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American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research
1150 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

(202) 862-5800

June 2, 1987

Mr. Matt Zachari
Office of Public Liaison
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Matt:

I am returning the pictures of the individual members of the Working Seminar with the President.

In the order they appear, the individuals are:

Charles Murray
Barbara Blum
Chris DeMuth
Michael Greve
Jeremiah Milbank
John Cogan
Richard Nathan
Pam Prothro
Daniel Schmidt
Larry Mead
Don Moran
Alan Carlson
Robert Reischauer

After the pictures are signed, I would appreciate it if you send them all to me. We plan to frame the pictures as a memento for each member of the Seminar.

Many thanks.

Cordially,

Douglas J. Besharov
Resident Scholar

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

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.



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