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EDITOR'S NOTE: WE EXPRESS OUR APOLOGIES TO OUR READERS FOR THE DELAY IN PUBLISHING THE COFO MEMO IN 1980. THE HEAVY INVOLVEMENT OF SOME OF THE EDITORS WHO WERE WORKING IN BEHALF OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES PREVENTED THE MEMO FROM BEING WRITTEN ON SCHEDULE. WE REGRET ANY INCONVENIENCE OR CONFUSION THAT THIS MAY HAVE CAUSED OUR READERS.

OUR LEAD ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY JACK CALHOUN, THE NEW COMMISSIONER OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES. IT WAS SUBMITTED TO THE COFO EDITORS IN THE SPRING. THEREFORE, IT DOES NOT ADDRESS THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES WHICH TOOK PLACE THIS SUMMER. WE CONSIDER THE ARTICLE TO BE SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT AND TIMELY TO PRINT IT (WITH THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION) AND THINK OUR READERS WILL BE PLEASED THAT WE DID.

MEANWHILE, IN OUR NEXT ISSUE OF THE COFO MEMO, COMMISSIONER CALHOUN HAS GRACIOUSLY OFFERED TO DO ANOTHER MAJOR ARTICLE WHICH WILL DISCUSS THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES, ITS RESULTS, AND THE PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE OFFICE FOR FAMILIES WHICH HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH THIS RESPONSIBILITY BY PRESIDENT CARTER.

THANK YOU.

THE OFFICE FOR FAMILIES: A BEGINNING*

By John A. Calhoun, Commissioner,
Administration for Children, Youth and Families

I was delighted when COFO asked me to write this piece because it gives me the opportunity to publicly thank so many of you who played such a critical role in the decision to establish an Office for Families.

There were a number of very compelling and appealing reasons as to why I should accept the appointment as Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Perhaps none was more challenging, however, than the fact that President Carter had just announced creation of a new Office for Families.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the COFO Organizations.

As Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, I developed a proposal for Governor King's Family Advisory Committee. In addition, I launched the first statewide conference on families. Making programs more responsive to the basic needs of families is a long-held personal concern. In considering the HEW position, I felt I had an opportunity at the Federal level to push beyond the constraints of narrow, categorical programs in order to better serve families, to encourage inner family strengths, and to begin to reverse a criminal cost formula, a formula which has meant that we spend increasing amounts of money for children the further they are from home.

A few months of experience has confirmed both the importance and the difficulty of what we are setting out to do.

I did not realize at the outset that we are living through a time of consciousness-raising. The interest, and debates surfaced by the White House Conference on Families, have resulted in a stimulating educational process at the local, State and national levels. People care very deeply about problems and issues which affect their families, their lifestyles, and their futures. More than 100,000 citizens across the nation cared enough to participate in State meetings or discussions and to vote for their representative delegates to the Conference.

I personally think that these debates made a critical contribution. One point driven home very early is that there is a large gap between our government policies and their impact on families in America. During the course of the national hearings, the most frequently cited concern was the sensitivity or insensitivity of the Federal, State, and local governments toward families.

To cite a familiar example, in approximately half the States, welfare services and benefits are not available unless and until the father leaves the home. There is also the so-called "marriage penalty tax" whereby a married couple pays substantially higher taxes than two single people living together with identical income levels. Another illustration of how we have

skewed incentives away from the family can be seen in our reimbursement policies for foster care. We will pay a stranger to care for a child, but not a blood relative. Similarly, we spend enormous dollars to provide care to our nation's elderly (and children) in institutions, while less than 2 percent of Medicare goes toward home health care. We have never analytically examined the incentives--both fiscal and other--necessary to keep the elderly parent or family member in the home. There is no evidence that social planner or government bureaucrats are consciously attempting to undermine the American family, but unfortunately (and so frequently), this is what occurs.

As charged by President Carter and Secretary Harris, we see the Office for Families filling both an analytic and advocacy gap. We consider it essential not only to assess critically the perceived and real problem areas, but also to challenge, to promote change, and to help develop a network.

The Office for Families can make a difference. We think it important that government policies serve to strengthen families. By servicing families, we avoid more stigmatizing labels. We should be empowering families to do things for themselves. We should also ensure that someone is explaining policies in terms of their effects on families.

I view creation of this Office as a unique opportunity to mobilize and assure meaningful citizen participation in the process of government. When policies are discussed, we must inject a family perspective into the debate. That perspective must reflect both the united and diverse needs and concerns of families. In summary, we intend to make the Office for Families serve as a family lens through which we view Federal and State-funded activity.

Most of you are probably familiar with the functional and organizational statement of the Office for Families which was published in the Federal Register last November, so I will not describe it in detail here. However, you may be interested in knowing that for fiscal year 1980 (which runs through September 30, 1980) we are setting out to accomplish one very difficult, yet essential goal: The successful launching of the Office for Families. We hope to do this by providing the management structure and organizational identity which promotes solid accomplishments and public awareness.

To achieve this goal, we believe that the following short-term objectives are in order:

- To create a broader family perspective within programs of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families;
- To begin dialogues with and to accomplish selective projects requiring joint agency coordination and cooperation;
- To develop a strong family advocacy identity;
- To develop an analytical and research capability;
- To develop an information dissemination and technical assistance capability;
- To launch family-focused demonstration projects; and
- To provide an orderly transition for the implementation activities of the White House Conference on Families.

To accomplish these objectives, we believe that creativity and imagination are as essential as resources.

Several projects are under consideration, and four important ones are already off the ground:

First, we have launched a parenting education initiative. Many of you probably have seen episodes of "Footsteps," a parenting program which is currently being shown on PBS. Some of you may be aware of the "Exploring Childhood" project which was produced a few years ago cooperatively by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families and the Office of Education. We discovered that over the past several years, the Department has spent substantial dollars to develop parent education materials, but very little has been done to promote their use. Under the leadership of the Office for Families and the Department's Public Affairs Office, we pulled together staff from 26 agencies in HEW alone, all of whom have some parenting education materials. This, of course, ranges from alcohol abuse to childhood disease information. The dialogue generated by this effort is encouraging and enlightening. While it may be no surprise, staff in many of these agencies were completely ignorant about what their colleagues were doing. It is exciting to see the coordinative contribution we can make.

We intend to produce a catalogue or inventory of all parenting education materials published by the Department. We are also planning to promote awareness and visibility of exemplary programs. We are anxious to work with national organizations and the voluntary sector in this effort.

The second project which we hope will make an important contribution this year is a small study examining how and what Federal legislation, policies, guidelines, and regulations are serving to undermine families. We expect this study to be available by summer. We intend to develop an analytical base and then use it as a springboard for a strong advocacy role for the Office. This study should provide an initial contribution.

The third project already underway involves information dissemination. We are responding to a multitude and a variety of citizen requests for information and help. As soon as people learned there was a new office, they began to seek assistance on where to go to resolve problems. Many individuals also have written asking for information on various community family-related projects throughout the country. Many of you are familiar with the Child Welfare Resource Exchange Project funded by the Children's Bureau for the past several years through a contract that is now ending. They have developed descriptive abstracts of training resources, curricula, and community projects focusing on families. The Office for Families staff is working with the contractor to cull out and save that information. Ideally, we would like to publish a compilation or resource document which would be widely disseminated.

The fourth initiative I want to bring to your attention reflects my personal concern about pushing beyond categorical boundaries. Within ACYF, with the strong support of my top staff, we are launching several family-focused projects. To illustrate: In the runaway youth program, we expect to fund a project this year which will examine, for the first time, family dynamics. While substantial data are available on runaways, the problems of the parents and families of these youth have been neglected.

In the Head Start program, we look to the decade of the 1980's as providing the opportunity to assess creatively how we might better meet the needs of families as well as children served by the program. We know that the demographics of

the Head Start population have changed considerably since the program began 15 years ago. What we are trying to determine is whether and what changes might be called for in the future so that the program remains and becomes more responsive to children and families.

Within the Children's Bureau, implementation of H.R. 3434 is our top priority. In addition, early next fiscal year, we plan to fund a National Resource Center on Home-Based Services. This project should provide expertise to public State Child Welfare Agencies in developing, initiating and providing services to children in their own homes in order to prevent separation. A second project will be geared toward developing and improving techniques for predicting and identifying vulnerable, high-risk families and children so that we might use early prevention to avert greater problems.

In the day care area, an extremely helpful document was just published by the Department--"A Parent's Guide to Day Care."

More and more parents face problems in choosing child care arrangements suitable for their preschool and school-age children, and this publication addresses many questions and concerns which arise. Perhaps the most helpful feature in the document is a detailed checklist for parents outlining what to look for in child care arrangements. Free copies are available by contacting the publications office of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families.

We believe that each of these projects holds the promise for making important contributions.

Many groups outside the Department became concerned about the Office for Families when the Administration began to consider budget revisions for fiscal year 1981 and when it appeared that the new initiatives would be cut back. I want to assure you that both President Carter and Secretary Harris remain firmly committed to the Office for Families.

Congress is now considering the Department's budget and the constraints facing us may result in slightly less than the initial amount projected for the Office in fiscal year 1981, but I am determined to ensure that the Office is launched on a solid, credible basis. We have broken out approximately \$120,000 from

ACYF's Section 426 Research and Demonstration monies for the Office for Families in fiscal year 1980, and we hope there will be other projects funded this fiscal year.

In conclusion, I want to state my firm commitment toward making the government more responsive to the needs and concerns of families. We look toward the groups actively involved in the White House Conference on Families to provide us with a constituency. The Office for Families must serve as a resource, a sounding board, and a committee advocate for your concerns.

I remain challenged and excited by our prospects. We are determined to make the Office a caring, responsive, and representative voice for families across the country. The COFO organizations were vital to our beginning, and I look forward to a continued and close working relationship. I encourage you to push us hard so that we work with courage and imagination in fulfilling our mandate.

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES SOME OBSERVATIONS*

By Patricia A. Langley
Washington Representative, FSAA

The first White House Conference on Families in U.S. history occurred this summer. The three regional sites of the Conference were Baltimore (June 5-6-7), Minneapolis (June 19-20-21) and Los Angeles (July 10-11-12). This White House Conference was unique: it was preceded by extensive hearings around the country which involved over 100,000 persons, it was not held in Washington, and the delegates who attended the Conference were, by a ratio of two to one, lay persons. There were other unique aspects to this Conference: the intense scheduling dynamics under which the process operated, the politicization of the families issue, and the polarity in American politics today which carried into the heart of the Conference process.

*We thought that our readers might be interested in some discussion about this very important Conference by one of the COFO editors who was present at all three sites and who was a delegate in Baltimore. Those ideas expressed in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the COFO organizations.

The White House Conference on Families which was first promised by Presidential candidate, Jimmy Carter in 1976 was greeted with excitement and worry from its very inception. Many persons in Washington and around the country were well aware that public policies were greatly in need of reassessment for their impact on families and family life. Many believed that a White House Conference on Families could bring about a much needed national consciousness-raising and, at long last, help to build a national constituency for families. And many also knew that it could be a lightning rod for certain ideological agendas.

The staff for a White House Conference is exceedingly important. The Carter Administration had some difficulties in finding the appropriate persons to fill the key positions of Chairman and Executive Director. Years of delay and confusion led to real concern that the Conference might never happen. Finally, in April of 1979 the appointments were made. And they were very exceptional appointments! Whatever its other problems, the first White House Conference on Families was blessed with extraordinary leadership.

Those who work in Washington and were able to observe the Conference Chairman Jim Guy Tucker and the Executive Director, John Carr and his staff at work, were continually surprised and delighted by the talent, commitment and endless dedication to a fair Conference--while working under the most killing of time schedules. It was little more than a year from the time that Tucker and Carr came on board before the Conference opened in Baltimore on June 5! In that space of time a National Advisory Committee was appointed, staff was hired, hearings were held around the country, papers written, a national research symposium on families was held, a Conference format designed, Conference sites found and delegates chosen and assigned to Workgroups--to name only the obvious accomplishments.

Early in the Conference process, in the fall of 1979 and spring of 1980, at the state meetings being held around the country, two basic and conflicting ideological viewpoints began to emerge. These two positions revolved around the "overheated" topics of abortion, gay rights, ERA and the definition of family. On the one hand there were delegates arguing that the Conference would not be relevant if it did not address and support these controversial issues including a broad definition of family which would encompass homosexual relationships. On

the other hand, equally sincere and caring persons, believing that the traditional American family had been undermined by government policies, the media and the schools, took an equally strong and opposing position on the above issues. They wanted the Conference to endorse a pro-life Constitutional amendment, to return prayer to schools, to adopt a traditional definition of family that would clearly exclude homosexual relationships, and to oppose the adoption of an Equal Rights Amendment.

Because it was anticipated that these strong ideological positions would be represented at the Conference sites as well, it became the mission of the national Coalition for the White House Conference on Families (which the COFO organizations helped to establish) to build a structure for moderation. A platform that could speak to families issues from a position of moderation was written and adopted. Money was raised and staff (mostly volunteer) was established to provide technical assistance at each of the three Conference sites. The COFO organizations made an especially heavy commitment to this national Coalition effort in a variety of ways--staff, leadership and funds were provided.

At the Conference sites, delegates were urged at the meetings of the Coalition on the opening day of the Conference to avoid polarizing issues and to focus on those matters more central (and long neglected) to the concerns of families in our society. It was also clearly understood and openly stated that some organizations within the Coalition would not be able to totally subscribe to the Coalition's platform of moderation. To the extent that they pursued another agenda, they were asked to do so separately and independent of all Coalition activity. Generally speaking, the Coalition provided a focus for moderation for those delegates who attended its meetings at the Conference sites.

The Conference Process

The Conference was divided into 20 Workgroups, each on a major subject area. Each delegate was given the opportunity, by mail, to indicate the three Workgroups of most interest to them. The delegate was then assigned by the WHCF staff to one Workgroup for the Conference. It was clear even before the Conference opened that certain Workgroups would be particularly conflict-ridden. One Workgroup was assigned, in

its list of topics, the definition of family, one had abortion, another had ERA and another parents rights, etc. Persons assigned to those particular Workgroups often found themselves working in a charged atmosphere.

The vast majority of delegates, however, whether they were philosophically moderate, conservative or liberal, worked diligently and constructively under an exceedingly tight and demanding time schedule. Within a twenty-four hour time span, the delegates met for the first time with their assigned Workgroup, formulated and introduced resolutions, gathered in the larger Topic Session, and established the list of final recommendations on which the delegates would vote in the closing session on Saturday morning. Given the complexity of family issues and the fact that several Workgroups were polarized ideologically, it was a tough assignment, and it left almost no time for eating or sleeping. Delegates caucused and worked late into the night, before and during breakfast, between sessions, etc. It was intensive and very hard work.

The final balloting took place on Saturday morning at the closing session of the Conference. The results at all three Conference sites were quite moderate. The overheated and conflict-ridden issues did not receive heavy support. Broader concerns about families were expressed as the priority issues: on July 13, 1980 an article in the Washington Post stated "The top recommendations showed more concern for education, housing, awareness of disabled, media responsibility and taxes imposed on families than on the more volatile subjects of abortion, ERA and homosexuality."

After delegates were given an opportunity to speak on the different resolutions they voted on them. For each of the sixty resolutions a delegate could indicate on a secret ballot, one of the following choices: strongly support, mildly support, strongly oppose, mildly oppose. This information was then fed into a computer. By the conclusion of the Conference the computer had ranked every one of the sixty resolutions in order of priority of support. The ten top issues that emerged at each of the Conference sites are of particular interest for their moderation and focus.

The most frequently emphasized concern was the need for American society to better address the problem of alcohol and drug abuse. In Baltimore it was the #1 issue of the top ten! At the two

other Conference sites it was also voted in the top ten priority issues. The resolutions dealing with substance abuse urged better programs in schools to educate the young, more sensitivity in the media and better community supports for the families of victims of substance abuse. A second and important priority of a majority of the delegates at all three sites was the need for family impact studies (systematic review of government policies at the federal, state and local level to determine their direct and indirect impact on families). This issue was voted #1 at Minneapolis and #4 at Los Angeles. It did not make the top ten in Baltimore. Another consensus area that emerged was the need for government incentives (via the tax system) to help families to better help themselves: better tax breaks for day care; tax credits to encourage caring for an elderly family member; and better programs to help the handicapped live a more independent life. There was also strong support for better community resources to assist the elderly, the handicapped and foster children. The marriage tax issues also emerged in the top ten at two of the Conference sites. Concern about the media and its insensitivity to family values was mentioned twice in the ten top issues voted out in Minneapolis. The family's need for more sensitivity in the workplace also received much attention and was #3 in Baltimore.

The above analysis merely highlights some of the priority concerns which emerged at the three Conference sites. A fuller analysis will be provided in the next issue of the COFO Memo.

What will happen to all these resolutions? At the Conference sites each state delegation selected one person to sit on a national Task Force which will meet in Washington on August 18. These delegates, plus the forty person National Advisory Committee and twenty-two presidential appointees will make up the National Task Force which will meet for three days on August 18, 19 and 20, in Washington, D.C. Here they will determine how the issues will be carried forward and implemented. A narrowing of the dimensions of issues is also likely.

The Conference staff has been working hard since the close of the Los Angeles Conference to do a very thorough review of all the resolutions that were passed and to put them into a context that can best be utilized by the National Task Force. In addition, a portion of the WHCF staff at HHS (formerly HEW) will remain intact until March 1981, working toward the implementation of some

of the important priorities established by the August Task Force. The Office for Families (which currently lacks a Director and necessary staff) was charged by the President with the long range responsibility for implementation of the WHCF recommendations.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, coalitions that formed around the WHCF's state processes are now in place all over the country. Those states and local coalitions will have the greatest opportunity to carry forward the momentum of the first White House Conference in U.S. history.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION S. 1843, H.R.2977

By a 3-0 vote the Senate Labor and Human Resources Child and Human Development Subcommittee on March 27, 1980, reported out S. 1843, the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Act. The 3-0 vote came after the two Republicans on the five-man subcommittee, Humphrey of New Hampshire, and Armstrong of Colorado attempted to delay action on the bill and, after this failed, refused to vote. Voting in favor of the bill were Cranston of California, Riegle of Michigan and Nelson of Wisconsin, all co-sponsors of the bill. The Full Committee reported out the bill on May 7th.

S. 1843 authorizes \$65 million over a three year period to fund programs which aid victims of domestic violence. The House has already passed a similar bill, H.R. 2977. While S. 1843 and H.R. 2977 are identical in purpose and authorization of funding, differences in the funding distribution formula and the definition of domestic violence would have to be worked out if and when the Senate passes its bill. To date, the Senate has failed to take any action. S. 1843 is expected, however, to be sent to the Floor before the adjournment of the 96th Congress.

THE FAMILY PROTECTION ACT S. 1808

On September 27, 1979 S. 1808 was introduced in the United States Senate by Sen. Paul Laxalt (R. Nev.). This is the first time that family issues have been addressed in one complex piece of federal legislation. The legislation includes provisions which would prohibit use of federal education funds in any state that did

not allow voluntary prayer in schools. Similarly, federal funds would be prohibited to any state that did not guarantee parental review of textbooks, prior to their use in the classroom. It would prohibit any intermingling of sexes in sports. And it prohibits federal funding for purchase or preparation of any education materials that would tend to deny or diminish the role differences between the sexes as it has been historically understood in the United States. Other provisions of the legislation would abolish the marriage tax and would provide tax incentives to families to care for elderly family members.

Senator Laxalt and his staff have received criticism for some of the provisions in this legislation. In an article in the Washington Post on July 25, 1980 Senator Laxalt was quoted as saying "The family is now facing social and political threats of such magnitude as to compel a political defense." The same article in the Post indicated that although Senator Laxalt is planning to revise the legislation next year in response to the criticism he has received, "...conservatives are planning a move to attach some provisions as riders to appropriations bills this year."

Senator Laxalt, who is Ronald Reagan's Campaign Manager, has indicated he will review the legislation after the Presidential election.

For a copy of the entire bill, write the Senate Documents room as indicated on the cover of this issue.

THE ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AND CHILD WELFARE ACT OF 1980 IS SIGNED INTO LAW: PL 96-272.

On June 17, 1980, H.R. 3434 became Public Law 96-272. It places a \$2.7 billion ceiling on Title XX for 1980 and provides for indexing of the ceiling to \$3.3 billion by 1985. Other provisions would provide for preventive services to families when a child is at risk. It also provides for adoption assistance for hard-to-place children. Funding for these preventive services to families has long been at the authorization level of \$266 million but at a \$56.5 appropriations level. The HEW Appropriations Subcommittees of the House and Senate will meet in September to determine the new funding level. To order PL 96-272, see the MEMO cover.



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