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FAMILY IMPACT SEMINAR: OUR INTERIM REPORT. By A. Sidney Johnson, III,
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Introduction

It is a great privilege to have this opportunity to discuss the work of the Family Impact Seminar generally, and our recent Interim Report specifically, in the COFO MEMO. I have worked closely with each of the four COFO organizations, and I have a deep respect for each of your organizations, and for the terribly important but all too rare efforts you are making in the area of coalition building. I believe the work of our Seminar and of COFO are quite similar and complementary.

The Family Impact Seminar is an independently financed project based at the Institute for Education Leadership of George Washington University. The Seminar grew out of the increasingly widespread concern over the future of American families. One event that helped focus public attention on families was the 1973 hearings by the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Youth (chaired by the then Senator Mondale), entitled, "American Families: Trends and Pressures." Many witnesses suggested that we should require family impact statements on legislation being considered by Congress. It was around this concept that the Seminar was established in 1976.

Our main purpose is review -- carefully and in-depth -- the substantive, administrative, and political feasibility of developing a process for assessing the impact of public policies on families. And in doing so, the Seminar seeks to raise public consciousness about how public policies affect families, and to encourage government to be

more aware of and sensitive to the impact of its policies on families.

The Seminar is composed of twenty-two leading scholars and policy-makers with expertise in family research and public policies affecting families. The Seminar deliberately stands half-way between the world of academia and policy.

The Seminar's focus on governmental actions (and inactions) reflects our belief that government has a special responsibility to be conscious of its impact on families. It is not unusual for individual families to be harmed instead of helped by well-intentioned policies. Government programs should meet the needs of families -- helping families to help themselves -- rather than take over their functions. It is vital to keep family units healthy, because they are the fundamental units by which a society nurtures and perpetuates itself.

In our recently released Interim Report, the most complete description of our evolving framework is summarized. It includes conclusions reached as a group, staff papers that have been developed, and our preliminary findings for the three specific pilot family impact statements we are developing on public policy: Government-as-Employer; Foster Care; and Teenage Pregnancy programs.

Because there is so little existing methodology for family impact analysis, few guidelines for their development have been produced. Trying to evaluate which may be good or bad for families is difficult. So is trying to reach agreement on the definition of a family. We have adopted for a definition of a "household family" the U.S. Census definition of a "family": a group of two or more persons who reside together and are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. But we also use the definition of "kinship family," which contains all the same requirements except that these persons live in a common household or include a child. This flexibility accommodates recent changes in American life-styles.

From time to time, COFO will seek "guest articles" from individuals like Sid Johnson, commenting on public policy based on their particular background and experience. The views expressed in these articles do not necessarily reflect the positions of any of the four COFO organizations.

Although many of our preliminary findings are not revolutionary, some raise very important considerations. Some key facts and conclusions have shaped the direction of our work:

- * Families have been and are currently experiencing unprecedented changes. These include dramatic increases in the proportion of mothers working outside the home, in the rates of divorce and re-marriage, and in the number of single parent families.
- * Unlike some European countries, the U. S. does not have an official family policy despite a wide range of public policies and programs which affect families, at all economic levels. (Our report entitled Toward an Inventory of Federal Programs with Direct Impact on Families identified at least 268 Federal Programs with direct impact on families.)
- * The process of family impact analysis should be explored in a variety of settings and on a broad range of policies, focusing on more than just the membership of families.
- about
heaven* * Since family impact analysis is still in a developmental stage, we believe it is inappropriate at this time to establish government wide processes for family impact analysis.
- * Because we respect the wide diversity of families and the sensitive and personal nature of family life, we oppose the idea of enacting a uniform, comprehensive national family policy.

There are many reasons why public policies have seldom been examined in terms of their impact on families. Our democratic system of government, for one, has placed a great emphasis on defining social problems and opportunities with the policies designed to respond to a particular need of a family member, these policies often deal with that person as an isolated individual. There is also a strong tendency to attribute failures and problems to the inadequacies of that particular family or family members themselves, placing the responsibility and resultant guilt on their shoulders. However, major social and economic factors -- such as rising unemployment -- are not within the control of individual families.

The Interim Report also emphasizes our recognition and respect for the diversity and pluralism of families,

unavoidable value judgments and choices, and the variety of family functions which public policies can affect. We recognize, for example, that the basic decision to focus on how public policies affect families is a value judgment in itself. At another level, the value-laden judgments inherent in any attempt to determine what is beneficial, what "strengthens" or "weakens" families, makes family impact analysis most complex. Conflict over disparate values can not be avoided when a diverse group of families and family needs are considered. Thus, the Family Impact Seminar is committed to stating its own value assumptions and judgments, confronting the issue of values with open honesty:

- * We have a mutual interest in the well-being of families and their ability to care for their members.
- * Public policy should seek to support and supplement families in the exercise of their basic functions.
- * Government policies should provide families with broadened options and choices.
- * Diversity and pluralism of families must be recognized and respected.

We recognize that this statement of general values is not complete and will need further clarification. Conflict and trade-offs will need to be weighed and discussed as we examine particular policies; these value statements will often require a more precise meaning in relation to specific problems. What we hope, however, is to illustrate how family impact analysis involves value judgments and to encourage the open discussion of values in this process. The Seminar will continue to state value trade-offs involved in the options we discuss and in the recommendations we propose. Our work is not immune from such biases, but in confronting them in a straight-forward manner, we hope to provide a good model for public policy decision-making.

Pilot Family Impact Statements

As part of our overall effort to develop a process for assessing public policy impact, the Seminar has begun three family impact statements: Work Schedules, Foster Care, and Teenage Pregnancy. The decision to analyze work schedules stems from the belief that people's working lives have fundamental and complex effects on their family lives, both directly and indirectly. As part of this study we will shortly survey 800 federal workers to determine, in part, the extent to which flexitime has made it easier for them to balance their work responsibilities with their family responsibilities.

Our Foster Care study focuses on one of the most direct ways in which government seeks to serve the needs of families. Foster Care, as a program, is a governmental response to family stress and/or breakdown of the biological family.

Although other organizations have examined the foster care system, the Seminar's analysis may be unique in its examination of the foster care system from the perspective of families. We believe that a pilot statement on foster care will demonstrate the complexities of family impact analysis, including the diverse ways one policy can affect different families and different members of the same family.

The Teenage Pregnancy case study focuses on the extent to which a family's perspective has been ignored in previous research, and in the variety of programs and policies directed towards teenage sexual behavior and parenthood. Throughout this focus, the relevant differences between families of different racial, ethnic, or religious background is highlighted.

These three projects are still in the preliminary stages. We are excited about them because they ask the kind of key family impact questions that can help the general public, practitioners, policymakers, and scholars become more sensitive to the impact of public policies on families.

CONCLUSION

It is our hope that these reports will be helpful to you and your organizations, and that you can provide us with feedback and reaction to them. Evaluations, criticism, and revision are critical components in the work of the Family Impact Seminar and we actively seek and welcome such input. We look forward to your comments both individually and from COFO representatives.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

A seemingly uncomplicated promise during the 1976 Presidential campaign by Jimmy Carter to convene the first White House Conference on Families has led to a series of frustrating delays and controversial decisions. Because of the resignations of the unofficial Executive Director, Patricia Fleming, and the announced Conference Chairman, Wilbur Cohen, the White House Conference -- originally planned for December, 1979 -- has been postponed until 1981. And planning for the Conference is in limbo until these two critical positions are filled.

There has been a great deal of press speculation surrounding the resignation of Ms. Fleming. Some have claimed that she resigned rather than accept a demotion as a co-director, and that the pressure for a co-director was coming from those who objected to the symbolism of a divorcee running a White House Conference on Families. Secretary Califano and other HEW officials vigorously denied the existence of such pressure, and they have characterized Ms. Fleming's resignation purely as a management issue.

In any event, the Fleming episode has demonstrated the political volatility underlying any White House Conference on Families.

Why so much controversy? The concept of White House Conferences is not a new one. In 1909, during the Roosevelt administration, child welfare workers urged the President to hold a conference to discuss the needs of dependent children and endorse the principle of public responsibility for the welfare of children. Conferences on children and youth are now a regular decennial occurrence. Years later, White House Conferences on hunger and the aging led to an enlarged federal government role in alleviating hardships for America's hungry and elderly.

In part, the controversy over a White House Conference on Families centers around the belief that family values are a private matter, and are not an appropriate arena for public scrutiny or influence. A sign of disagreement during early discussions of the conference centers on definitions of family and required a name change for the Conference title. 'Family' in the original title became 'Families,' indicating that diversity among family styles and arrangements is a more accurate representation of the nature of families in 20th century America.

Immediately following the postponement of the Conference, the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families wrote Secretary Califano to re-affirm his commitment to such a Conference; the letter stressed the need for prompt staff appointments and clear directions for the Conference, and re-iterated the Coalition's belief that a White House Conference on Families must represent the diversity of American families.

The Coalition will hold its next meeting in September, and the effort will be made at that time to develop strategies and procedures to make the Coalition an effective advocate for a productive and useful White House Conference on Families.

THE WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE

by Robert M. Rice, Director
Policy Analysis and Developer,
Family Services Association of America
and

Chairman, The Coalition for the White House
Conference on Families

It has been some time since April, but doubtless the results of the Wingspread Conference, developed by the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families, and supported by the Johnson Foundation of Racine, Wisconsin, are still being sorted out by participants and observers.

The Coalition for the White House Conference on Families is a group of national organizations joined together in advocating for an effective White House Conference on Families. One of the several purposes of the Coalition is to insure that the natural networks

that support the family are adequately considered by a White House Conference on Families. Because knowledge and opinion have not fully jelled concerning the nature of support networks for the family, the Coalition developed a concentrated discussion experience for representatives of the 28 organizations then in Coalition membership to discuss the topic. Joseph Giordano of the Louis Kaplan Center on Group Identity and Mental Health, American Jewish Committee, chaired the conference.

Support systems for families were considered in considerable variety. Sessions led by experts in neighborhoods, religion, ethnicity, and specific self-help or support groups contended with each other over how best to preserve the family through enriching its "natural" environment. Some advocated a hands-off view of the family, fearing that services weakened family resolve. Others saw natural support networks failing in a modern industrialized society, and felt that new professional roles were required to bolster families' environments. Many participants found themselves grappling with profound moral questions, and gained a new appreciation of the role of values in the consideration of government policies.

One by-product of the conference was greater appreciation of the likely process within the White House Conference on Families itself. On the subject of families and policies affecting families, it is often difficult to define issues and stick to them. Once having passed that hurdle, there are important differences reflecting the diversity of American lifestyles. Yet despite the difficulties, most participants reported their increased awareness of the importance of careful consideration of the family in society, and the upcoming White House Conference on Families. There was keen awareness of the considerable evidence of rapid change and dislocation in family life. The need to develop greater value and policy consensus seemed clear to most who attended. Some were stimulated, some were depressed — no one was bored.

The as yet unpublished results will be forthcoming soon from the Johnson Foundation. (Write Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin 53401.) These published results will be helpful to policymakers and policy advisors, as well as to White House Conference planners, as an early indication of what is involved when new perceptions of families are placed in a policy context in a pluralistic nation. This may be particularly important in view of the apparent difficulty the present Administration has had in implementing the White House Conference on Families amidst diverse views of what is right and proper.

LEGISLATION AND THE FAMILY

FLEXITIME: THE NOT SO SACRED COW

The 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act set the 40 hour work week — eight hours a day, five days a week. The law was considered a major victory in protecting American workers from unfair employer practices. Recently, however, with an increase in automation and the changing styles and needs of families, representatives of industry, labor, and the federal government are re-examining this sacred work arrangement.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Companies such as Control Data, Equitable Life Insurance, Pitney-Bowes, and Sidney Harmon Associates, in cooperation with the United Auto Workers, have been advocating and experimenting with alternative work patterns since the 1960's. By contrast, the federal government is just beginning to experiment with innovative work patterns. In 1977, approximately 17% of the work force in private industry was employed in permanent part-time work, while only 2.3% of federal employees were hired on part-time work schedules. The numbers of federal workers on flexitime schedules is still relatively small — 141,000. In contrast, it has been estimated that 1.2 million individuals in the private sector are working under compressed time schedules and from 300,000 to 1,000,000 private sector employees are on flexible work weeks. (Note: The last issue of COFO MEMO defined flexitime, compressed work and permanent part-time).

The House and Senate bills which were introduced in the Congress this year were discussed in the Summer issue of the COFO MEMO. That article explained that the House bill had been sent to the Floor for a vote under the procedure known as "suspension of the rules" (no amendments allowed and passage by a two thirds vote of the members). The House domestic violence bill, H.R. 12299, failed by a vote of 201-205.

Meanwhile, the Senate bill, S. 2759, was being opposed by a small number of Senators who prevented the bill from being sent to the Senate Floor for a vote. In late July, this opposition was withdrawn. On August 1, the Senate domestic violence bill was passed without debate or amendment.

Current advocacy efforts have been focused on Speaker Tip O'Neal, Congressman John Brademas and the House Rules Committee. The Rules Committee finally agreed on September 20, 1978 to place the bill on the House Calendar. It is not clear how soon the bill will be sent to the Floor for a vote nor whether any undesirable amendments might be added to it. Generally the outlook is hopeful.

Not surprisingly, opposition to H.R. 7814 came from the AFL-CIO because the federation feels that existing labor law on overtime will be undercut by flexitime arrangements. Despite labor's doubts, the Senate committees reported the bill.

H.R. 7814 permits a 3-year experiment with flexitime workweeks, which will not reduce the job hours, but simply allow employees to vary their starting and quitting time around certain "core hours" during which all employees must be present. The compressed work schedule permits employees to work four days, 10 hours a day, with a three day weekend. The legislation calls for evaluating these work experiments for "their impact on government efficiency, transportation, energy consumption, increased full and part time employment opportunities and their impact on individuals and families generally."

S.518 requires the creation of a part-time career employment program in every Federal agency and is viewed as another means of breaking down the stereotype of part time employees as less committed or less skilled workers. The bill's purpose is to benefit individuals who cannot meet the requirements of a standard workweek, such as older workers, students, the handicapped and parents who must "... balance family responsibilities with the need for additional income." When the Senate committee adopted S. 518, it changed the definition of part-time career employment from anything less than 40 hours a week to employment of 10, 20, or 30 hours per week; the bill also allows federal agencies to prorate employee health benefits based on the number of hours worked. The House bill defines part-time as 16-32 hours per week and does not prorate fringe benefits. These differences must be resolved by the conference committee.

TITLE XX

When Title XX of the Social Security Act became law in 1972 the Congress had set a spending ceiling for social services at \$2.5 billion a year. That same ceiling is still in place, despite inflationary pressures in recent years.

In 1978, legislation was introduced to address this problem. H.R. 12973, which has passed the House and is now pending in the Senate, permanently increases the ceiling on Title XX to \$2.9 billion in 1979, \$3.15 in 1980 and \$3.45 billion in 1981.

The Carter Administration supports a one year increase to \$2.85 billion. At hearings held in the Senate Finance Committee on August 18, it was not clear whether the Senate Committee would agree to the provisions of the House bill.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY LEGISLATION

HEW has sent to the Hill legislation designed to help pregnant teenagers. The bill, S.2910 in the Senate and H.R. 12146 in the House, is not receiving much support in its present form. And lobbying efforts by many groups to improve the bill have had little success.

Basically, the bill provides money to link existing services rather than create new ones. The funding level is very low, \$60 million, and only half that amount can be used to develop new programs. In addition, the issues of abortion counseling and administrative jurisdiction at HEW must be resolved.

THE POWER OF THE PURSE: LABOR-HEW APPROPRIATIONS

With the California vote on Proposition 13 uppermost in the minds of Congressional members, the House adopted an amendment to the 1979 Labor-HEW appropriations bill that mandates 2% across the board cuts in discretionary funding for Labor-HEW programs. By a vote of 200-181, House members agreed to cut programs by at least 2% and not more than 5%. It was left up to the Carter administration to decide how the cuts will be made.

In the Senate, the Appropriations Committee rejected the principle of skimming 2% off the top of Labor-HEW funds, but when the bill goes to the floor for Senate action, a number of amendments are expected that would parallel the Miller amendment in the House.

FISCAL RELIEF AND WELFARE LEGISLATION

After a heavy investment of time, it has become clear that the Congress will not pass the Carter Administration's \$20.22 billion welfare reform proposal. Recently, a less costly and less complex bill was introduced in the Senate and it appears to have the crucial support of Senator Russell Long and his Finance Committee. Introduced by Senators Alan Cranston (D-California) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-New York) the bill is geared to providing permanent fiscal relief to the states and local governments and would cost only \$1 to \$2 billion in fiscal 1979. It would also expand the earned income tax credit for the working poor as well as provide a tax credit for employers who hire persons on welfare.

There is no assurance that this bill will pass both the Senate and the House. The House Ways and Means Committee is unlikely to support such a bill. There is concern that such a bill, if it provided permanent fiscal relief, would be a disincentive next year for a real overhaul of the existing welfare system. Thus, Administration opposition to the Cranston-Moynihan bill has developed. Opposition has also been voiced by the National Governors Conference and advocacy groups.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

On April 14, 1978, President Carter issued an Executive Order to assure U.S. participation in the U.N. sponsored International Year of the Child for 1979. The IYC Commissioners, headed by Jean Young, wife of the U. N. Ambassador Andrew Young, met in August to press for greater national attention to the needs and accomplishments of children. Two more meetings are scheduled in Washington this fall.

As sensible an effort as IYC appears to be, there are some who believe its existence constitutes a major threat to families. In letters circulated by Congressman Robert Dornan (R-California) and a group called the Foundation for a Free Congress, the IYC is condemned as a "U. N. sponsored program" that "is sure to become an all-out assault on the American family structure."

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Pressure has been building up for some time on the Carter Administration to keep its campaign promise to sponsor a comprehensive national health insurance program. Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass), the AFL-CIO, and the United Auto Workers have created the most visible public pressure on the Administration.

Finally, on July 29, the Administration announced its health proposal. It was little more than an outline of what the Administration hopes to send to the Hill next year.

Basically, the President's statement made a commitment to control costs, provide quality medical care for all Americans, and retain a role for the private insurance industry with appropriate government regulations. Finally, to keep inflationary pressure under control, a phased in approach would be used, depending on the health of the economy.

The response in the Congress was mixed. It is not clear that sufficient public pressure to pass such a costly program exists. In addition, caution is especially high in an election year amid Proposition 13 fever that seems to be sweeping the country.

Senator Kennedy was very critical of the Administration's proposal for not being more specific and for not being more aggressive. Kennedy and the unions argue that the only way to control costs of health care in this country is to control all sources of payment.

The history of Medicare and Medicaid and the explosive costs for these programs, will be of major concern when a national health insurance program comes before the Congress next year.

It should be noted that the Administration's hospital cost containment proposal has been gutted in the Congress, and this proposal is not likely to pass this year in any form. The controversy over this proposal indicated how difficult it will be to pass any type of national health insurance scheme.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

AAMFC RECOGNITION AS NATIONAL
ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION

On June 23, 1978, HEW's Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility unanimously voted to recognize AAMFC as the national accrediting organization in the field of marriage and family counseling. While this recommendation must be approved by the U. S. Commissioner of Education, such approval is considered very likely.

For many years AAMFC has accredited graduate degree programs and clinical training centers in the field of marriage and family counseling, and recognition by HEW is sought by many national accrediting organizations after sufficient experience has been obtained.

Recognition of AAMFC culminates a long and difficult process, during which the AAMFC petition was opposed and questioned by several other professional and accrediting organizations. Significantly, AAMFC's three COFO partners strongly supported the AAMFC petition, and this support played a major role in the favorable actions taken by the HEW staff and Advisory Committee.

Inquiries regarding accreditation of graduate degree programs and clinical training centers should be addressed to John S. Shalett, Executive Director, AAMFC Committee on Accreditation, AAMFC, 225 Yale Avenue, Claremont, California, 91711.

FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICASymposium

A November Symposium on Family Practice has been announced to be held in New York, November 1 - 4. The Symposium will provide a forum for workers in the field to come together to exchange ideas and to learn from each other in a unique and profitable manner.

For further information and registration materials, please contact Jacqueline M. Atkins, FSAA, 44 East 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010.



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