through the Congress.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH  
The President's Commission on Mental Health, which is chaired by Mrs. Carter, is attempting to complete its final report to the President by April 1, 1978.

The staff of the Commission, led by Dr. Beatrix Hamburg, the Director of Studies, has spent a considerable amount of time and effort in focusing on the impact of mental health policies on American families. On December 18, 19 and 20, 1977, a three-day conference on "Mental Health and Families in America" was sponsored by the Commission at Airlie House in Virginia. Dr. Nicholas Hobbs of Vanderbilt University chaired this Airlie workshop on the family, and some leading experts in the field attended this three-day meeting. The end result of this conference will be a report and a series of recommendations to the Commission's Task Panel on the Mental Health of Families.



The Airlie House Conference focused on such issues as working life and families, income supports, single parent families, family disruptions, adolescent and school age parents, pluralism in American families, violence in the family, and an overview of federal family policy. The Conference also examined methods of improving delivery of mental health services to all families, and in this regard, the participants seemed committed to expansion of marital and family counseling services.

While the Conference recommendations are not in final form as of this time, the final recommendations will be available after April 1, 1978, when the Commission completes its final report.

If you want this particular paper, or any studies produced by the Commission -- including the Commission's final report -- you should write the President's Commission on Mental Health, Old Executive Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20500, after April 1, 1978, and request a list of all available Commission publications. There will be a charge for this particular paper, as well as any other publications requested, but the Commission will make every effort to keep these charges reasonable. A publication list will be available soon, and this list will detail all available papers not included in the final report itself.

The Airlie House Conference, and the creation of a separate Task Panel on the Mental Health of Families, indicates that the Commission is serious about looking at the mental health needs of Americans from a "family impact" perspective. Obviously, the most critical document will be the Commission's final report, and the recommendations to the President contained in that report; and until that report is completed, it is impossible to speculate on the precise direction which the Commission will take. But all early signs point to some important and helpful recommendations by a Commission sensitized to the mental health problems faced by American families.

#### SPENDING THE PUBLIC MONEY IN FISCAL YEAR 1979

On January 26, 1978, President Carter offered his first complete budget to the Congress, giving a clearer view of his

policies and priorities for spending the public money. This was the first budget designed under Carter's concept of "zero-based budgeting," which requires federal departments and agencies to order and explain their priorities in program spending. In an effort to diminish the role of federal government, the administration appears to be moving away from federal funding for narrow categorical programs, in favor of directing money to larger populations in need where federal funds provide the principal source of financial aid. The President recommended a total of \$500.2 billion in federal spending for Fiscal Year 1979.

Approximately \$126 billion, or one-fourth of the budget outlays, will be spent on defense, and approximately \$185 billion, or one-third of the budget, will be spent on health, education and welfare programs. Of that \$185 billion, 89% of the funds will go to entitlement programs, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other income assistance programs. Entitlement programs are uncontrolled costs in the HEW budget, because any person who meets the eligibility requirements can receive assistance. The two areas within HEW receiving an increase in funding -- and where recommendations for new legislation have been made -- are education programs and health services to adolescents, children and pregnant women.

The Carter budget recommends a hefty boost in federal funding for three major education programs: Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which provides compensatory education for disadvantaged children; programs for education for the handicapped; and the Basic Educational Opportunities Grants (BEOGS) programs, which would allow greater participation of students from low and middle income families.

The new initiatives in health care within HEW would expand pregnancy related health services for young women who, under existing law, would not now be eligible for Medicaid until they were seven months pregnant, or had already had a first child and were receiving public assistance. A \$60 million program, requiring new legislation, would establish community based services aimed at preventing or decreasing the number of teen age pregnancies. The Child Health Assess-



ment Program (CHAP) would be increased by an additional \$263 million, to provide diagnosis and treatment of children and adolescents up to the age of 21. The supplemental feeding programs for women, infants and children (WIC), a health related program in the Department of Agriculture, would also come in for more federal money.

In the Department of Labor, there has been an increase in funding for youth employment programs -- the Jobs Corps, which would provide 44,000 training slots, the summer jobs program which would create approximately 1 million jobs for teenagers, and the new Youth Employment Demonstration Project Act (YEDPA), providing 167,000 jobs and job training.

The budget also proposes expansion of mortgage subsidy programs for low income families. Under a HUD program, subsidies would increase housing opportunities for middle income families in central cities, and encourage the rehabilitation of neighborhoods and communities. And the Farmers Home Administration would have authority over a new program to subsidize mortgages for low income home owners in rural communities.

The President's budget brought no surprises, some criticism, and seems very much in line with his desire to reduce state and local dependence on federal funds.

#### FUNDING FOR THE CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKER EDUCATION PROGRAM

President Carter's budget for Fiscal Year 1979 was delivered to Congress on January 16, 1978, with the Consumer and Homemaker Education program included in his funding recommendations. In earlier versions of the President's budget, it appeared that funding for this modest but important program would be eliminated. However, COFO supported the strong effort of the American Home Economics Association to convince the Administration to retain this program, and as a result, the Administration budget recommended \$34 million in continued funding.

Every effort will be made to convince Congressional Appropriations Committees

to restore an additional \$7 million to this program, and the prospects for obtaining this additional funding are good. In any event, the ability of COFO to assist AHEA in maintaining funding for this program demonstrates the importance of joint advocacy efforts.

#### THE TEENAGE PREGNANCY PROBLEM

In response to a growing concern inside and outside government about the growing number of teenage pregnancies in this country, HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano appointed an in-house task force composed of 50 HEW officials from each of the Department's "principal operating components." The task force was headed by HEW Deputy Assistant Secretary Peter Schuck.

The report of the task force was made public on November 26, 1977. It recommended that the government increase its spending for programs to deal with this problem by \$147 million to \$251 million. The task force report indicated that this money should be used for programs to help pregnant adolescents and their children, and to expand birth control services, including abortions, for the 11 million sexually active teenagers in this country.

The report states: "Even if Federal funding is not available for pregnancy termination, we recommend that health and service providers make available abortion information and counseling, and where appropriate, referrals to and from abortion services, to permit the adolescent a full range of choices and to assist those who do choose to terminate their pregnancy to receive adequate and safe abortion services."

Giving strength to some of the recommendations in the Schuck report, the President's new budget for Fiscal Year 1979 provides: "...\$100 million in budget authority in 1979 for the prevention of unwanted adolescent pregnancies. This includes a separate appropriation of \$60 million for new joint Federal and State efforts to establish networks of community based services." While the budget recommendation is less than that requested by the task force, it does assure some new money for program activity and planning.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Attention to the problem of family violence has grown considerably in the past three months. Along with women's organizations and civil rights groups, Congress, government agencies and commissions, state legislatures, representatives of the criminal justice system and the media are demonstrating concern and interest in this serious problem.

In Congress, the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development, chaired by Senator Alan Cranston (D-CAL), is holding a day of hearings on domestic violence. Because COFO represents a broad range of experience in research, family life education, and the delivery of services, COFO has been approached by the Subcommittee staff to testify. Hearings are scheduled for March 8, 1978.

On the House side, there is similar activity. There will be hearings in the House in March, 1978, but a date has not yet been set. Congressman George Miller (D-CAL), a member of the House Subcommittee on Select Education, will take the lead in coordinating the House hearings. Representative Miller's staff has expressed an interest in having COFO testify at these hearings.

On January 30 and 31, 1978, the United States Civil Rights Commission held two days of hearings to learn more about violence in families. Witnesses and panelists provided a range of testimony about the extent of the problem, the need for protective shelters for battered wives, the unresponsiveness of law enforcement officers, and the need for coordination of existing research in order to identify gaps in the research data. Many witnesses who testified expressed the view that the continuation of aggravated assault of one spouse against another, without adequate access to police and legal protection, constitutes a denial of the civil rights of the victims of domestic violence.

Five government agencies -- the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor, and the Legal Services Corporation -- have set up a task force effort to determine the appropriate role of the federal government in trying to alleviate this problem.

We will attempt to follow developments in this area in future editions of the COFO Memo.

DISPLACED HOMEMAKER

In December, 1977, Representative Yvonne Burke (D-CAL) introduced HR 10270, the Displaced Homemaker Assistance Act. She is the prime sponsor of the bill, and Representative Augustus Hawkins (D-CAL) is the leading co-sponsor. The bill has been introduced as an amendment to Title III of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), and would be administered through the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor.

In earlier versions of Representative Burke's bill, the program was to be administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. According to staff at HEW, they do not want to establish new categorical programs. Instead, they are considering new ways to fund programs, as they reexamine the role of the federal government in human services.

On January 30, 1978, Senator Birch Bayh introduced in the Senate S 418, a bill identical to Representative Burke's proposal. The bill has been referred to Senator Gaylord Nelson's (D-WISC) Subcommittee on Employment, Poverty and Migratory Labor. Although Senator Nelson recognizes the needs of older women who are without recent experience in the paid labor force, he appears to have serious reservations about establishing more centers for special populations. Therefore, it is not yet clear what action his Subcommittee is prepared to take. However, the Subcommittee has scheduled hearings for Administration and public witnesses on February 22, 23 and March 1 and 2. Regional hearings will be held in Michigan on February 16 and 17 and in Madison, Wisconsin on February 24.

EXPANSION OF FEDERAL AID TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

For the third time in three years, a tuition tax credit proposal passed the Senate and was defeated in the conference committee. This time it was part of the Senate passed Social Security Financing Bill. Sponsored by Senator William V. Roth, Jr. (R-DEL), the credit was for \$250 a year for each child attending a college, university or vocational school full time. Roth argued that such a



credit was needed to provide relief for the middle class family. Opponents argued that the credit would not provide significant relief to individual families, but that the total impact on the federal budget would be harmful. There was also concern about escalation of the credit amount in future years. Because of this budgetary impact, the Carter Administration threatened to veto the bill if the credit stayed in.

This issue is likely to be raised again this year during the hearings on the President's new tax legislation. Senator Roth believes such a tax credit would pass the Congress if the issue were put to a vote, and the influential chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Russell Long (D-LA), has supported the need for a tuition tax credit.

Responding to these pressures, and in an attempt to deflect Congressional pressure for a college tuition tax credit, the Carter Administration has proposed a major expansion of federal aid to college students -- designed to benefit middle-income families. On February 8, 1978, the President proposed legislation adding about \$1 billion to the existing \$4 billion a year now provided by the Federal government in grants and loans

to college students.

In essence, this proposal would raise the family income ceiling for grants from \$15,000 per year to \$25,000 per year, substantially increasing the number of college students eligible for such grants. In addition, the Carter proposal would liberalize the loan program by raising the ceiling for annual family income from \$25,000 to \$45,000.

According to a White House announcement, the proposed legislation attempts to deal with the problem of rapidly escalating college costs, which means that middle class families are increasingly unable to send their children to college. And the Administration believes that its approach is less expensive and more effective than the tax credit for college expenses.

#### COFO at the State Level

COFO is having its impact at the state level, too! In California, representatives of AAMFC, AHEA, FSAA and NCFR are working successfully in a joint effort to gain passage of the California Family Life Institute Bill. (See COFO, Fall, 1977.)



#### NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS

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