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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 5, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR HOWARD BAKER  
CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: MARI MASENG  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR,  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

FROM: MAX GREEN  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

This Friday, May 8, at 1:15 p.m., the President will meet in the Cabinet Room with members of the Working Seminar on the Family and American Welfare Policy. Chaired by conservative scholar Michael Novak, the Seminar will issue its report on welfare reform to the President.

The report, which is entirely consistent with the Administration's approach to the welfare problem, is likely to garner much attention. The Economist has already endorsed the findings of the report in an article (attached).

I have two questions. First, would you want to participate in the meeting with the Seminar? Second, would you want to sit down with the group earlier, at approximately 1:00 p.m., to discuss the welfare issue before the President arrives?

Attachment

~~THE WHITE HOUSE~~  
~~WASHINGTON~~

May 5, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR KEN DUBERSTEIN  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: MARI MASENG  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR,  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

FROM: MAX GREEN  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

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WASHINGTON

May 5, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR KEN CRIBB  
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: MARI MASENG  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR,  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

FROM: MAX GREEN  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

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March 5, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR MARI MASENG

FROM: MAX GREEN

SUBJECT: Meeting with Chief of Staff

I would like to have a small group of Jewish leaders in to meet with the new Chief of Staff. We could have the meeting as soon as next week. Thursday, March 12th would probably be the best day, but I could probably arrange something on the 11th as well. I would invite Max Fisher and Dick Fox of the National Jewish Coalition; Morris Abram; Bob Asher; and as few as two or as many as six additional persons.

If the meeting can not be arranged for next week, we should hold off until the last week in March, since the President's Conference leaders will be in Israel the third week of March.

**THE FAMILY**  
**Preserving America's Future**

**A Report of the Working Group on the Family**

**November 1986**

"...unless we work to strengthen the family, to create conditions under which most parents will stay together--all the rest: schools, and playgrounds, and public assistance, and private concern, will never be enough to cut completely the circle of despair and deprivation."<sup>1</sup>

Lyndon B. Johnson

"Strong families are the foundation of society. Through them we pass on our traditions, rituals, and values. From them we receive the love, encouragement, and education needed to meet human challenges. Family life provides opportunities and time for the spiritual growth that fosters generosity of spirit and responsible citizenship."<sup>2</sup>

Ronald Reagan

"There are exceptional women, there are exceptional men, who have other tasks to perform in addition to, not in substitution for, the task of motherhood and fatherhood, the task of providing for the home and of keeping it. But it is the tasks connected with the home that are the fundamental tasks of humanity. After all, we can get along for the time being with an inferior quality of success in other lines, political or business, or of any kind; because if there are failings in such matters we can make them good in the next generation; but if the mother does not do her duty, there will either be no next generation, or a next generation that is worse than none at all. In other words, we cannot as a Nation get along at all if we haven't the right kind of home life. Such a life is not only the supreme duty, but also the supreme reward of duty. Every rightly constituted woman or man, if she or he is worth her or his salt, must feel that there is no such ample reward to be found anywhere in life as the reward of children, the reward of a happy family life."<sup>3</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt

### The American Family

The American people have reached a new consensus about the family. Common sense has prevailed. After two decades of unprecedented attacks upon it, the family's worth--indeed, its essential role--in our free society has become the starting point in a national effort to reclaim a precious part of our heritage.

We are all "pro-family" now, but it was not always so. Only a few years ago, the American household of persons related by blood, marriage or adoption--the traditional definition of the family--seemed to be in peril. In academia, in the media, and even in government, radical critiques of family life were conspicuous. It was trendy to advocate "open marriage," "creative divorce," "alternate lifestyles," and to consider family life as a cause of "neurotic individualism."

Some experts taught that parenthood was too important for amateurs, that children should be raised in State-approved clinics, that a license should be required for procreation, that tax penalties should be levied against



those with large families. Husbands and wives were urged to kick "the togetherness habit." A radical redefinition of "family" was underway.<sup>4</sup> It reached its peak of confusion in 1980, when the White House Conference on Families foundered on the fundamental question of what constitutes a family and what makes for good family life.

This hostility toward the family was new to Americans, even as we experienced its devastating impact upon our communities, our neighborhoods, our circles of friends and relations, and in many cases, our own homes. But it was not entirely new. It was merely a manifestation during a period of domestic strife and social dislocation, of an animus long at war with the values and beliefs of democratic capitalism.

It is no accident that every totalitarian movement of the 20th Century has tried to destroy the family. Marx and Engels viewed family life as Cato viewed Carthage: it was to be destroyed. Their disciples in state socialism, from the Petrograd Soviet to the Third Reich, from Hanoi to Havana, have sought to crush family life. The essence of modern totalitarianism has been to substitute the power of the State for the rights, responsibilities, and authority of the family.

Everywhere the equation holds true: Where there are strong families, the freedom of the individual expands and the reach of the State contracts. Where family life weakens and fails, government advances, intrudes, and ultimately compels.

That was the anti-family agenda of many in the 1960s and 1970s: a governmental solution to every problem government had caused in the first place. Because government had fostered welfare dependency, more government programs were needed. Because government imposed crushing economic burdens upon families, more governmental redistribution of income was required. Somehow the bottom line was always the same: government would take resources from the families of America in order to "help" them.

That approach came to a crashing halt in 1980, when the American people gave an unprecedented electoral mandate to a new president. He trusted them to manage their own lives. He sought to empower them anew, with all the promise of a growing economy, safer communities, a more decent way of life.

By lightening the heavy hand of government--through historic tax cuts, regulatory reform, respect for State and local authority--he unleashed their energy and initiative. The result has been the greatest period of expansion and job creation in modern times.

By standing firm for neglected verities--law and order, a depoliticized judiciary, parental rights, and plain civility--he sparked a social renewal that is bringing reform to our schools, our courts, our safer streets and more decent neighborhoods.

His defense of the family is now widely imitated. Indeed, it has become fashionable to recognize that the restoration of family life is vital to our society's future. But some have learned only part of his lesson. They finally see the import of the family, but they do not yet understand the basics of a pro-family policy.

That is the reason for this report: to attempt to distill the essentials of what government should, and should not do concerning the family. To individuals and organizations of all shades of opinion earlier this year, we posed a question: "What can we do to help America's families?" The response was overwhelming; and while the specific suggestions differed greatly, it became clear that there is a new awareness among the American people of a basic truth many had forgotten or overlooked. It is as simple as this: private choices have public effects. The way our fellow citizens choose to live affects many other lives. For example, there is no such thing as private drug abuse. The abandonment of spouse and children hurts far beyond the home. Illegitimacy exacts a price from society as well as from the individuals involved. Child Pornography and obscenity degrade the community, especially its women and children, as well as those who patronize it. The casual disregard of human life ultimately imperils all those who are weak, infirm, and dependent upon the compassion and resources of others.

It simply is not true that what we do is our business only. For in the final analysis, the kind of people we are--the kind of nation we will be for generations hence--is the sum of what millions of Americans do in their otherwise private lives. If increasing numbers of our children are born or raised outside of marriage, if youth drug and alcohol abuse remains at current levels, if an ever larger percentage of adults choose not to marry or choose to remain without children, there will be staggering consequences for us all: greater poverty, more crime, a less educated workforce,

mounting demands for government spending, higher taxes, worsening deficits, and crises we have only begun to anticipate.

For example, the withering of the American family has already had unexpected demographic consequences. Without immigration, our population would already be in decline (as it is over much of the western world). We can foresee the graying of America, with new strains on social security, the manpower needs of the economy, and the viability of the volunteer armed forces. For another example, our entire society is now confronted with the fallout from the sexual revolution of the last quarter-century. Was it really just a matter of private choice that has ravaged the country with an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, many of them new and virulent? Is it a private matter that results in staggering medical bills distributed among consumers (through higher insurance premiums) and among taxpayers (through taxes to support medical research and care)?

Who pays the bills? In this as in so many other cases, the American family pays, even when it stands apart from the pathologies that inflict such costs, economic and social, upon the body politic.

The family has paid too much. It has lost too much of its authority to courts and rule-writers, too much of its voice in education and social policy, too much of its resources to public officials at all levels. We have made dramatic progress, during the past six years of economic reform, in turning back those resources to the men and women who earn them through labor, invention, and investment. Now we face the unfinished agenda: turning back to the households of this land the autonomy that once was theirs, in a society stable and secure, where the family can generate and nurture what no government can ever produce--Americans who will responsibly exercise their freedom and, if necessary, defend it.

It is time to reaffirm some "home truths" and to restate the obvious. Intact families are good. Families who choose to have children are making a desirable decision. Mothers and fathers who then decide to spend a good deal of time raising those children themselves rather than leaving it to others are demonstrably doing a good thing for those children. Countless Americans do these things every day. They ask for no special favors--they do these things naturally out of love, loyalty and a commitment to the future. They are the bedrock of our society. Public policy and the culture in general must support and reaffirm these decisions--not undermine and be hostile to them or send a message that we are neutral.

## A Pro-Family Policy

This report proposes standards and principles by which to judge public policy and its effects on the family. It is not meant to be the last word on this matter but, rather, is intended to advance the emerging national consensus that can translate rhetoric into reality. In that process, we propose the following guidelines:

1. First and most important, a pro-family policy must recognize that the rights of the family are anterior, and superior, to those of the state. Government does not create the family, though it has an obligation to protect it. And Government cannot abolish the family, or intrude upon its functions, without undermining the social foundation of the state itself.

2. Parents are fundamental, in terms of both rights and responsibilities. They have the duty to provide for their offspring, and they are usually the best judges of their children's needs. Parental control is not perfect; and our society has always recognized that, in certain circumstances, it can be contravened. But law and policy should presume the reasonableness of parental action, and the authority of the home should be respected except in cases of substantial risk of harm.

3. When dealing with the family, the starting point for government at any level--Federal, State, or local--should be the central tenet of the Hippocratic Oath: Primum, non nocere. First of all, do no harm.

The indirect impact of government activity is often more important than its intended effect. Our courts, our legislation, and even the rhetoric of our leaders send signals to the American family. Those who pushed instant no-fault divorce laws through 49 State legislatures did not intend to facilitate the abandonment to poverty of millions of women and children. But it happened, in a wave of marital dissolution made possible by those laws. Our judges probably did not intend to touch off an explosion of illegitimacy when they minimized the power of the States to legislate on that subject. But it happened, and today our society wonders how to get the genie of personal indulgence back into the bottle of legal restraints.

4. We must guard against abusing and misusing the pro-family label. In the past, it has been used to cover an incredible array of political schemes. During the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, Social Democrats in

several European nations purported to "save" the family by socializing the costs of child rearing. State-funded day care, child allowances, national health systems, school feeding programs, and other welfare programs were put in place, but at tremendous expense. Government grew and taxed, pinching pocketbooks and forcing mothers into the workplace. Predictably, like animals in uncomfortable captivity, people reproduced less. Birth rates declined. All this has been done elsewhere in the name of the family. It must be avoided here.

5. A family policy is not a remedy in itself but a standard by which proposed remedies can be judged. The nation's response should begin with questions: Will this program, this change, this law be fair, supportive, and encouraging to the families of America? Does it justify the financial burdens it would impose upon household income? Is there a way to accomplish our purpose that involves less government or a private-sector substitute for it?

6. Although many family problems are not amenable to policy solutions, the public sector can nonetheless influence patterns of culture. There never has been, and never will be, a governmental solution to the interpersonal problems of spouses and children. There never will be a governmental substitute for individual responsibility for the results of our own actions. But that does not mean government has to ignore problems that are rooted in a contemporary culture hostile to, or ambivalent towards the family. Although government cannot mandate cultural change, public officials can, as opinion leaders, influence its direction. For example, they can be intolerant of drug abuse within their own offices. They can avoid occasions which give respectability to those who demean women through pornography. Just as we expect them to shun segregated facilities, so we should expect them to avoid association with anti-religious bigotry. In short, their conduct must not be value-neutral.

7. When intervention into family affairs is necessary, it should be undertaken by institutions closest to control by citizens themselves. There are literally thousands of private sector organizations across America that help meet family needs. These include churches, neighborhood groups, voluntary associations--the whole panoply of self-help organizations which has characterized America since Alexis de Tocqueville marvelled at our networks of private institutions. Many of the problems of the mid-century welfare state could have been avoided if those in power had reinforced these mediating institutions, instead of undermining them.<sup>5</sup>

8. When government intervenes in family affairs, whether through assistance or correction, the action should be undertaken by the level of government closest to the people involved.

9. Family policy must be built upon a foundation of economic growth. It is futile to apportion slices of a shrinking pie. Sustained, vigorous expansion of the economy--with all the opportunity that flows therefrom--is an essential part of any pro-family program. That means low marginal tax rates. It means keeping inflation under control. It means resisting spending schemes--even those wrapped up in pro-family rhetoric--which undermine household prosperity.

10. There is great reason for hope. No trend is irreversible. Most of America's families are pulling through, and our institutions are rallying to assist those in trouble. From inner-city neighborhoods to rural communities, most households hold together. Most youngsters aspire to productive, independent lives. Most young adults, upright and responsible, hope to build families of their own. Most families endure.

For most Americans, life is not a matter of legislative battles, judicial decrees, and executive decisions. It is a fabric of helping hands and good neighbors, bedtime stories and shared prayers, lovingly packed lunchboxes and household budget-balancing, tears wiped away, a precious heritage passed along. It is hard work and a little put away for the future.

No government commands these things. No government can replicate them. In a faddish culture that emphasizes living for the moment and for oneself, they affirm an older, and more lasting, set of priorities.

This fabric of family life has been frayed by the abrasive experiments of two liberal decades. If by some terrible turn of events, it were to unravel, then both economic progress and personal liberty would disappear as well. Neither prosperity nor freedom can be sustained without a transfusion, from generation to generation, of family values: respect and discipline, restraint and self-sacrifice, interdependence and cooperation, loyalty and fidelity, and an ethical code that gives to individuals, however lowly, a transcendent import.

The idols of our recent past were those who defied norms and shattered standards, and indeed there is always a

place for "rebels." But in a healthy society, heroes are the women and men who hold the world together one home at a time: the parents and grandparents who forego pleasures, delay purchases, foreclose options, and commit most of their lives to the noblest undertaking of citizenship: raising children who, resting on the shoulders of the previous generation, will see farther than we and reach higher.

This is social responsibility at its best. Parental nurturing and education of the young is our most important national investment. It is the fundamental task of humanity.

"Family experiences shape our response to the larger communities in which we live. The best American traditions echo family values that call on us to nurture and guide the young, to help enrich the lives of the handicapped, to assist less fortunate neighbors, and to cherish the elderly. Let us summon our individual and community resources to promote healthy families capable of carrying on these traditions and providing strength to our society."<sup>6</sup>

Ronald Reagan

"...No matter how many communes anybody invents, the family always creeps back."

Margaret Mead

### Why families?

Many "visionaries" have contended over the years that there are better ways to raise and nurture children than in intact families. These efforts have failed and the traditional family, forever described as teetering on the brink of extinction, has persevered.

In spite of obvious strains, Americans remain committed to the family. The Gallup poll shows that a "good family life" is our number one social value outranking, even in this age of the "me generation," physical health, self-respect and freedom of choice. Americans seem to understand Edmund Burke's observation: "To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society is the first principle of public affections." For most Americans, this "little platoon" is the family.

Why is this so? Why is there "no alternative to the bourgeois family in the contemporary world."<sup>7</sup> Why is the family "an absolutely essential component of a society that is based on freedom and democratic processes...."<sup>8</sup>

First, the family nurtures children better than any alternative. Amitai Etzioni of the Center for Policy Research and George Washington University has written, "There never was a society throughout all of history...without a family as the central unit for launching the education of children, for character formation, and as the moral agent of society."<sup>9</sup> Indeed during all of written history from ancient Egypt to modern America the records show "that the family has been



the vehicle through which men and women have entered upon life. In the family they have been born, there they have been trained to take a place in society as adults, and from there they go out to begin the cycle all over again with their own children. Even more significant as a measure of the antiquity and fundamental nature of the family is that anthropological studies of cultures far removed in character from so-called civilized societies have turned up virtually none which lacked a family life."<sup>10</sup> Will and Ariel Durant summarized their study of history by observing that "the family is the nucleus of civilization."

When individuals are in trouble the family becomes even more key in the struggle to survive and prosper. "One unforgettable law has been learned painfully through all the oppressions, disasters, and injustices of the last thousand years: if things go well with the family, life is worth living; when the family falters, life falls apart."<sup>11</sup>

Of course, in addition to everything else, the family transmits our culture and nurtures the character traits that create good citizens in a free society--in short it is a source of "public virtue." "It is through the commitments made in families that both children and parents experience the value of authority, responsibility, and duty in their most pristine forms. Those who formulated our constitutional system knew that 'public virtue' among the citizenry was crucial to preserving the authority of popularly elected leaders."<sup>12</sup>

In view of all this, it is clear that public policy-making in a free democratic society should begin with the axiom "What strengthens the family strengthens society."

"In general, however, upward mobility depends on all three principles--work, family, and faith--interdependently reaching toward children and future. These are the pillars of a free economy and a prosperous society."<sup>13</sup>

George Gilder

## Family Economics

### The Family and Democratic Capitalism

The freedom to make our own lives--the essence of democratic capitalism--can flourish only where the family is strong. Strong families make economic progress possible by passing on the values central to a free economy.

Clearly, "the free enterprise system and the modern family are intimately linked in a complex web of cause and effect."<sup>14</sup> In fact, democratic capitalism through "its devotion to human freedom, its creation of wealth, and its demand for personal responsibility--made the modern family possible. And the modern family--by its channeling of the unleashed individual toward natural and necessary social tasks, by its mobility, by its unique motivational psychology, and by its linkage to an inherited moral code--made the free enterprise system possible."<sup>15</sup> Some contend that the consumer ethic of capitalism undermines family values, but it is more true that neither the modern family nor the free enterprise system would long survive without the other.

Families save; and even more importantly they teach children the values upon which savings are built--delaying gratification now for some future goal. In fact, "the family is the seedbed of economic skills, money habits, attitudes toward work, and the arts of financial independence."<sup>16</sup>

The savings of millions of American families "coming together like the small rivulets that form a raging river," are what drives the American economy. These savings have made economic expansion possible by providing the capital pool that keeps interest rates reasonable, allows businesses to borrow and grow, and creates job opportunities for young men and women who are beginning families of their own. "It was the saving patterns of families, and the virtues inculcated by them, which made capitalism possible by making capital available. Destroy the one, and you destroy the other."<sup>17</sup>

More directly, many individual businesses in our country are family based. By some estimates, at least 60% of the gross national product is generated by family firms and 75% of private corporations, partnerships and proprietorships are family dominated.<sup>18</sup>

Attitudes toward work are formed in the family. Families which teach that effort results in gain prepare skilled and energetic workers who are the engine for

democratic capitalism. In contrast, if children are taught that effort is to no avail--that "the deck is stacked"--nothing is more likely to undercut achievement. Without employees, investors, and entrepreneurs nurtured in families and instilled with the work ethic, democratic capitalism falls.

George Gilder in The Wealth of Families puts it succinctly: "The family which is tied together with love is the source of all productivity and growth."<sup>19</sup>

### Family vs. the Individual?

It may appear a paradox that American society, with its emphasis on rights of the individual, has placed great value on a strong family structure. To some the nature of the family may seem opposed to freedom: a limitation on spouses bound by commitments to each other, a burden on parents obligated to care for children, and a restriction on children who live under parental authority.

The experience of history, however, shows family and liberty to be natural companions, not enemies. The framers of our Constitution saw clearly that only those societies strong in certain civic virtues could sustain an experiment in representative democracy. The family is the primary training ground for individual responsibility, for self-sacrifice, for seeking a common goal rather than self interest. Without those virtues, democracy breaks down in an unrestrained battle of each against the other. Only strong families can build a society strong enough to make representative democracy secure.

Conversely, only in a society that allows individual freedom can family members exercise the initiative and responsibility that makes for strong family life.

The breakdown of the American family in recent years merely confirms the interdependence of strong families and secure liberties. Irresponsibility, self-seeking, and contempt of authority erode not only the family but respect for law and civility as well. Children who do not learn to live out commitments to others in a family do not learn to live within a larger society either. If we wish to see a renewal of liberty, we must work for a renaissance of the family.

### Legal Status of the Family

We venture the guess that most Americans, if asked about the legal status of the family, would respond that it has a special place in our jurisprudence, a hallowed role in our constitutional system. The disconcerting truth is that judicial activism over the last several decades has eroded this special status considerably.

That is a radical departure from our national heritage. The Anglo-American legal tradition always recognized the family's central role in begetting, nurturing, and educating children. Under the Common Law, and under our State laws based upon its spirit, the family was the legal expression of the closest human relationships from childhood through old age. When the framers of the Constitution drafted the legal blueprint for the nation, there was no need to enumerate the rights of the family or its unique role as mediator between the individual and government; for everyone knew that and took it for granted. Family law, moreover, was a matter for the States, where the family unit, the household, was the basis of social identity and public standing.

For almost two centuries thereafter, the nation changed in many ways, some of them nothing short of revolutionary. But the legal status of the family remained secure, and the interest of the community in protecting that status was affirmed by Supreme Court decisions in *Maynard vs. Hill* (concerning divorce in the Oregon Territory) and the *Reynolds* case (concerning polygamy). Perhaps the reason why there were not more cases affirming the legal status of the family is that few challenges to that status ever arose.

In the 1920s, however, two significant challenges did arise, and the Supreme Court's response to them affirmed our long tradition of legal respect for family life. Striking down a Nebraska law in 1923, the Court held that the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment "without doubt" includes the right "to marry, establish a home and bring up children."<sup>20</sup> Two years later, the Court voided an Oregon law, which required all children between the ages of 3 and 16 to attend public schools. Under the Fourteenth Amendment's protection of liberty, the Court insisted, this law "unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control."<sup>21</sup>

In matters of economics, the Court at times veered in different directions concerning substantive due process

under the Fourteenth Amendment. But in family law, there was no deviation: the natural rights of the family were never in question, and it was entirely predictable, in *Skinner vs. Oklahoma* in 1942, that the Court would strike down a compulsory sterilization law, which violated the human right to beget children.

It was not predictable--indeed, it was a shocking surprise--that the Supreme Court 25 years later would hand down a series of decisions which would abruptly strip the family of its legal protections and pose the question of whether this most fundamental of American institutions retains any constitutional standing. The common thread in these decisions has been the repudiation of State or Federal statutes or regulations based upon traditional relationships between spouses and between parents and children.

We cannot say that all the invalidated measures were sound public policy. Some of them may have been outdated, others may have been out of step with national public opinion. But these were matters for the people themselves to decide, through their elected representatives in State legislatures and in the Congress. Instead, the Supreme Court decided; and it did so on a philosophical basis which left little room for legal recognition of the family.

In *King v. Smith*, *New Jersey Welfare Rights Organization v. Cahill*, and *USDA v. Moreno*, the Court gutted attempts to enforce the moral order of the family as the basis for public assistance. *Levy v. Louisiana*, *Glon v. American Guarantee and Liability Insurance Company*, *Gomez v. Perez*, and *Weber v. Aetna Casualty and Surety Company* put an end to legal preference for the former. The Court has struck down State attempts to protect the life of children in utero,<sup>22</sup> to protect paternal interest in the life of the child before birth,<sup>23</sup> and to respect parental authority over minor children in abortion decisions.<sup>24</sup>

In *Moore v. City of East Cleveland* (431 U.S. 494, 1971), the Court denied to the citizens of that predominately black community the power to zone their town for intact families, in order to protect residents from the downward drag of the welfare culture. In so doing, Moore in effect forbade any community in America to define "family" in a traditional way.

The Supreme Court has turned the fundamental freedom to marry<sup>25</sup> into a right to divorce without paying court costs.<sup>26</sup> It has journeyed from protection of the "intimate relation of husband and wife" in its contraception cases<sup>27</sup>

to the dictum that "the marital couple is not an independent entity with a heart and mind of its own...."28

The cumulative message of these cases reverberates today. In some respects, the family stands outside the law or more specifically, familial relationships may not be given preferential standing in law. Taken together, these and other decisions by the Supreme Court have crippled the potential of public policy to enforce familial obligations, demand family responsibility, protect family rights, or enhance family identity.

Yes, economic remedies are important for helping the American family; but they cannot by themselves tilt the balance of public policy back in favor of family life. That will require something more fundamental: returning to communities the authority to set norms and affirm values, while protecting at the Federal level those fundamental rights which undergird our system of ordered liberty. This approach may be foreshadowed in a recent Court decision upholding an anti-sodomy law in Georgia. In that decision, the Court expressly refused "to take a more expansive view of our authority to discover new fundamental rights." To do that, would be for the Court to "take to itself further authority to govern the country without express authority." It would, as Justice White put it in another case, leave the Federal judiciary "roaming" at will in "an exercise of raw judicial power" over the ruins of the American family.

Some will say that is a simplistic solution, and that simple solutions don't work. We disagree. We affirm the prophetic declaration of a losing but cheerful presidential hopeful as he stood before his party's nominating convention in 1968: "There ARE simple solutions. There are just no easy ones."

So where do we begin? We urge the Federal courts to permit the States wide latitude in formulating family policy. Judges should resist the temptation to write their own favored notions of marriage and family into Constitutional law.

State courts, with specialized family forums, have superior competence in adjudicating and monitoring family disputes. The intrusion of Federal courts into controversial matters regarding divorce, alimony, custody, and so forth could result in incompatible Federal and State decrees in cases which are normally subject to ongoing court supervision. Severe restraint by the Federal judiciary

will be necessary to avoid problems that would strike to the heart of the administration of justice.

The States, for their part, should not hesitate to promote family goals for fear of, or in deference to, the Federal Government. Rather they should feel free to protect the family according to their own sense of goals and priorities, consistent with the relatively few limitations imposed by Federal statute.

In the final analysis, however, a fatally flawed line of court decisions can be corrected, directly or indirectly, through mechanisms created by the Constitution itself. These include the appointment of new judges and their confirmation by the Senate, the removal of sitting justices for cause, the limitation of the jurisdiction of Federal courts, and, in extreme cases, amendment of the Constitution itself. All these have been proposed in response to judicial tendencies of the last quarter century, and we do not presume to endorse or oppose any of them here. But we do anticipate that the good sense of the American people, through one means or another, will generate the means and the will to restore the legal standing of the American family.

## Divorce

One legal issue regarding the family demands particular attention. Ironically, it is a subject over which the Federal Government has--and, we believe, should have--no jurisdiction. Divorce is a State matter, and its inclusion in this report is not to suggest a Federal role in its regulation. The fact is, however, that the Federal Government--or more accurately, the Federal taxpayers--are directly affected by the level of divorce in our country.

Our discussion of this subject is not judgmental of individuals. The target of our censure is a trend, an attitude, a pattern, and the way that pattern has been instigated by unwitting legislation.

When the authority of the State declares a marriage ended, there is usually more than enough pain to go around. That is particularly true when children are involved. For those reasons, traditional divorce laws inhibited easy separations. They recognized the interest of the community in encouraging marital stability. They provide disincentives to dissolution of the marital bond. In so doing, they sometimes made things difficult, and changes in divorce law may well have been overdue. But in a relatively short period of time, almost all the States adopted a model divorce law that established, in effect, no-fault divorce.

Not surprisingly, the divorce rate skyrocketed. While it is true that one in five couples who marry can anticipate reaching their 50th anniversary, it is also tragically true that, in recent years, there has been one divorce for every two weddings. We have throwaway marriages, like paper towels, summed up by a recent cartoon of bride and groom in their honeymoon suite, with the former saying, "I'm sorry, Sam, I just met my dream man in the reception line."<sup>29</sup> One distinguished social scientist extrapolates to a startling conclusion: "If we continue to dismantle our American family at the accelerating pace we have been doing so since 1965, there will not be a single American family left by the year 2008. While I frankly believe that some force will set in to reverse the course and save the American family before this time, we should not disregard that the trend has been going on for more than a decade and half."<sup>30</sup>

This is not a matter of cold statistics. For millions, the divorce rate means emotional trauma and economic distress. Reporting to the American Academy of Child Psychiatry on a ten-year study, Judith Wallerstein concludes that divorce can so disturb youngsters that they



become psychologically unable to live happy lives as adults. A study by Stanford University's Center for the Study of Youth Development in 1985 indicated that children in single-parent families headed by a mother have higher arrest rates, more disciplinary problems in school, and a greater tendency to smoke and run away from home than do their peers who live with both natural parents--no matter what their income, race, or ethnicity.<sup>31</sup>

A two-year study funded by Kent State, the William T. Grant Foundation and the National Association of School Psychologists, found that there were substantial differences between children of intact families and those of divorced families. "Children of divorce also are absent from school more frequently and are more likely to repeat a grade, to be placed in remedial reading classes and to be referred to a school psychologist, says the study of 699 randomly chosen first-, third- and fifth-graders in 38 states."<sup>32</sup> In addition, John Guidubaldi, Professor of Early Childhood Education and director of the study, noted, "'far more detrimental effects' of divorce on boys than on girls. Disruptions in boys' classroom behavior and academic performance increased 'noticeably' throughout elementary school. Boys, he speculated, are much more affected by their parents' divorce because children fare better with single parents of the same sex, and 90 percent of all custody rights go to mothers. Out of 341 children from divorced families in the study, fathers had custody in only 24 cases."<sup>33</sup> Education Daily reported that "Children from divorced families are much more likely than their peers from 'intact' families to score lower on IQ, reading and spelling tests, get lower grades and to be rated less favorably by teachers and peers."<sup>34</sup>

The divorce epidemic has not only devastated childhood. It has brought financial ruin to millions of women. Divorce reform was supposed to be a panacea for women trapped in bad marriages. It has trapped many of them in poverty. A widely respected study of one State's landmark no-fault divorce law found that the effect of the average divorce decree was to decrease the standard of living of the women and her minor children by 73 percent, while increasing the man's standard of living by 42 percent.<sup>35</sup> Behind those horrendous statistics are real people, like the lady in New Hampshire who, after 23 years of marriage and eight children, was left by her husband for a younger woman. Her household income plummeted from \$70,000 a year to just over \$7,000.<sup>36</sup>

What are we to say to her and to millions like her? That they are victims of a sexual revolution in which public

policy has no interest? That apart from efforts to enforce child support, government has to stay neutral toward the endurance of the marital relationship? And are we to say the same to the taxpayers, who pick up the bills for other people's break-ups through more spending on remedial education, law enforcement, mental health programs, drug and alcohol abuse programs? As one State jurist (Richard Neely of the West Virginia Supreme Court) recently noted, "In families of average income or less, the burden of divorce-related poverty falls on society as a whole. Welfare payments, subsidized housing, public sector make-work jobs, and salaries for lawyers who collect support for women and children are but a few of the mounting costs we pay for other people's divorces."

Clearly, we all have an interest--whether ethical or economic--in reversing the recent trend toward automatic divorce. In part, this is a matter of self-interest: the dissolution of households imposes heavy strains upon our society. But in a more important part, it is a matter of selfless compassion: for the weak and the young, the abandoned and scorned, the cheated and tossed aside.

We will never be able to rectify the wrongs of the last two decades. There are injuries beyond the scope of government to heal. We can, however, both as individuals and through our institutions of community, help those who have suffered by the collapse of their own households. And what is most important, we have the power, as residents of the separate States, to demand the rectification of those laws which have allowed, and even encouraged, the dissolution of the family.

"Many of the us have begun to ask again about the role of the family and the critical importance of the values embodied in strong families--discipline, hard work, ambition, and self-sacrifice, patience and love. It's easy enough to mock such values and bourgeois. But middle-class or not, they appear to constitute the spiritual foundation for achievement--the psychological infrastructure, if you will, for both personal growth and full participation in the world around us."<sup>37</sup>

Clifton R. Wharton

### Family and Poverty

There is no doubt that poverty and weak family life are related, but there is a common misconception about which is the cause and which is the effect. Some have asserted that poverty leads to family break-up. That was not the statistical experience of this country during the Great Depression, however, and it certainly does not explain why our worst period of family dissolution coincided with a period of tremendous prosperity.

Worst of all, is the theory that lack of income leads poor husbands and fathers to abandon their wives and children so that the broken family can then receive public assistance? Those who hold this view have argued that extending more welfare benefits or a guaranteed income to intact families would result in less family break-up. The facts do not support the theory. From 1971 to 1978 a major experiment doing just that was conducted in Seattle and Denver. The effect on poor families was devastating. Dissolution of marriages was 36 percent higher for whites receiving the benefits than for those who did not and 42 percent higher for blacks.

Fathers do desert, but not so their loved ones can get welfare. The availability of public assistance, however, does make desertion easier. But there is a far more destructive connection between welfare and family poverty.

Welfare contributes to the failure to form the family in the first place. It is the creation of family fragments, households headed by a mother dependent upon public charity. In that process, the easy availability of welfare in all of its forms has become a powerful force for destruction of family life through perpetuation of the welfare culture. One

can only imagine with horror what would happen to low-income, intact families if the centrifugal force of public assistance were applied to them in the same manner.

No one disputes the fact that changes in family composition have had a crucial effect on poverty rates during the last decade. If the rate of family fragmentation had not increased, there would have been 4.2 million households below the poverty line in 1980 instead of the 6.2 million which were actually in poverty then. For black families, the poverty rates--adjusted for the family factor--would have been 19.9 percent, or 9 points lower than it actually was. The adjusted poverty rate for white families was 5.9 percent in 1980, about 2 points lower than the published estimate.

These numbers are not meant to minimize the impact of poverty, but rather to emphasize the extent to which the failure to form and maintain stable families has wrought economic dislocation for millions of people. Thus, the relatively more frequent splitting up of families through divorce and separation and the creation of more female householders in general have been closely associated with the maintenance of high official poverty rates for these groups.<sup>38</sup>

The University of Michigan has tracked the relationship of economic status to family status. Its Panel Study of Income Dynamics has been monitoring the economic fortunes of a nationally representative sample of American families since 1968.

Among other findings, the survey demonstrates the following:

- o Poverty is not static. Economic status fluctuates substantially, and families go into and out of poverty.
- o Changes in family composition--marriage, divorce and remarriage--are the most important factors in accounting for changes in economic fortunes.
- o Remarriages dramatically improved the economic well-being of whites and blacks.

Perhaps no group has suffered more from the breakdown of the family than have black Americans. The statistics on family health are disturbing enough for our society at large, but for poor blacks they are a disaster story. Black

illegitimacy rates has always been higher than those for the overall population; but starting around 1965, the rate arose from an already high 25 percent to close to 60 percent today. What is clear is that poor Americans, particularly minorities, have become the principal victims of the new relativism in family values. Back in 1965, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., affirmed that the nuclear family, "the group consisting of mother, father, and child," was "the main educational agency of mankind" and the "foundation for stability, understanding and social peace" on which the whole of society rested. Even then, he labeled the prevailing levels of divorce, illegitimacy, and female-headed families found in the black ghettos "a social catastrophe." Eighteen years later, the frequency of these social pathologies in the black community has increased by a factor of three.

Interestingly, the trend toward the failure of families to form accelerated during the period when the nation was committing an increased portion of its national wealth to helping the most disadvantaged. In 1959, 23 percent of poor families were headed by females. By 1982, this figure was 48 percent. This represents an unprecedented destruction of families.

As a nation, we remain committed both to helping the poor and to ending dependency wherever possible. Those two goals go hand in hand. If "helping" merely perpetuates dependency, then it is worse than no help at all. Can welfare programs--or, for that matter, even economic growth--overcome the "poverty ethos" that prevails among what is increasingly called the underclass? How do we deal with those instances of poverty, of which there are more and more, that result from personal choices? As one critic has put it, "Nobody forces people to abandon spouse, to separate, to divorce, or to have children outside of wedlock. The government doesn't. There's no law saying you have to do that."<sup>39</sup> The question remains: What can government, and the community at large, do to discourage those reckless choices?

"Private values must be at the heart of public policies."<sup>40</sup>

Ronald Reagan

"It is easier to acknowledge the necessary involvement of government in character formation than it is to prescribe how this responsibility should be carried out. The essential first step is to acknowledge that at root, in almost every area of important public concern, we are seeking to induce persons to act virtuously, whether as school-children, applicants for public assistance, would-be lawbreakers, or voters and public officials. Not only is such conduct desirable in its own right, it appears now to be necessary if large improvements are to be made in those matters we consider problems: schooling, welfare, crime, and public finance."<sup>41</sup>

James Q. Wilson

### Private Choices - Public Effects

Public policymakers, the media and others tend to talk about the poor as if they were some homogenized mass. They are not. They are individuals--most deserving of help, some arguably less so. Not all, not even most, poor families are characterized by criminality, drug addiction, welfare dependency and disintegration--recent headlines notwithstanding.

We must recognize the millions of poor men and women, black and white, who hold down low-paying jobs, do their best to raise their children and like all Americans want their streets and neighborhoods to be clean and free of crime. They lead good and upstanding lives. They make good neighbors. They may be "money poor" but they are "value rich." Every time opinion leaders say that poverty excuses bad behavior, we make more difficult the efforts of the majority of the poor to raise their children to a better life.

Over the last 20 years in a well-intentioned effort to help poor families, there is evidence that we have encouraged self-defeating patterns of behavior that destroys poor families and undermines the acquisition of character

traits and work habits most likely to lift them out of poverty.

Research clearly indicates these character traits and work habits make a difference in escaping poverty. A recent study by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) compared minority youths who were able to find work with those that were unsuccessful.

The survey found a significant correlation between churchgoing and "right" attitudes or aspirations in enabling youths to escape inner city poverty.<sup>42</sup> In fact, churchgoing reduced socially deviant activities such as crime and drug use and increased school going and employment. In addition to this factor, the background factors that most influence "who escapes" are whether other members of the family work and whether the family is on welfare.<sup>43</sup>

According to the analysis done by Freeman and Holzer, the most depressing part of the NBER project was the finding:

"That persons whose families are involved with major public programs for disadvantaged families do worse in the job market. Youths from welfare homes, with the same family income and other attributes as those from non-welfare homes, do far worse in the job market; youths living in public housing projects do less well than youths living in private housing. Since the 'loss' of welfare benefits is slight when youths work, the problems of youth in welfare households cannot be explained as simply a 'rational' response to economic incentives. Instead they are more likely related to other factors, such as information and 'connections' or attitudes and 'work ethic.'"<sup>44</sup>

The battle over how to help America's poor families is not between the compassionate and the greedy. Our nation reached a consensus long ago that we must help those less fortunate than ourselves. We now need to agree that such help to be really compassionate must not rob the needy of the motivations, aspirations, family loyalties, values and character traits that ultimately are the only engine that drives families out of poverty and dependency to self-sufficiency. "...There is compassion that stifles and there is compassion that empowers."<sup>45</sup>

Most of us understand this obvious fact: If you make certain behavior less costly or if you increase the benefits

associated with it, a society will experience more of it. As we make decisions about making a living, starting and raising a family, we are impacted by the rules government directly and indirectly sets. If this is true, what kind of rules did we set over the last 20 years and what lessons did we teach with those rules?

During those years social scientists, politicians, academe and the elite advanced the proposition that we are not responsible for our behavior.

This message is the exact opposite of the version that each year brings millions of immigrants to our shores. The tapestry of the American experience has been composed of a million individual stories of extraordinary effort and sacrifice to build a better life. The father who works two low-paying jobs so that a son can go to college, the penniless immigrant who teaches himself English and ultimately begins his own business--these success stories are not an elaborate myth. They are possible because the people who are the main actors in them believe that personal effort, sacrifice, perseverance and hard work will result--if not today, then tomorrow; if not for them, then for their children--in a better life. It is the embracing of this belief that makes success possible.

We have done the underclass no favor by sending them a message contrary to the one that serves as a guidepost for upward mobility.

In fact, as welfare analyst Charles Murray has said, "One may take virtually any legislation, administrative change, or Supreme Court decision of the 1960s and early 1970s intended to help poor people and ask, 'How would this affect a poor young person's perception of his personal responsibility?' and the answer would be the same: Right behavior, he would learn, is not necessarily followed by rewards; wrong behavior is not necessarily followed by penalties. Outcomes are a lottery. When things go wrong, there are ready excuses; when things go well, it is luck."

In short, we may have made it desirable for some to behave on a short-term basis in ways that clearly and demonstrably are negative and destructive in the long term. The impact on families and their children has been profound.

#### Recommendations:

- o Any changes in the welfare system, whether new programs or tinkering with the old, should be



built on the first principle: they "must stress the integrity and preservation of the family unit."  
(John F. Kennedy, 1962)

- o Research clearly shows the kind of value system and character traits needed for upward mobility. Welfare programs must be developed and implemented in ways that aid the acquisition of those values.

### Children and the American Future

Train up a child in the way he should go; and  
when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs, chapter 22, verse 6

#### Reason to Hope

"Children are the future," claims a popular song by Whitney Houston. And thus far, no one has come up with a better formula. That is good reason for us to be concerned about the present condition of a significant portion of young America, for it warns us that the future of our nation is at stake.

Before we examine just how bad things are with regard to some children, we should put today's problems into the context of the last quarter century. For the social pathologies of the 1980s did not suddenly erupt. They festered and grew insidiously over more than two decades. Therein lie the roots of the problems we face, and therein too we may find solutions to them.

In the 1960s and 1970s, we were a remarkably young country. That is, an unusually large proportion of our population was in its first three decades of life. The post-war baby boom had created a youthful bulge in the demographic profile. This put strains on schools, courts, and other institutions that deal with the young. It made our culture more dependent upon fads, trends, and the ephemeral. Society was more rootless, less settled, more apt to challenge tradition, more eager to experiment. In a generation raised on immediate gratification, many scoffed at ethical strictures and legal impediments to the pursuit of happiness.

That is over now, but the social damage of America's youthful fling with self-indulgence has not been mended.

Some used to believe that the maladies of youth, behavioral and otherwise, were related to low-income, low levels of parental education, or being "disadvantaged." Accordingly, they led the nation to expend many billions of dollars to improve the status of children, in the expectation that there would be improvements across the board. Setting aside children from minority families, for white teens the period from 1960 to 1980 saw a decline in poverty, a smaller average family size, improvement in parental education, and

a 99 percent increase (in real dollars) in per pupil spending for schools. Other Federal spending programs grew apace. By 1976, there were 260 programs administered by 20 different agencies in Washington, D.C., whose primary mission was to benefit children.

How did America's children fare during that period? Their delinquency rates doubled. Their Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT) scores plummeted. Drug and alcohol abuse skyrocketed. Illegitimacy dramatically increased, and so did teen abortions. Venereal disease ran epidemic. Perhaps most astounding: during that 20-year period, while mortality rates improved for all other Americans, they worsened for teenagers due to homicide, drug overdose, motor accidents, and suicide.

In hindsight, we can see why all that was inevitable. While we spent billions to meliorate symptoms, the underlying illness raged on. We created programs to remedy a hundred different secondary problems without ever addressing the critical condition that was causing them all--the breakdown of an ordered sense of right and wrong.

The drug plague is a perfect example. For almost two decades, efforts to convince youngsters to avoid drugs had little success because the anti-drug message was equivocal and confused. Instead of condemning drug abuse absolutely, many made exceptions. They invented the notion of soft drugs. They talked about responsible use, about recreational drugs. And millions who disapproved of all that did not dare to appear intolerant or sanctimonious. Rather than seem prudish or square, we refused to draw the line and say enough is enough.

That has radically changed, largely because certain individuals stepped forward to reassert common sense and a sense of values. A nation, led by First Lady Nancy Reagan, united on this point as it may be on nothing else, now tells its children to "Just say no!" And predictably, children listen and most heed--as most have always done when given clear standards.

The fight against drugs has laid out the framework for attacking other threats both to the well being of young Americans and to the future of their country. It reminds us of truths which, forgotten for a while in the 1960s and 1970s, now offer us a basis for action and a reason for hope.

### Crazy About the Kids

Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University recently touched a sympathetic nerve in the American body politic

when he identified the key ingredient of successful human development: "Somebody has got to be crazy about the kids." Most of us are, as any observer of school pageants, scouting, little league, and family recreation can attest. Unfortunately, several social trends, from divorce to busier lifestyles and the trend toward self-fulfillment, have worn thin the bonds between parent and child.

These trends are not easily reversed as long as the interests of children are secondary to our individual desire for career success or a new mate. And yet, improvement must come from within the home. It will not come from Government, for "those who propose to improve the situation by designing programs which bypass the family are embarking on a futile quest."<sup>46</sup>

It can never be said too often: Children learn most by example. If we are "crazy about the kids," we will do better than we did during the 1960s and 1970s, when the example youngsters received told them "that there is no natural order of society and no inherently right patterns of living, loving, begetting and getting through life."<sup>47</sup>

Midge Decter puts it more bluntly: "For a generation now, millions upon millions of Americans--I will not say all--have been engaging in a child sacrifice....Nor do I mean this as a flowery metaphor. In our case, the idol to whom we have sacrificed our young is not made of wood or gold, but of an idea. This idea, very crudely put, is that we are living in an altogether new world with not yet fully understood new moral rules. As inhabitants of this supposedly newly ordered world, we tell ourselves we have no right to cling to or impose on others outmoded standards of behavior. On the contrary, everyone has a right, even an obligation, to make up his own rules--and with these rules, to make up his own preferred mode of living. This idea is no merely abstract proposition with us; we have translated it, socially, religiously, politically, and juridically, into the stuff of our everyday national existence. And we have, as I said, literally sacrificed our children to it."<sup>48</sup>

### The Bottom Line

Standards of behavior are not private. They are the key to citizenship. The way we live our private lives demonstrably effects our ability to get a job, hold regular employment, be productive, find a spouse, maintain a household, educate children, and contribute to the community. When our culture sent the message to young people that these

things did not matter, it not only failed them but also betrayed the public interest.

Social experiments can be most devastating to those on the margins of society. That was the case with the rejection of values and authority. It hit hardest those who could least tolerate the blow: the minority youngsters who were about to inherit a new world of opportunity, earned for them in the sweat and blood of generations gone before. At last the barriers of race were falling. A revitalized America was learning to judge its citizens, as Martin Luther King, Jr., put it, "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." The fair chance for which millions had hoped and prayed was at long last placed in the hands of their children and grandchildren.

It was cruelly shattered from their hands. It was broken by a lie, the falsehood that individuals cannot control their future, are not responsible for their actions, and cannot live or be judged by a single set of standards. Just when almost everything became possible for these young people, they were told that anything goes.

The result is a catalog of misery, all of it linked inexorably to the denial of character and rejection of responsibility. Listen to James Payne, Chief of the Corporation Counsel in New York City's Family Court, on the hoodlums responsible for much of the City's street crime: "There are too many people around here bleeding over these kids, encouraging them to believe they got a raw deal. But if you go back and look at their individual histories, where they had an opportunity to do something for themselves--they didn't go to school, they didn't want to look for a job, or it wasn't a good enough job--they always had an excuse. And we reinforce it, academics, sociologists, psychologists want to blame anything but the individual himself."<sup>49</sup>

We've stopped making deterministic excuses to explain away drug abuse. We know the problem starts with the individual and must be solved by the same person. That's the same approach we have to take to a lot of other unacceptable, inappropriate, unlawful, and unethical behavior.

We must stop providing excuses, for excuses guarantee failure. When we tell our children that external circumstances are more important in shaping their future than are virtue and self-restraint, they will have little use for virtue and self-restraint. They will think that industrious and law-abiding people, perhaps their own parents, are fools. They will ignore the very concept of right and wrong.

Good families, rich or poor or in between, provide encouragement and support to their children, but no excuses. They teach character. They insist upon standards. They demand respect. They require performance.

Government must do the same.

Children, Poverty, and Family: Hurting the Helpless in the Name of Charity

For children, the key determinant of poverty is whether they live in an intact family. Between 1960 and 1985, poverty among children in two-parent families decreased almost by half. Among minorities, intact families have attained incomes near the national average. But at the same time, the percentage of children living in female-headed families more than doubled.

This--not economic trends, not lack of compassion, not official unfairness--this is the root of child poverty in America: the formation of households without a breadwinner, usually through illegitimacy, often through desertion. This is the brutal fact: only one-fifth of children are in single-parent families, but they make up over one-half of all children in poverty.

Births out of wedlock, as a percentage of all births, increased more than 450 percent in just 30 years. For whites, the rate went from 1.7 percent to 10 percent. For non-whites, from 16.8 percent to 48.5 percent. The child of a never married mother spends on the average, 6 years in poverty if she is black, 6.2 if she is of another race.

We know that women who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits when they are less than 25 years old remain dependent on AFDC for long periods of time. In fact, 70 percent received AFDC for at least 5 years; more than one-third got it for at least 10 years.

"Raised in an environment in which fathers don't provide for their young and dependency on government is assumed, few children will develop the skills of self-sufficiency, or even the concept of personal responsibility. Young men will not strive to be good providers and young women will not expect it of their men. Family breakdown becomes cyclical, out-of-wedlock births become cyclical, poverty and dependence becomes cyclical. And the culture of poverty grows."<sup>50</sup>

We cannot allow children to suffer. At the same time, there is increasing evidence that the easy availability of welfare has greatly increased the incidence of child poverty. For example, the highest increases in the rate of child poverty in recent years have occurred in those States which pay the highest welfare benefits. The lowest increases--or actual decreases!--in child poverty have occurred in States which restrain the level of AFDC payments. That astounding connection challenges the fundamental assumptions of our public assistance programs.

An unpublished report to the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress--"Poverty, Income Distribution, the Family, and Public Policy"--reveals what many have long suspected: a "poverty-welfare" curve. Cash transfers, at their lower levels, assist people to make their way out of poverty. But as the assistance increases, it becomes less effective in reducing poverty because it creates powerful work disincentives. At some point, the rising welfare payments actually result in more poverty, including more child poverty, because dependency becomes more attractive than labor and self-sufficiency.

That sobering nexus should be pondered by every would-be humanitarian demanding higher welfare spending. This is not a matter of money; it is a question of wasted futures and more suffering, most of it by youngsters doomed to the poverty culture by misguided altruism.

"First, public leadership must do what public leadership is supposed to do: Lead. That is, public leadership must affirm with no apologies the values and ideals which our tradition has affirmed as good. We must speak up for the family. We have to say it, we have to say it loudly, we have to say it over and over again. No, there is no shame, there is no second-class status, in raising a child by oneself. There is honor for those who can do it well. But we must say too that a husband and wife raising children together is preferable to a mother or father doing the job alone. It's better for the child, it's better for the parents. This is not something we can be properly neutral about."<sup>51</sup>

William J. Bennett

### Illegitimacy

Why is the illegitimacy rate so high among poor women in some minority groups? Does the welfare system, particularly AFDC, give them incentives to bear children? Statistical evidence does not confirm those suppositions; and yet, even the most casual observer of public assistance programs understands that there is indeed some relationship between the availability of welfare and the inclination of many young women to bear fatherless children.

Charles Murray has suggested that, even if welfare doesn't bribe a poor woman to have babies, it enables her to do so. "For the young woman who is not pregnant, 'enabling' means that she does not ask, 'Do I want a welfare check badly enough to get pregnant?' but rather, 'If I happen to get pregnant, will the consequences really be so bad?'"<sup>52</sup> Further, Murray suggests that the welfare culture may make illegitimacy more likely even among those women in the community not on welfare. "The existence of an extensive welfare system permits the woman to put less pressure on the man to behave responsibly, which facilitates irresponsible behavior on his part, which in turn leads the woman to put less reliance on the man, which exacerbates his sense of superfluity and his search for alternative definitions of manliness. When welfare recipients are concentrated, as they are in the inner city, these dynamics create problems that extend far beyond the recipients of welfare. Community values and expectations of male behavior are changed, and with them the behavior of young men and women who never touch an AFDC check. The defenders of the welfare system are prone



to sanitize their estimates of effects: When a single young woman in the inner city has a child and does not go on welfare (as often happens), it is inferred that welfare is not implicated in her behavior. This set of hypotheses argues otherwise, focusing on the fact that she does bear the child."<sup>53</sup>

But what do we do about it? That leads us to a much larger question, and one which directly involves, not just the young people living in the poverty culture, but all the children of this country.

### Why

"Progressively over the past 25 years we have, as a nation, decided that it is easier to give children pills than to teach them respect for sex and marriage. Today we are seeing the results of that decision not only in increased pregnancy rates but in increased rates of drug abuse, venereal disease, suicide, and other forms of self-destructive behavior."

Representatives Dan Coats,  
Thomas J. Bliley, Jr., Dan Burton,  
Barbara F. Vucanovich, David S. Monson  
and Robert C. Smith

The question posed to us by those Members of Congress, in their Minority Report on Teen Pregnancy in December 1985, must be our starting point: "Why does this problem seem so much more difficult in this generation? Are babies born today different from babies born fifty years ago? Or is the difference in the adults who are raising them? Have we really failed in our efforts to prevent pregnancies to unmarried teens? Or is it truer to say that we have abandoned them? Teaching them self-control, respect for themselves and others, fidelity, courage, and patience requires constant and tireless efforts. It also requires good example."

The easy answers have failed us. Now we have to go back to the simple solutions, the hard ones that really work.

We learned our mistake with drug abuse: when we expect young people to engage in a forbidden behavior, we actually encourage them to do so. The parents who told their kids not to use hard drugs but ignored their private use of marijuana were fostering the conduct they hoped to prevent. The States which taught the dangers of drunken driving in

classrooms but also lowered the drinking age taught youngsters a lesson, but it was not the one presented in school.

Teenagers are not fools. They distinguish between what we say and what we mean. We say they should be responsible about sex; we mean they should not get pregnant. We say they should understand the dangers of promiscuity; we mean they can get contraceptives, antibiotics, and abortions. We have repeated the terrible mistake we made about drugs 20 years ago, and with the same consequences. Over one million adolescents become pregnant each year. Of these pregnancies, only 47 percent result in live births, 40 percent are ended by abortion, and 13 percent end in miscarriage or stillbirth.

Birth rates for unmarried adolescents aged 15-19 years have increased from 22.4 births per 1,000 in 1970 to 29.7 in 1983. However, in 1970, 29.5 percent of births to adolescents aged 15-19 years were out of wedlock as compared to 53.4 percent in 1983. Of course, illegitimacy is a symptom of a larger problem--and that is the numbers of American children who are engaging in coitus while in junior or senior high school.

Testimony before the Virginia General Assembly's Joint Committee on Adolescent Pregnancy drives the point home: "Here is the basic figure: three out of 10. In 1971, three out of 10 sexually active, unmarried adolescent women had become pregnant. In 1976, three out of 10 sexually active, unmarried adolescent women had become pregnant. In 1979, again, three out of 10, and in 1982, again, three out of 10. Nothing changed."

Except, that is, the percentage of teens engaging in sexual activity. That rate jumped by 50 percent. And that, all by itself, accounts for the epidemic of teen pregnancy, illegitimacy, and abortion.

Just as with drug abuse, most teens are not part of the problem. Those who live with both parents, those to whom religion and church attendance are important, those who do not use narcotics are less likely to be sexually active. In fact, the last factor deserves much greater attention. There is ample impressionistic evidence to indicate that drug abuse and promiscuity are not independent behaviors. When inhibitions fall, they collapse across the board. When people of any age lose a sense of right and wrong, the loss is not selective.

William Raspberry, in a recent column (WASHINGTON POST, November 7, 1986), asked his readers to react to the following statement:

"Young people are going to do it anyway, so rather than waste time shouting a futile 'Don't,' maybe we ought to just teach them to do it responsibly: supply them with the information, the resources and the devices to eliminate the worst of the consequences of their doing it."

He then correctly pointed out that many would reluctantly agree with the statement if they assumed the "it" was teenage sex. But there would be shock and indignation if the "it" was drugs.

Raspberry concludes, "we remain...absolute when it comes to illicit drugs, while in matters of sex, we are rapidly adopting what I call normative morality--a tendency to set rules not on what we think is proper behavior but on what people actually do."

On drugs, we are now sending an absolute message of "no" to our children. On sex, we're still stuck in the '60s, trying to make the best of unacceptable conduct. But if these two patterns of behavior are intimately related, if, indeed, they are two parallel expressions of the same ethical vacuum among many teens, we cannot address them in conflicting ways. We cannot hope to fill half a vacuum. Either we give young people a coherent, integrated approach to the temptations of modern life; or else they will apply the least common ethical denominator to all the moral questions that confront them.

That gives us reason to be optimistic. As parents, religious leaders, and public officials begin to confront drug abuse without reservations and without compromise, they will begin to see the need for a similarly unequivocal approach to other teen pathologies.

Contrary to the old excuse, everybody is NOT doing it. Adolescent sex is on the decline. Several studies indicate the percentage of American teenagers sexually active declined between 1979 and 1982.<sup>54</sup> Almost half of all unmarried 18 year old girls are virgins. Of the remainder--incorrectly labeled "sexually active"--almost one in seven had engaged in intercourse only once. About 40 percent had not had intercourse within the last month.

This is not the irresistible trend some would portray. It indicates a fluid situation in which sound public policy and a resurgence of parental guidance can make a tremendous difference--if we learn the lessons of our fight against drug abuse.

### A Culture Crossroads

American society has reached the point at which it must choose between two fundamentally opposed solutions to the problem of adolescent sex. We must either make a massive, and open-ended, commitment of public resources to deal with the consequences of promiscuity (including illegitimacy, abortion, venereal diseases, AIDS, teen suicide); or we must explain to the young, for their own good, one clear standard of conduct which tells them how we expect them to grow up.

We have chosen the latter course with the drug plague and with teenage drinking. We are choosing it, after years of wandering the other way, with regard to teen street crime. We have, under President Reagan's leadership, chosen it in education. No more excuses for misconduct; we're getting back to basics. The cultural relativism, the value-neutral approach of the '60s, has been dumped.

Except for teen sex. Incredibly, some would continue, and expand upon, the mistakes of the past through programs to make it easier for teens to become sexual statistics. Usually in the face of bitter resistance from parents, some public officials want to use our schools for dissemination of contraceptives, counseling and abortion referrals. Secretary of Education William Bennett points out the defects in this approach. He asks, "What lessons do they (the clinics) teach, what attitudes do they encourage, what behaviors do they foster? I believe there are certain kinds of surrender that adults may not declare in the presence of the young. One such surrender is the abdication of moral authority. Schools are the last place this should happen. To do what is being done in some schools I think, is to throw up one's hands and say, 'We give up. We give up on teaching right and wrong to you, there is nothing we can do. Here take these things and limit the damage done by your action.' If we revoke responsibility, if we fail to treat young people as moral agents, as people responsible for moral actions, we fail to do the job of nurturing our youth."

In addition, there is little in the record to suggest that value free sex education courses or the availability of

contraceptives to minors has helped--in fact the evidence is quite to the contrary.

For example, a July 1986 study by Joseph Olsen and Stan Weed of the Institute for Research and Evaluation found that greater teenage involvement in family planning programs appears to be associated with higher, rather than lower, teenage pregnancy rates. They note that most studies of clinic effectiveness only measured change in birth rate. Their own study discovered that there were 30 fewer live births for every 1,000 teenage family planning clients. However, to their surprise, they also found a net increase of 50 to 120 pregnancies per 1,000 clients. In short, enrollment in a family planning program appeared to raise a teenager's chances of becoming pregnant and of having an abortion."<sup>55</sup> In fact, the number of teenagers "using family planning services climbed 300 percent for blacks between 1969 and 1980 and 1,700 percent among whites. In the latter year, 2.5 million adolescents received contraceptive services from PPFA clinics, private physicians, and other sources. Nonetheless, the teenage pregnancy crisis only seemed to worsen."<sup>56</sup>

There is a good deal of research evidence that seems to be ignored in the public policy debate. For example, two researchers discovered that when measuring the relationship between family structure and premarital sexual behavior black girls from father-headed families were twice as likely to be "non-permissive" sexually as compared to those from mother-headed units. Graham Spanier of Pennsylvania State University found that when mothers served as their daughters' primary source of sex information, the latter were significantly less likely to have engaged in coitus; when clergymen filled a similar role, the same was true for men. Other studies have shown significant correlations linking father-headed family structure, parental control over the sex education of their children, and traditional values to lower rates of adolescent sexual behavior.<sup>57</sup>

None of this should surprise us. It is the common wisdom of the grandparents of America. It is what average people always understood before the experts of the '60s told them their inherited code of traditional values was oppressive and out of date. Americans understood that strong family life IS sex education, of which physiological details are only a small and relatively insignificant part. Americans understood that parental example could never be completely replaced by programs external to the home. They knew that children who play with fire sooner or later get burned, and no amount of

assistance after the fact can make up for the suffering or remove the scars.

Most Americans still know these things. They wait for their leaders, in religion and business and entertainment, as well as in government, to reassert them.

Recommendations:

- o Most legislation on the subject covered under this section has traditionally been within State jurisdiction. It should remain there.
- o Public programs, however, particularly those funded by the Federal taxpayers through HHS or other agencies, are a matter of national concern. Both the Congress and the Executive Branch have a special responsibility to ensure that those programs respect family values and foster right behavior.

At a minimum, no Federal program should provide incentives for sexual activity by teens. No Federal activity should contravene the approach we have taken to drug abuse: we do not compromise with self-destructive behavior. We insist that it stop and we provide assistance to those young people who want to regain control of their future.

- o Government should not provide incentives--or make things easier--for teenagers tempted to promiscuity. Specifically, single mothers under the age of 21 should not be given subsidized housing apart from their own parents. AFDC benefits could be restructured in a similar way. These steps would go a long way toward making illegitimate motherhood less attractive in the poverty culture.
- o The private sector, which bears the financial consequences of teen sexual activity, can do the most to reduce those problems. The sponsorship of entertainment, the advertising of commercial products, the attitude taken by opinion leaders in every walk of life all have an impact upon teen conduct.

"If more Americans could be persuaded to carve out of their three or four hours of television viewing each day a period of five minutes at bedtime and use this time to ask their child a simple question--'How did things go today?'--and listen, the results in terms of individual families and society as a whole could, I believe, be highly salutary."<sup>58</sup>

George Gallup, Jr.

### Children and Television

Any American parent who tries to deal with children finds out very quickly that the television set can be a major obstacle. Not only does it compete for time but, in addition, some experts worry about the values that are passed on in the long hours of viewing by American children.

Between the ages of 6 and 18, children view 15 to 16,000 hours of television compared to 13,000 spent in school and have been exposed to 350,000 commercials and 18,000 murders. According to the Nielsen Report on Television for 1980, children watch 30 to 31 hours of TV weekly--more time is spent in any other activity except sleep. By graduation day, the average high school student has seen 18,000 murders in 22,000 hours of television viewing."<sup>59</sup>

The impact on education can be profound, particularly, as is often the case, when television is a substitute for reading by the child. A California study of a half million public school students in the 6th through 12th grades concluded that the more a student watches television the worse he/she does in school.<sup>60</sup> This finding held across I.Q. and socio-economic levels. The study led its author to conclude, "Our social institutions must help parents with this problem, and parents must commit themselves to regulating their children's television-viewing and to making time for constructive family activities."<sup>61</sup>

Television critic Jeff Greenfield has noted that prime time television deals with every issue except those most fundamental to our being. He wrote, "They have moved into areas once considered untouchable in prime time; yet, the most common, most crucial area of all time--the capacity of modern men and women to love, trust, share, and provide a moral framework for children, this seems to be beyond their grasp."

So complete has been the banishment of intact American families from the federally-regulated airwaves that the arrival of the Huxtables (Bill Cosby Show) in prime time has been cited as a major cultural event. This show, along with "Family Ties," (a favorite of the President's) and new series like "Our House" reinforce family values, and teach children personal responsibility and character. Assuming the networks respond to the market place, one can hope similar programs will be forthcoming.

Government can enforce standards of decency on the airwaves, which are, after all, public property. But we must remember that home entertainment is in a revolutionary transition. The infancy of television is over. As cable television and videocassettes proliferate, we will find ourselves in a new age of media. The competition that comes from regulatory reform and consumer choice can guarantee that family fare will flourish, as long as the viewing public is not timid about making its preferences known. Parents do not have to tolerate offensive or exploitative programs. First, they can turn them off. Second, they can protest to sponsors and producers. The power of the purse remains with the American household.

We hope for improved television. It should be a vital part of our entertainment, our education, our cultural expression, and even our spiritual growth. But it remains for parents to teach by example that television viewing is a small part of life: that precious minutes spent listening to children are inestimably more valuable than hours spent watching a tube.



### Caring for Children

Our title for this section is a double entendre, and we intend it; for the subject of child care reminds us that there are different forms of caring. As the term is popularly used, child care means supervision of youngsters by someone other than a parent. And yet, who cares more for boys and girls than their parents.

So we begin with this caution: child care does not only, or even primarily, mean something outside the family. It is something parents engage in 24 hours a day. Its best practitioners are those for whom caring for children is the most important career of all.

Most mothers of children under the age of 18 do not work outside the home. Only 41 percent of all mothers work full-time. Of married mothers with children under six, only 33 percent work full-time for any period during the calendar year and only 23 percent work full-time year around.<sup>62</sup> Unlike Sweden, for example, the mothers of America have managed to avoid becoming just so many more cogs in the wheels of commerce.

Many do hold jobs outside the home, some because they have to and others because they want to. We cannot help but admire those mothers who work for a living, support their families, and strive to raise good kids. They are nothing short of heroic.

Public policy must not presume that the trends of the last decade will last forever, and government should not try to perpetuate those trends against the individual wishes of parents. Millions of mothers entered the workforce, full or part-time, out of financial need during a period of bad economic policy in Washington. With the breaking of inflation, the gradual decline of interest rates, the return of stability and predictability to the economy, no one knows what choices will be made by mothers in the years ahead.

Some polls show that close to half of the working women with young children would prefer to remain at home with their youngsters but feel they cannot afford to do so. A recent survey revealed that over 70 percent of women working full-time would prefer to have a part-time job or to share employment even though their income would be reduced.<sup>63</sup> As the private sector adapts to these inclinations, and as the historic economic recovery of the last six years continues, new choices should open up for those who care for children.

Currently, the Federal Government is involved in day care in a number of ways from the Dependent Care Tax Credit to programs that encourage private sector employers to come up with creative ways to accommodate workers with children. The Dependent Care Tax Credit has been criticized by some for only helping families who seek third party child care. A few public policy analysts have suggested the credit ought to go to every family with children including families where one parent decides to stay home and raise the children. Such a policy would be more neutral than the current one although obviously more costly. In our discussion of the tax policy later, the Working Group suggests some ways the tax code could help families with children without being prejudiced to families who would prefer to care for their children at home.

**Recommendation:**

- o Policy options need to recognize that parents have the primary responsibility for rearing and caring for their children. Policy also must be sensitive to the perception of favoring one type of family arrangement over another (e.g., two parent families with dual earners vs. a single earner). Without creating new entitlement programs, the Federal Government can assist parents with their child care needs by encouraging and endorsing employer efforts to adopt family oriented policies which provide for flexibility in the workplace.

**Child Support Enforcement**

To some extent, the problem of welfare in the United States is a problem of the nonsupport of children by their absent parents. According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in the spring of 1984 there were:

- o 8.7 million women living with children under 21 years of age whose fathers were not present in household;
- o only about 5.0 million (58 percent) of these women had been awarded child support payments,
- o of the 5.0 million women awarded child support, 4.0 million were due to receive child support payments in the previous year, and
- o of those 4.0 million, only half received the full amount due while one quarter received

partial payment and one quarter received nothing at all.

The aggregate amount of child support payments due in 1983 was \$10.1 billion, but payments actually received amounted to only about \$7.1 billion.

#### Current Efforts

The enactment of the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program in 1975 represented a major new commitment to address the problem of nonsupport of children. The 1975 amendments were aimed at strengthening the efforts of the Federal and State governments to improve the enforcement of child support obligations.

The most significant legislation affecting the Child Support Enforcement program since the program's inception in 1975 was the enactment of the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984. In response to the escalating nonsupport problem and the need for increasing effectiveness and efficiency in child support enforcement, the President and the Congress, in a bipartisan effort, worked to enact these Amendments. Their key provisions make critical improvements to State and local programs in four major areas:

- o Child support services will be provided to all families that need them--welfare and non-welfare;
- o States will use enforcement techniques that work;
- o Federal financing and audits will be used to stimulate and reward improved program performance; and
- o Interstate enforcement will be emphasized and improved.

#### Recommendation:

- o State and Federal governments should strive to make greater use of "cross-checks" of social security numbers and State and Federal income tax returns in order to locate fathers who have not fulfilled child support obligations.

## Adoption

In one of the great tragedies of American life, tens of thousands of childless families wait for children to adopt while 1.8 million other Americans abort their unborn children each year. In creating families, adoption can be a special event through which everyone benefits. Federal policies should encourage and support adoption whether it is infant adoption as an alternative for pregnant women, especially adolescents, or "special needs" children who are waiting for a permanent family.

Adoption can be an alternative for a pregnant young woman who may be uncertain about becoming a parent, but who may also misunderstand or forget about adoption as an option when making decisions about her baby and her future. For the pregnant adolescent adoption can be an option which builds futures and builds families. The outlook for her future can be improved because she will be better able to complete her schooling and become self-sufficient. A stable, loving home adds to the future of the baby. And, for the adoptive family, a long-desired child is possible.

However, adoption has not been the chosen option for most pregnant teens. Two factors--legalization of abortion and increased social acceptance of single parenting seem to have contributed significantly to the decline of adoption as a chosen alternative:

- o Approximately 40 percent of all pregnancies to teens end in abortion. Slightly less than half of all teen pregnancies end in live births (the remainder result in miscarriages or stillbirths).
- o Single parenting is currently the accepted, and often the expected, option for pregnant teens. Although almost 93 percent of all unmarried adolescents who bear a child decide to parent their child, single teen mothers usually have unrealistic expectations, limited resources, few supports and little experience for coping with the difficulties of parenthood.

The Adolescent Family Life (AFL) program authorized under Title XX of the Public Health Service Act supports demonstration and research projects addressing the problems associated with adolescent pregnancy. Among the principal aims of the program is the promotion of adoption as a positive option for unmarried pregnant adolescents.

Therefore, all projects providing care services are required to provide adoption counseling and referral services.

In addition, several AFL research projects are focusing on adoption and pregnant adolescents. These studies should help fill gaps in the understanding of adoption trends and help providers improve adoption services to pregnant adolescents. Most of the studies are not yet completed; however, findings from the studies should help provide new insight into decision-making and counseling about adoption.

In other efforts to support adoption as an option, the Office of Population Affairs in the Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the Title X National Family Planning Program and the Adolescent Family Life Program, supported the dissemination of an adoption resource directory and the development of an adoption information guidebook for counselors who work with pregnant teenagers. This guidebook will be available in the fall, 1986.

### Special Needs Adoption

Recent studies indicate that more than 50,000 special needs children in foster care are legally free for adoption. Of this number, 17,000 are already in adoptive placement and 33,000 are waiting for a home. For thousands more, adoption would be the plan of choice, but parental rights have not been terminated. There are about 269,000 children in foster care nationwide (1983 data). A large number of these children are special needs children.

### Background

Special needs children are children who need special attention or assistance in order to be placed in an adoptive home. These children are school age; emotionally, physically or mentally handicapped, or members of minority groups; some are also sisters and brothers who should be adopted together. These types of children, previously considered hard-to-place, have often been passed over by prospective adoptive parents or agency staff. They tend to be over the age of 11, and they are likely to have been in foster care more than four years.

Two Federal programs impact upon special needs adoption:

- o The Adoption Opportunities Program is designed to eliminate barriers to adoption and to help find permanent homes for children who would

benefit by adoption, particularly children with special needs.<sup>64</sup>

- o The Adoption Assistance Program permits Federal reimbursement to States for adoption subsidies made to special needs children eligible for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) or SSI (Supplemental Security Income).<sup>65</sup>

In FY 1982, 27 States served 3,826 children per month using Federal funds. An average of 12,000 children per month was served in FY 1984, and 14,000 (estimated) in FY 1985. In addition, almost every State and the District of Columbia has its own adoption subsidy law.

Until recently, many people interested in adopting did not know about the population of special needs children. This is changing, however, no doubt in part because of a Department of Health and Human Services special initiative to promote such adoption.

The initiative aims to:

- o increase awareness of special needs children in foster homes, group homes and other institutions;
- o recruit adoptive families including minority parents;
- o improve training for adoption workers; and
- o review and improve State adoption laws and practices.

#### Recommendations:

Several options warrant further study in this area including:

- o Allow a deduction for all qualified medical expenses related to the adoption of an infant or a special needs child on a basis which would be equal to the treatment of medical expenses for the birth of a child.
- o Provide an increased one-time tax deduction, perhaps at a level of \$2,000, to all families upon the adoption of a child.

### Neighborhoods

Even in modern America with our highly mobile population, it is necessary to recognize the sense of neighborhood most Americans still feel. America's diversity is its strength. Our neighborhoods are not all alike. The South Side of Chicago is different from Baltimore's West End and Peoria, Illinois, has different standards than New York's East Village. Government policy should deal with families in ways that allow the cultural differences to be considered. As Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus said in their book, To Empower People, "Neighborhood governance exists when--in areas such as education, health services, law enforcement, and housing regulations--the people democratically determine" what is in their own best interest.<sup>66</sup>

### Housing and the American Family

Home and family are inseparable. Good families make good homes, but the best of housing cannot make good families. Strong, resilient families came from sharecropper shacks and immigrant tenements, as they earlier had come from log cabins and sod huts on the prairie. Conversely, the problems of contemporary family life affect those who live in luxury units, as well as those in public housing.

Government dare not try to steer the course of the housing market. It adapts remarkably well to changing needs, following trends in family size and patterns of living. For most Americans, housing is a private matter; and they can best tend to it if government does not impose upon their incomes, either directly through onerous taxation or indirectly through economic dislocation. By reducing the tax burden and, perhaps even more important, by breaking the back of inflation, the Reagan Administration has launched a new era in housing policy. Mortgage rates have fallen from 17.5 percent in 1981 to 10 percent today, making homeownership affordable for an additional 10 million families. Many others can now afford to buy homes because of declines in inflation and unemployment. That is why homeownership has reached one of its highest levels in the nation's history. About 65 percent of all Americans are homeowners now, compared to less than 45 percent just a few decades ago.

The Federal Government's housing programs aid millions of American families--helping those of modest income to buy their first homes and helping low-income families rent decent, affordable housing.

FHA and VA mortgage insurance and guarantee programs, as well as the development of new secondary markets for mortgage loans, brought unprecedented capital to housing after 1950 and expanded opportunities for ownership to a wider range of income groups. In rural areas, the programs of the Farmer's Home Administration performed a similar function.

For those unable to afford ownership, the Federal Government has subsidized the construction, and more recently the operation and modernization, of 1.3 million public housing units owned by local public housing agencies. It has also subsidized the construction of 1.7 million privately operated multifamily rental units through loans or insurance. Additionally, over 800,000 families living in private rental units receive Federal subsidies in the form of vouchers or certificates to help them pay their rent. In recent years, communities have received increased latitude to design and administer housing programs receiving Federal support.

The proportion of the poor living in substandard or overcrowded housing has declined dramatically. The American people have poured tens of billions of dollars into public housing, and our current financial commitments for future years will require tens of billions more. We all have an interest in the upkeep of this housing; but even more, we have an interest in ensuring that poor families are not isolated there. Housing policies that separate the poor from jobs, good schools, and the social mainstream only reinforce the "underclass" culture, the greatest enemy of poor families in central city areas.

In response to the changing needs of poor families, the Reagan Administration has moved away from the traditional approach of building new "poor people's" housing toward a system that places greater purchasing power directly in the hands of the poor--housing vouchers. Using vouchers, an assisted household pays a portion of the rent based on income, with the government paying the balance.

Experience shows vouchers to be the most cost-effective means of meeting the housing needs of poor families in communities of all kinds. In places where restrictions on housing construction or other problems temporarily produce tight rental markets, rehabilitation programs have been used successfully to increase the supply of rental housing. Rehabilitation thus complements the voucher approach and helps a community preserve its neighborhoods by saving and reclaiming good housing. It also avoids much more expensive subsidies that would be required to build new housing.



Of special importance for families seeking to escape from dependency, housing vouchers promote geographical and economic mobility. One-half of all families use their vouchers to move; and 70 percent of these move to new neighborhoods. These moves are nearly always voluntary and result in relocation to neighborhoods that are less racially concentrated than was previously the case.

Vouchers, better than the traditional forms of housing assistance, support the efforts of families to change their economic and social circumstances. If a poor family decides it has to move in order to be near good schools or to seek jobs in a different city, that family can do so with a voucher.

During the critical transition period when a single parent is investing in education, training, or work experience, a housing subsidy offers the family additional financial security and stability. For a non-working parent with two children, the voucher typically has a cash value of between \$200 and \$300 per month. Because housing subsidies will usually continue after other forms of cash assistance have ceased, they not only provide an immediate increase in financial security but help to smooth what otherwise can be an abrupt transition from welfare to self-support.

Through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Administration has taken other steps to improve the quality of the whole living environment for residents of public housing. As part of the ongoing effort to rehabilitate and modernize public housing, young minority residents are now offered opportunities to train for careers in housing maintenance, rehabilitation, and management. Public housing tenants also are being given new opportunities to participate in managing their own projects. Finally, through HUD's Public Housing Homeownership initiative, some upwardly mobile public housing residents are being given the opportunity to buy the units where they live or others in the same community.

#### Recommendations:

- o Fiscal responsibility is essential to keep inflation and interest rates low. That is the key to keep housing affordable.
- o Most existing forms of housing assistance should be replaced with housing vouchers.

- o Programs to enable tenants to purchase their public housing should be expanded.
- o Consideration should be given to phasing in or delaying rent increases for tenants who are newly employed. This will remove current disincentives to seeking employment.
- o Government, at all levels, should follow the example of HUD in working with local officials and home builders to overcome restrictive cost-adding regulations.
- o Public housing authorities and tenants' groups should have broad authority to deal with criminal elements or tenants who make it impossible for other families to maintain a good environment for raising their children.
- o To maintain the stability of public housing and to reinforce family life therein, single parents under the age of 21 should not be eligible for separate units.
- o For all homeowners, but especially those of modest incomes, crime and vandalism are totally unnecessary additions to the cost of housing. Expensive locks, bars, grills, gates, dogs, alarm systems, window and masonry repairs, and other expenditures are the price paid by homeowners--and by renters too, for landlords must pass these costs through to tenants--for the permissive approach to crime that characterized the 1960s and 1970s. A tough approach to crime--there are no minor burglaries when someone's home has been violated--is an essential component to our housing policy.
- o The itemized deduction in the Federal income tax code for mortgage interest should be maintained.

## Crime

Crime is the cruelest tax of all on the American family, a regressive levy that burdens those least able to bear its exactions. But it is also a symptom, a consequence of the widespread collapse of family life. No matter what weapons we throw into the fight against crime, we cannot expect lasting success until we reverse the trend toward family dissolution.

The establishment of justice is the highest duty of government. Swift and sure enforcement of the laws means protection of the weak and of the social order which enables households to move up the opportunity ladder. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 9.6 percent of the households with incomes less than \$7,500 were burglarized in 1984. This is nearly twice as high as the rate for households in the \$25,000 to \$30,000 range.<sup>67</sup> For a poor family, often uninsured, the economic loss from a robbery can be financially devastating.

Other more indirect costs of crime to poor families may be even more significant. To what extent, for example, do unsafe streets stop a poor inner-city resident from working overtime, moonlighting or going to night school? One study in Chicago showed a drop in home values of 0.2 to 0.3 percent for every rise of one percent in the crime rate, thus, making the build-up of capital less likely.<sup>68</sup> Crime discourages investment, leads businesses to relocate, raises operating costs for those businesses that stay, and frightens away customers.

Many crimes in poor neighborhoods, out of fear, are never reported. And of those that are only 20 percent are ever solved. Fewer than 30 percent of those convicted of violent crimes and serious property crime are sentenced to prison. Many more get "felony probation" and are back in the community. Not surprisingly, 65 percent of these individuals are arrested again for similar crimes in three years.<sup>69</sup>

In some communities the crime culture overwhelms decent families trying to raise their children. A National Bureau of Economic Research study showed that 32 percent of inner-city black youth could earn more from criminal "street" activity than from legitimate work.<sup>70</sup>

What this does to the community at large is devastating. When many in a community are subsisting on illegal sources of income and violent crime permeates the streets, the impact is predictable. "To put it roughly, good

folks no longer set the standards...the role models for the youth are not blue collar working men who raise families but hustlers."<sup>71</sup> Even language is impacted by the crime culture. In an Orwellian twist, in some Washington, D.C. neighborhoods, "getting paid" is slang for mugging somebody.

The Administration's stepped-up efforts against crime recognize that in many neighborhoods today it is violent crime that most imperils the atmosphere families need in order to raise their children. The Administration's Comprehensive Crime Control Bill, enacted by the Congress in 1984, was the most sweeping effort in many years to make the Federal laws a more effective weapon against criminals. The 1984 Act tightened the standards for releasing violent criminals on bail, provided for uniform sentences developed by a Sentencing Commission, and provided for much stiffer forfeiture penalties against drug traffickers. Studies have shown that under the arbitrary sentencing practices of some judges in the past, high percentages of convicted criminals such as rapists, robbers, and burglars--from 30 percent to 60 percent in these categories--do not serve any time in prison at all. Real progress is being made.

The National Crime Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that crime in the United States has declined for four consecutive years, with property crime now at its lowest level since the survey began in 1973. Other surveys show at worst a leveling off.

Law enforcement experts agree that citizen involvement in crime prevention is critical to this reduction. Today, more than 10,000,000 Americans participate in Neighborhood Watch programs to work together with law enforcement to combat crime. Fully one-fifth of all American families live in communities with such programs. Communities in all parts of the country have experienced crime rate declines of 50 percent or more following the establishment of neighborhood watch programs. The Department of Justice is working with the Advertising Council and national and State organizations to conduct the "McGruff, Take A Bite Out of Crime" program which raises public awareness and emphasizes simple steps people can take to protect their families, homes, neighborhoods and businesses. McGruff has become an enormously popular character and, in over 1,000 communities, the official symbol of crime prevention. As a result of increased awareness, about one-third of the households in America report taking some crime prevention measure.

**Recommendations:**

- o All levels of government have as a prime responsibility the safety of their citizens and families. There must be more strategic use of police resources including improvements in the legal systems to more expeditiously handle cases. Communities must have more confidence that law breaking will be met by swift and sure punishment.
- o Personal involvement in crime prevention can be an essential part of any anti-crime program and should be encouraged. There must be adequate support, financial and otherwise, for public safety systems. Finally, we need more judges who are able and willing to balance the rights of the accused with the rights of all Americans to safe communities and neighborhoods.

Even as we protect the American family against crime, we must seek to reestablish traditional familial controls against its perpetration. That means tackling an interwoven web of social pathologies--particularly drug and alcohol abuse and promiscuity--discussed elsewhere in this report.

"Children do not just 'grow up.' They must be raised by the community of adults--all adults. The community should accept as its solemn responsibility--as a covenant--the nurture, care and education of the coming generation."<sup>72</sup>

William J. Bennett

### Schools

School and the family are bound together in the enterprise of molding children. A good bit of what children think about themselves, their neighbors, their country, and the world are formed by these two institutions.

Parents are children's first and most important teachers. A traditional family; that is, a man and a wife who stay together and raise a family, have inherent advantages in the process of raising those children. There are no guarantees, however. As Secretary William Bennett has pointed out, "two neglectful parents are of less use to children than one who is attentive and caring."<sup>73</sup>

Education has enabled waves of American immigrants to rise out of poverty, and it remains the most effective vehicle today for breaking the cycle of dependency. A recent study shows that if you are a white or black male and if you graduate from high school and get a job, any job, and stick with it, you have a miniscule chance of living in poverty. In fact, of all men ages 20-64 with just a high school education, only six-tenths of one percent were in poverty in 1970. For women the figure was only two percent.<sup>74</sup>

In spite of this clear connection between schooling and upward mobility, it is not an easy task to convince children to learn today so that they can get a better job years later. The right conditions and atmosphere for learning must exist. A host of reports, most notably among them, A NATION AT RISK, have dramatically outlined the decline in American education as measured by student performance that took place between 1960 and 1980. There is some evidence to indicate that this decline took place not because Americans lessened their commitment to education--spending grew by leaps and bounds during the period--but, rather, because the prerequisites for success were being eroded by a number of trends.

James Coleman in his book, HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT, pointed out that most studies show "little or no consistent relation of per pupil expenditures, laboratory facilities, libraries, recency of textbooks, and breadth of course offerings to achievement." Rather the characteristics most related were "academic demands and discipline." It was precisely in these two areas, however, that in the '60s and '70s showed the greatest deterioration.

### Educating the Disadvantaged

Poor and minority children often present special problems for American educators--but not insurmountable problems. To meet the challenge, educators and society, at large, must be very clear in the message we send. All of our children are educable. We should have high expectations of all of them regardless of race or economic status. No child should be put on a slow track or aimed at non-technical occupations solely because they are black or Hispanic or low income. Each child must be challenged to dream and to strive. In inner city neighborhoods all over America strong principals and teaching staffs are proving every day that with high expectations, discipline and a commitment to excellence all of our children can achieve. Labels like "underclass" must not be used to smother the spark in a child's mind or to send him a message that success is impossible.

### Values - The Flight from Common Sense

We have already alluded to the movement in the '60s and '70s to introduce "value free" curriculum into the nation's school system. This trend seems to be one more symptom of the "loss of nerve" that pervaded American elites, including some parts of the educational establishment. Confusion about our past, about our free institutions--even about what being a "good citizen" meant led to an unwillingness to assert moral authority. Fortunately, the American people were by and large not as confused as their leaders. The Gallup poll continues to show that next to teaching reading, writing, and math, American parents want schools to teach reliable standards of right and wrong.

This common sense about values is reflected in a growing amount of research. For example, students who valued the work ethic, attached a high importance to education and who were religious outperformed their peers between 12 and 18 percentile points on standardized tests.<sup>75</sup> A 1982 study showed that youth actively involved in their church were much less likely to have used marijuana and alcohol than non-church attenders.<sup>76</sup> Students

possessing certain core values--ambition, industriousness and responsibility--were much less likely to drop out of school.<sup>77</sup>

Recently arrived Asian immigrants have provided us further evidence of the link between values--family and education. Experts have watched in astonishment as the children of the "boat people" who just a few years ago arrived penniless and facing language and cultural impediments have catapulted themselves literally to the "top of the class." On national standardized tests of academic achievement, 27 percent of the refugee children scored in the 90th percentile on math achievement. In grade point average, more than a quarter of them had an "A-average" and overall their scholastic average was 3.05 or slightly above a "B." Research shows that the reason for this performance is the values the children bring with them. Nathan Caplan of the University of Michigan found these children possessed traditional cultural values, a cohesive family structure and achievement orientation. In addition, they were convinced that America, in the words of Lincoln, offers the opportunity of "an open field and a fair chance."

American families expect their children to be taught the same values--the precursors to success--that these immigrant families have. These are not Oriental values or concepts alien to the American experience. The failure over the last 20 years to do this has hurt all families but perhaps the poor and disadvantaged the most.

#### Courts in the Classroom

The '60s saw the Federal courts move aggressively into America's schools. A number of cases established the "rights" of disruptive students and sent a clear message that local school officials did not have the discretion they once did in dealing with student disorder. Not surprisingly, there was an explosion of school disorders from 1964 to 1971 with the problem remaining at unacceptable levels after that time. That part of this explosion was due to the unsettling nature of the times cannot be doubted. Neither can one doubt that the playing field had changed. School administrators had fewer tools to deal with the problem--courtesy of the courts. Students who had been deterred by seeing what happened to a fellow student who broke the rules now saw their peers "beat the system." It should have surprised no one that as bad behavior became less costly, we witnessed more of it. Not only was schooling undermined, but the family was too.



The family who was trying to teach its children to respect authority, study hard, and stay in school, now found themselves at odds with the reality their children experienced. Defying authority brought no lasting pain and obeying it was not particularly rewarded.

The impact on minority students and their families was particularly pronounced. Studies show that minority students are more likely to attend a school in which discipline has broken down and learning is disrupted. The misplaced emphasis on the rights of disrupters at the expense of the rule abiding student was unfair and ill-advised.

### The Future

The release in January of 1984 of the President's report on school violence and discipline signaled a major effort by the Administration to return authority to families and local school authorities to maintain order in their local schools. Recent Supreme Court decisions such as T.L.O vs. New Jersey are sending a new message to students and serve to reinforce the family's effort to instill good behavior. A number of strong principals, often minority, around the country have gained prominence by insisting on strict conduct standards and have literally turned schools around overnight by strong and consistent enforcement of common sense rules. Schools that follow this approach find themselves with long waiting lists of families who want their own children in such a learning environment.

### Recommendations:

- o Schools should treat parents as the partners they are in the educational process. Parental input should be encouraged and solicited. New education programs on the local, State or Federal levels should require parental involvement.
- o Curriculum material should not undermine family values but should reinforce the principles and ideals most parents strive to impart to their children.
- o Local school officials should have a good deal of discretion in formulating day-to-day policies for the education of our children. Their efforts to maintain order and an atmosphere conducive to learning should not be undermined by intrusive court action.

## Taxes

For two decades, the Federal tax code meant bad news for the American family. It sent a message to every household in the land: the traditional family of parents and children was of no importance to policymakers--and tax spenders--in Washington. Nearly every special interest group managed to protect itself in tax legislation except for the most important part of our economic and social system: husband, wife, and children.

Determined presidential leadership has radically reversed that now, but we should not forget how dire the tax system was for the American family. Through the 1960s and 1970s, corporate income tax payments, as a percentage of Federal revenue, were steadily declining. The Tax Reform Act of 1969 gave major tax reductions to unmarried and single taxpayers. But for many, taxes were increasing.

Between 1960 and 1984, the average tax rate for a couple with two children climbed 43 percent. For a couple with four kids, the increase was an incredible 223 percent. Intentionally or not, the tax system imposed a dollars and cents penalty upon families with children. The nation whose tax code penalizes productive work and stable family life will find itself overtaxed and underserved.

No single portion of the tax code was responsible for the shift of the tax burden onto the backs of families, but a major contributor to the problem was the fact that the exemptions taxpayers received for themselves and their dependents remained static as inflation eroded it and income rose. In 1948, the personal exemption was set at \$600, which removed most families with three or more children from significant income tax liability. If the exemption in 1984 had offset the same average percentage of income as it did in 1948, it would have been around the \$5,000 mark.

Tax fairness for families was a major motivation for President Reagan's tax reform. The Administration asked Congress--and the American family has received--a doubling of the exemption to \$2,000 by 1989. This is a giant step in the right direction.

Families with low incomes will be aided by another provision of the President's tax reform. They will receive a larger earned income tax credit (EITC), as much as \$800. By offsetting social security taxes, this serves as a powerful work incentive. As a result of these changes, millions of

families will pay no taxes at all; and a larger number than previously will receive the EITC.

The child care tax credit was left unchanged by tax reform. This provision is often called pro-family. In fact, the credit helps some families but not those who need it most. For example, the credit can be claimed by a household with two wage earners but is denied to couples who raise their children at home. This forces more than half the families of America to pay higher taxes solely because one spouse, usually the wife, has chosen not to work outside the home. She may devote long hours to humanitarian work, community projects, and her family. But her higher taxes subsidize child care for her peers who are in the workplace.

Everything we know about childhood development and psychology indicates that home care for youngsters is vastly preferable to institutional arrangements. But child care is a booming business, responding to a market demand. If public policy will not favor home rearing of America's boys and girls, at least it should be neutral: it should not tilt the board in favor of care outside the home. That is why we propose an increased exemption for dependents. It will help offset child care costs for both kinds of families, those with two wage earners and those who raise their children at home. The latter, at considerable sacrifice, perform an important service to society and deserve at least equal treatment.

Americans are the most generous people on earth--when they have control of their own resources. Their record of private giving and community service has been remarked by observers from Tocqueville to Banfield. The public enthusiasm for tax cuts may stem in part from their understanding that works of compassion can best be done by institutions closest to home: family, volunteer associations, local government, religious societies. These institutions help more successfully than government because they offer charity with a human face. To tax away family resources is to diminish the capacity of these mediating institutions. Then we are left with nothing but big government and small individuals. In that match-up, the State always wins.

We return to one of our first principles: To begin with, do no harm. To help families, the best step government can take is to let them keep more of their hard earned money.

#### Recommendations:

- o The tax cuts of 1981 and the tax reforms of 1986 are major victories for the American family. Their

principles must be preserved in any future adjustments of tax policy, and any additional tax relief should be directed toward families within the structure created by those landmark reforms.

- o Continued economic growth, combined with reductions in government spending, can set the stage for further reductions in the tax burdens of the American people. When that happens, the Treasury Department should study concentrating the changes in two areas:
  - 1. The personal exemption could be expanded further with a goal of \$4,000-5,000. To save revenues, the increase could be limited to dependents. Additional revenues could be obtained by ending the child care tax credit. This trade-off would be more fair to all families. Those with two wage earners could use the increased exemption for child care costs, while single paycheck families with a parent at home would have tax relief to help with the costs of raising children. Federal policy would no longer be biased toward one lifestyle. Each family would keep more of its own resources and make its own decisions about raising its children.
  - 2. The EITC can be improved by introducing a "per child" factor. For example, if an eligible family has three children, the amount of income on which they could earn the credit would increase accordingly.

### A Place to Begin

How can the public, and the officials we elect, evaluate policies in a family way? How can we determine what governmental actions are good for the family? It is all too easy for proponents of one or another course of action to claim they are doing things "for the family." If our commitments are to involve more than posturing, there must be clear standards by which to evaluate programs and policies.

For that reason, and as a way of fostering within the entire apparatus of the Federal Government a new sensitivity toward the importance of the family, we make this final recommendation:

o All heads of departments and agencies should review current programs and policies within their jurisdictions, rigorously applying to each of these specific criteria:

1. Does this action by government lessen earned household income? If so, how do the benefits of this action outweigh, and justify, the exaction from the family budget?
2. Does this policy serve to reinforce the stability of the home and, particularly, the marital commitment that holds the home together?
3. Does this measure strengthen or erode the authority of the home and, specifically, the rights of parents in the education, nurture, and supervision of their children?
4. Does it help the family perform its functions, or does it substitute governmental activity for that function?
5. What message, intended or otherwise, does this program send to the public concerning the status of the family?
6. What message does it send to young people concerning their behavior, their personal responsibility, and the norms of our society?
7. Can this activity be carried out by a lower level of government?

8. Can it be performed by mediating institution in the private sector?

Those are not difficult questions, and they should not be asked by the Administration alone. Members of Congress, individually and through their committee system, might make the same inquiries, especially with regard to proposals for new or extended Federal programs.

Because most of the administrative business of the Executive Branch of government is handled by regulations and guidelines, it is vital that departmental and agency initiatives be overseen with those eight questions in mind. Review by OMB is one possibility. Another would be the creation, within the Office of the President, of a small panel, drawn from existing personnel of the Executive Branch, to systematically apply those questions to proposed policy or regulatory changes from the departments.

The precise mechanism for asking those questions is less important than ensuring that they be asked--and answered in a public way. Only then will the households of America know who truly speaks, acts, and governs in the interest of the family.



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MEMBERS  
WORKING GROUP ON THE FAMILY

Gary L. Bauer (Chairman)  
Under Secretary of Education  
Department of Education

William Kristol  
Chief of Staff/Counsellor to the Secretary  
Department of Education

Lawrence F. Davenport  
Assistant Secretary for  
Elementary and Secondary Education  
Department of Education

Wayne Stanton  
Administrator, Family Support  
Administration  
Department of Health and Human Services

Dorcas R. Hardy  
Commissioner, Social Security  
Administration  
Department of Health and Human Services

Dodie Livingston  
Commissioner  
Children, Youth and Families  
Department of Health and Human Services

JoAnn Gasper  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs  
Department of Health and Human Services

Deborah Dean  
Executive Assistant to the Secretary  
Department of Housing and Urban Development

Clarence Thomas  
Chairman  
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Ralph Bledsoe  
Executive Secretary of the  
Domestic Policy Council  
The White House

Robert W. Sweet, Jr.  
Deputy Executive Secretary for the  
Domestic Policy Council  
The White House

Charles D. Hobbs  
Director  
Office of Policy Development  
The White House

Carl Anderson  
Special Assistant to the President  
for Public Liaison  
The White House

Josh Gilder  
Speechwriter  
The White House

Terry Eastland  
Director  
Office of Public Affairs  
Department of Justice

Stephen J. Galebach  
Senior Special Assistant to the Attorney General  
Department of Justice

Becky Norton Dunlop  
Senior Special Assistant to the Attorney General  
for Cabinet Affairs  
Department of Justice

Earle Gjelde  
Counsellor to the Secretary  
Department of the Interior

David Demarest  
Deputy Under Secretary for Public and  
Intergovernmental Affairs  
Department of Labor

Stephen J. Entin  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy  
Department of the Treasury

Debbie Steelman  
Associate Director, Human  
Resources, Veterans and Labor  
Office of Management and Budget

Maiselle Shortley  
Deputy Associate Director  
ACTION

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**Institute For Educational Affairs**

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June 2, 1986

The Honorable Gary L. Bauer  
Under Secretary  
United States Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

C n t o

Dear Under Secretary Bauer:

Thanks for your letter of April 24, requesting ideas on how to strengthen the family. Some of your staff and several other members of the panel you chair have copies of articles I have written or are otherwise familiar with my views on this matter and I have little more to add, except for a willingness to meet with you personally, if you wish.

However, let me try to summarize my thinking by using the format you suggest:

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 1: Concentrate on strengthening the responsibility of males for their families -- For example, most "workfare" programs will necessarily be enrolling females, since they are most likely to be the heads of households on AFDC. Instead, it would be better to give priority to the male -- i.e., to the fathers of the children -- whether or not they are officially part of the family receiving welfare. Similarly, continuing the effort to enforce child support laws more rigorously and toughening divorce laws are important.

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 2: Emphasize early identification and assistance to "at-risk" families -- This might entail early pre-school education for children growing up in badly shattered (or non-existent) families. Or directing "parent-effectiveness" programs at marginal families. Child-protection laws (foster care) should be reinvigorated and child-abuse laws made more practical. Government regulations that inhibit private, voluntary groups from developing such efforts should be eliminated.

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 3: Encourage individual and family responsibility by providing needed assistance through vouchers -- The main exception to the generally dismal record of social policy in the last twenty years is to be found in health care; on the most important measures, the poor have not lost ground. This may have something to do with the fact that we provide medical services to the poor not through government-run health clinics, but through what amounts to a voucher: a Medicaid (or Medicare) card. Similar results might be obtained in education and housing.



June 2, 1986


PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 4: Reduce the financial incentives for teenage pregnancy -- Even if the availability of welfare is not a major causal factor in teenage pregnancy, changing AFDC rules would still have a salutary impact upon public and private attitudes. Two simple steps: require the parents of teenage mothers (and fathers) to assume greater financial responsibility for their offspring and require the parents even of very young children to enroll in training or work programs. Though it may not have a large result, increasing the financial incentives for adoption (e.g., allowing costs to be deducted) would be useful too.

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 5: Redirect government-funded research to deal with family stability -- We still have scandalously little good information about the causes and consequences of family problems, the effects of government programs on the family, the ways in which some families and children manage to adapt or get ahead, and many other important questions. Government-funded research has too often been unconcerned about these matters. For example, the largest current study involving welfare recipients, the MDRC evaluation of the "workfare" demonstrations, is gathering no useful data on what consequences these programs are having (if any) on the family lives of the participants. That ought to be changed.

I also believe that a lot of what needs to be done to strengthen families must occur outside government, but apart from using the "bully pulpit," there is not much you can do.

I hope the preceding ideas have been helpful. Please feel free to contact me if you would like further elaboration of any of them.

Sincerely,

  
Leslie Lenkowsky  
President



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

APR 24 1986

THE UNDER SECRETARY

Dr. Leslie Lenkowsky  
President  
Institute for Educational Affairs  
1112 - 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Dr. Lenkowsky:


Several years ago, while at the National Endowment for the Humanities, William Bennett asked leading American scholars and journalists for a list of 10 books every student should read before graduation from high school. The resulting exchange was an example of American democracy at its best. The enclosed column by George Will illustrates the enthusiasm with which citizens offered advice to their government. And I think the cause of excellence in education was greatly advanced by that exchange.

I was recently asked by President Reagan to chair a panel on the family. In the spirit of Secretary Bennett's earlier challenge, I ask for your ideas on how to strengthen the role of the family in our society.

How should our public policy be reformed so as to improve family life? What five or so reforms would you put at the top of your list? You may use the enclosed form or send me a letter. I would also like to know what you judge as the best literature--books, essays, studies, etc.--on family policy. Both your ideas and your reading recommendations will prove invaluable in preparing our report to the President; they could also help scholars and policymakers in the future.

Thank you for your contribution to this important project.

Sincerely,

  
Gary L. Bauer

Enclosures

George F. Will

## What to Read? Start With Genesis

Dr. William J. Bennett  
Chairman  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Bill,

Your letter is a pointed reminder that, as has been said, human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted. You ask, in effect, do we really know what we ought to know?

That means: Do we know what we ought to be? And that means: Do we know what we ought to read? After all, to a considerable extent we are what we read.

You write to report that you encounter skepticism when you say there are certain works in the humanities with which everyone graduating from high school should be familiar, and you solicit from me and others a suggested list of 10 such works. A clever fellow once noted that the creatures we call "lower animals" reason hardly at all but they hardly ever make mistakes, whereas we . . . Never mind. Herewith my list, but first my caveat, which is:

Lists proper for British or French pupils would be different. The world is wonderfully differentiated. American sec-

ondary education should give a glimpse of the shared treasure of Western culture, but also should help define an educated American—the noun is as important as the adjective. So, here goes.

The Bible (the King James version, of course). Genesis and other portions of the Old Testament, plus any two Gospels. American Civil Liberties Union lawyers will object? To the state with them!

Aristotle's "Politics." The Bible is important news, Aristotle is important advice. Students can learn early in life the correct conclusion of every serious argument: Aristotle was right.

Plato's "Apology" and "Crito," the dialogues about the trial of Socrates and his response to the death sentence, illustrate coherent argument about serious matters, including civil disobedience. Socrates was executed for corrupting the young, so these dialogues also serve as a warning to high school teachers.

Shakespeare's "Macbeth" is the best way to give brutes steeped in the mechanical adventures of "Indiana Jones" a sense of real terrors. It is an introduction to the richness of genius, and the richness of something at the disposal of persons who are not geniuses—the English language.

The Federalist Papers. Imagine—a collection of newspa-

per columns on a list like this. The columnists—Madison, Hamilton and Jay (the columnists' profession seems to have peaked early in this country)—explain the philosophy behind our political physics of separated and balanced powers.

De Tocqueville's "Democracy in America" analyzes how politics and national character shape each other. It warns that some things of value are jeopardized by, and others are incompatible with, democracy.

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates are an introduction to the mind of the greatest statesman in the history of democracy, and to the central event of our democracy, and to this idea: Democracy, when understood merely as popular sovereignty, is understood primitively.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" is effortless to read but difficult to get to the bottom of. By the time students see "the green light at the end of Daisy's dock" they have been introduced, by a voice with an American accent, to the idea of depth in a novel.

"Night," Elie Wiesel's remembrance of childhood in Auschwitz, is perhaps the most effective way to introduce young people to a fact that must be faced if citizens are to understand the stakes of modern politics. That fact is: Nothing is unthinkable.

"The Idea of a University," by John Henry Newman. Admittedly, I am reaching a bit here. But high school graduates not going on to further education will benefit from a glimpse of what they are going to miss—as will, come to think about it, most persons going on. Newman, one of the greatest masters of English prose, explains that proper education does not arouse random curiosity, it arouses the right curiosity and makes people like and dislike what they ought.

Now, Bill, you really suggest that I urge readers to send to you, at the address above, their list of 10. That will take care of your summer reading: my readers are nothing if not quick to vent vigorous opinions. Perhaps when you have tabulated the vote, I can report it, in this space, to the electorate.

Yr mat ob'l sv't,

George

P.S. Your letter is seasonable. Millions of Americans are heading for vacations—and are packing unworthy books. So little time, so much to read. My guilty secret is that I am reading my 62nd P.G. Wodehouse novel, which like all the more than 90 of his novels is long on style but short on mind. I know your secret—a passion for books on the history of rock 'n' roll. But don't worry, I won't tell anyone.

## FAMILY POLICY IDEAS

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 1:

Comments:

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 2:

Comments:

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 3:

Comments:

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 4:

Comments:

PUBLIC POLICY IDEA 5:

Comments:

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 7, 1987

MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE WORKING SEMINAR ON  
FAMILY AND AMERICAN WELFARE POLICY

Date: May 8, 1987  
Location: Cabinet Room  
Time: 1:15 p.m.

From:  Mari Maseng

I. PURPOSE

To accept the group's report on welfare reform.

II. BACKGROUND

The Working Seminar on the Family and American Welfare Policy is composed of conservatives, centrists, and even a few liberals. The group is chaired by conservative scholar Michael Novak. Its report identifies the problem as one of behavioral dependency. They point out that three behaviors will keep virtually all people out of poverty: 1) finish high school; 2) get married and stay married (remarry if divorced); and 3) take a job, any job, and stay with it.

The group argues that much of our current welfare system is counterproductive because it is based on misunderstandings of the problem. It thinks that government has a limited role to play, which is primarily to signal that all people have an obligation to become as economically independent as possible. Finally, they call on all institutions in society - e.g., the media, churches, and families - to help the dependent to become independent.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Michael Novak, Chairman  
John Cogan, Vice Chairman  
Blanche Bernstein  
- Douglas Besharov, American Enterprise Institute  
Barbara Blum, Foundation for Child Development  
Allan Carlson, The Rockford Institute  
Chris DeMuth, President, AEI  
Michael Horowitz, Former Counsel, OMB  
S. Anna Kondratas  
Leslie Lenkowsky, Institute for Educational Affairs  
Lawrence Mead, New York University  
- Donald Moran, formerly with OMB  
Charles Murray, Author, Losing Ground

PARTICIPANTS (continued)

Richard P. Nathan, Princeton University  
Robert D. Reischauer, Brookings Institution  
Alice Rivlin, Brookings Institution  
Michael Greve  
Jeremiah Milbank, Jr.  
Daniel Schmidt

+ Secretary of Education Bennett  
+ Secretary of HHS Bowen  
+ Secretary of Agriculture Lyng  
+ Ken Cribb, Assistant to the President  
Nancy Risque, Director of Cabinet Affairs  
+ Mari Maseng, Director, Office of Public Liaison  
Max Green, Associate Director, OPL  
Carol Hornby, Associate Director, OPL  
Peter Germanis, Office of Policy Development  
Delores Martin, Office of Policy Development

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open coverage

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

12:45 - 12:56

1:10 p.m.	Guests enter Cabinet Room.
1:15 p.m.	You enter Cabinet Room. You welcome the group.
1:20 p.m.	Press pool leaves Cabinet Room. Michael Novak summarizes the findings of the report and a discussion follows.
1:28 p.m.	Meeting concludes; individual photographs are taken with group members.
1:30 p.m.	You leave Cabinet Room. Guests leave Cabinet Room.

Attachments: Introductory Remarks  
Talking Points

## Introductory Remarks

Welcome to the White House. I have been looking forward to this meeting with you.

As you probably know, I have been committed to finding a solution to the welfare problem since I first became active in politics. No feeling human being can fail to be moved by the plight of the most unfortunate among us, and therefore we want to help them. But we also know that some programs that were supposed to help actually have done more harm than good by making people dependent on government. What I would like to discuss with you today is what we can do to move us closer to the much desired goal of helping people to become economically independent.

## Talking Points

- I don't disagree with a thing you have said. In fact, let me put it in the positive: I could not agree with you more.
  
- Obviously we need reform: we're just not getting the results we should for the huge amount of money we're spending on the problem. As our own "Up From Dependency" report points out, "if public assistance were distributed with perfect efficiency, \$51.6 billion would have left no one below the poverty level." But as you say, a lack of money per se is not the problem. Rather it is the "behavioral dependency" that prevents people from taking advantage of the economic opportunities of our society.
  
- The behavioral aspect of the problem demonstrates once again that questions of morality have economic consequences. But we've met so much resistance when we've said, for example, that our schools should encourage moral behavior. Bill Bennett, who spoke to your group, can testify to that. I see some indication that the tide is turning. Do you?



- Being compassionate people, we are understandably reluctant to remove the props holding up the dependency producing system we have erected over the past two decades. I'd like to hear more from you about how we can encourage self reliance without harming people who really cannot fend for themselves.
  
- My own Working Group on the Family pointed out the importance of forming families because of the often times disastrous consequences of out of wedlock births. The question is how to get back to the point where the two-parent family is considered the norm, not just one of many equally accepted alternatives.
  
- We think that there are no obvious answers and that the best approach is to encourage states and localities to experiment. In fact, that is the purpose of our Low Income Opportunity Act legislation. I am happy to hear that you share our view that the principle of federalism should be maintained and strengthened in the administration of welfare.