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COMMENTS: Here's a draft of the press
release and most of the report, FYI for
the op-ed.

Jim

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, March 1, 1995

Draft

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CRUEL HOUSE BUDGET CUTTING ASSAULTS CHILDREN

Billions Slashed from Crucial Child Protections, Undermining Child Health & Safety, Families' Ability to Work

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In a "revolution" that has so far spared nearly everyone else, the House of Representatives has targeted children for the earliest, broadest, and by far the deepest budget cuts, according to a new report from the Children's Defense Fund (CDF).

"We are seeing a massive, multi faceted, \$10 billion assault on child protections that threatens to shred the entire federal safety net beneath them and their families while postponing for a later day, if ever, any measure of sacrifice from the interests that can afford it," said CDF President Marian Wright Edelman. "No massively federally-subsidized defense contractor has seen a dime threatened and no rich farmer has seen crop subsidies cut. No military or civil service retiree--or Member of Congress has seen his pay or health insurance or retirement benefits trimmed. No wealthy individual has seen his capital gains benefit cut, and actually may profit from the suffering of children."

"Yet House leaders are determined to take food out of the mouths of hungry children, deny safe homes to abused and neglected children, strip child care away from infants and toddlers whose parents are trying to get off welfare or keep a job, and deprive destitute children and children with disabilities of cash assistance," she said. "Children are being made to pay for a defense buildup we don't need and tax giveaways to the rich we can't afford," Edelman said.

CDF's report, *Unshared Sacrifice: The House of Representatives' Shameful Assault on America's Children*, provides details on the massive cuts moving through the House that

nearly exclusively target crucial protections for child health, care, and safety. The report concludes that if actions taken by House committees in recent days are not rejected by the full House and Senate or vetoed by the President, the basic safety net that has existed since the Depression to protect children from hunger, illness, homelessness, abuse and neglect will be shredded. In only two weeks, committees indiscriminately and recklessly (. . . insert chronology of block grant and rescission process):

<u>Child Protections Cut</u>	<u>\$ Cut Over 5 Yrs.</u>	<u>Children Cut by yr. 2,000</u>
Child Care	\$ 2.5 billion	378,000
School Lunches	\$ 2.0 billion	2.2 million
Child Care/Head Start Food (CACFP)	\$ 5.0 billion	365,000
Foster Care/Adoption Assistance	\$ 5.5 billion	111,000
Cash for Poor Children (AFDC)	\$12.8 billion	1.7 million
Cash for Disabled Children	\$12.1 billion	516,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$39.9 billion</u>	<u>4.9 million</u>

In addition to proposed cuts to safety net entitlements and successful discretionary programs such as WIC and Head Start, the House proposes to cut funds approved by Congress last year that have rescinded desperately needed after-school, weekend, and summer activities that prevent youth violence. In addition, the proposed rescissions would completely eliminate 1.2 million summer jobs for youths.

"This relentless and multi-front assault is as morally wrong as it is practically foolish. House leaders say over and over again that they want to move families from dependency to work and to cut bureaucracy," Edelman said. "But how does cutting child care assistance that enables parents to go to work every day help end dependency? How will children who are denied protection from abuse and neglect or help to cope with a serious disability grow up to become tomorrow's workforce of teachers, computer programmers, and business leaders? How does leaving children unable to pay attention in school because they have empty bellies improve the nation's future productivity? How does eliminating the entire summer jobs program for teens instill a work ethic? And how can they expect *anyone* to believe that cuts totalling nearly \$40 billion will only cut bureaucracy and not hurt children? The hypocrisy is appalling."

CDF President Marian Wright Edelman was joined by Delaware Governor Tom Carper in expressing concern about the impact such deep cuts would have on children.

Governor Carper said, contrary to the House committees' claims, converting key child survival programs into block grants in the name of flexibility and then cutting funding will not help states like Delaware. "What this proposal does is cut the legs out from under working poor families and from states like Delaware that want to help welfare recipients go to work. Instead of providing us flexibility, it shifts the cost burden to states and puts us in a fiscal straightjacket. I'm concerned about the next recession, or the next disaster, that will occur in my state, or others in the country, in which people will call for our assistance," said Carper.

Parents, child care providers, and others who care for children are worried about what the cuts will mean for their children and the children they serve. Karen Higginbotham of Louisiana receives about \$5,000 a year to help care for six-year-old Alison, who was born with a rare seizure disorder that left her with mental and physical disabilities, said that families like hers who are struggling now may not be able to make it.

"Many times one parent has to stop working to care for a child with disabilities and SSI helps to pick up the slack," Higginbotham said. "This helps keep families together and it is more cost-effective -- the \$5,500 my family receives, for example, is less of a burden on the taxpayers than the \$60,000 it would cost the state and federal governments to keep my uninsured daughter in an institution. While it appears that my family won't be cut this go around, parents of other children with disabilities won't be so lucky."

Sheryl Brussett-Chapman, executive director of the Baptist Home for Children and Families in Bethesda, MD argues that (insert quote).

"Parents and others who care for children will tell you that these cuts are not focused on government waste or programs that don't work. The targets of these cuts are children who have no PACs or powerful lobbies and cannot vote or speak for themselves," Edelman said. "Rather than pick on helpless children who have no voice, the House should pick on someone their own size."

Edelman said that at the same time that the House is moving to slash nutrition programs for children, it is pledging to spare programs that help non-needy constituents and promising a \$1 billion taxpayer-funded gift to three infant formula manufacturers by taking competitive bidding out of the WIC program.

Edelman said that she hopes the full House, the Senate, and the President will work to restore the services unfairly cut in the House bills, and take constructive steps to help families work and lift children out of poverty.

"Instead of continuing the assault on children, there needs to be a discussion in the Senate about the real reforms that give parents the tools they need to work and lift their families out of poverty, such as jobs and job training, child care, and health coverage."

(Jim, please insert language that conveys we support balancing the budget but not on the backs of children and describe which programs could be cut.)

The Children's Defense Fund exists to provide a strong and effective voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. CDF pays particular attention to the needs of poor, minority, and disabled children, and works to educate the nation about the needs of children and encourage preventive investment in children before they get sick, drop out of school, suffer family breakdown, or get into trouble. CDF is a private nonprofit organization supported by foundations, corporate grants, and individual donations.

Report

Intro

In a "revolution" that has so far spared just about everyone else, the House leadership and key committee majorities have targeted America's children for the earliest, broadest and by far the deepest pain in budget cuts, program restructuring, and rescissions. In less than two weeks key committees and subcommittees have voted to cut \$40 billion from crucial child survival programs, and to end the federal safety net for children and their families. This is a wholly unshared sacrifice: the House seems to be postponing for a later day, if ever, any contemplation of major cuts for other constituencies. Savings from savage cuts in programs for needy and helpless children will be used to fund a new and unnecessary defense build-up; to pay for a capital gains tax cut of which 71 percent goes to the richest one percent of Americans; and to reducing a tax on the richest 13 percent of the elderly by \$56 billion (over 10 years) when that tax goes to pay part of Medicare's cost.

While the House majority's welfare plan has gotten the most media attention, that plan's unprecedented savaging of children is merely symptomatic of a broad-gauged assault on hungry children's nutrition programs, disabled children's disability assistance, pre-school children's child care and child development centers, unemployed youths' summer jobs, sick children's medical care, and abused children's foster care and hope for adoptive families. Block grants, rescissions and consolidations have been used in a multi-front attack on children's services. Not even proven money-saving programs like Head Start have been spared. And in the midst of this series of savage reductions, the most severe have been reserved for the most vulnerable children -- those who are disabled or in foster care.

Based on data from the Congressional Budget Office, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, and analysis of Congressional numbers by the Children's Defense Fund, there were \$40 billion in core safety net program cuts adopted in the last two weeks that would force out of these programs millions of the children eligible under current rules:

	Dollars cut over 5 years	Dollars cut in the fifth year (2000)	Children losing benefits in the year 2000	Percentage of all eligible children who would lose benefits in the year 2000
AFDC	\$12.8 billion	\$3.7 billion	1.7 million (3-5 million in later years)	18.3 percent
SSI for children	\$12.1 billion	\$5.5 billion	516,000	67 percent
Foster Care and Adoption Assistance	\$5.5 billion	\$1.7 billion	111,000	26 percent
School Lunches	\$2 billion	\$510 million	2.22 million	8.8 percent
Child Care	\$2.5 billion	\$612 million	378,000	24 percent
Child & Adult Care Food Program	\$5 billion	\$1.1 billion	1,048,000 965,000	50 percent

These numbers assume that states would reduce spending by the amount of federal reductions, and do so by eliminating eligible children from the program, rather than reducing benefits across-the-board. In some programs like AFDC and SSI, that strategy of dropping children is virtually dictated by the proposed legislation. In others, it is possible for states to spread out the cuts and reduce benefits for more children, but completely deny benefits to fewer. In that case, many more children would be hurt, but the damage to each would be a bit less. In either instance, the pain will be massive.

The numbers in this report actually understate the real depth of the cuts, since they assume there is no recession driving up the number of children needing help; assume there are no transfers from the new block grants to other programs (as is allowed with some of the funds); assume that there are not larger cuts in state funds by states that would be freed from any matching requirements; and don't account for how cuts in one area (e.g., AFDC) will drive up the need in other areas (e.g., foster care). Moreover, the AFDC losses in 2000 disguise the full impact of the House welfare plan: three to five million children will lose AFDC when it is fully phased in.

This assault on America's children is also an assault on America's future. The millions of infants and toddlers who will be denied food necessary for their physical and intellectual development in the years ahead are the ones America will want to be computer programmers in 2017. The millions of five year olds who will be denied any cash aid for housing, food or clothing are the ones we will want to be learning in college or apprenticing in industry in 2012. The thousands of battered ten year olds denied counselling and foster care and adoptive homes are the ones we will want not to be violent 16 year olds in 2001. By ravaging the childhoods of millions of American children, the House will simultaneously be pillaging America's economic and democratic future.

The assault on children is unique in its size and severity. No other group, except for legal aliens, has been touched by more than a small fraction of the cuts aimed at children. No massively subsidized corporation has yet to see a dime threatened. (In fact, a handful of big businesses got a \$1 billion gift from higher prices on infant formula -- and less formula purchased -- when the House Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities voted down competitive bidding in the WIC program, a step USDA says will cause "increased malnutrition, growth stunting, and iron deficiency anemia.") No farmer has had his crop subsidies cut. No military or civil service retiree -- or member of Congress -- has seen his pay or health insurance or retirement benefits cut. Defense contractors have been given a gift of new and higher spending. Programs for poor families have faced extra cuts in order to spare traditional "pork" like visitors' centers or NRA-sponsored efforts to teach school children to shoot guns. The House majority has put almost all its cost-cutting effort into slashing and burning their way through programs for children and the parents, grandparents, foster parents and others who are struggling to care for them.

This is not what America voted for. This is not what Americans want. This is not what America needs. Nevertheless, in just 10 days in February, House committees voted to slash these basic supports:

Food for children. The House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee voted to take away the guarantee that low-income children can get free or reduced price school lunches and breakfasts. The plan indiscriminately lumps these programs together and cuts them \$2 billion over five years. In a separate block grant, the Committee ended the guarantee of food for children in Head Start and child care centers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program and lumped this with the WIC program of food for poor pregnant women and infants, the summer food program, and food for the homeless, and cut the package by \$5 billion over five years. Cutting fat? Hardly. Experts estimate that hundreds of millions fewer meals will be served to needy children in the year 2000, thanks to the cut. Sharing the pain? Hardly. No other food program has yet been cut, whether the cafeteria for members of the House of Representatives or the programs that feed the elderly.

House Speaker Gingrich has promised, as well he should, not to cut food programs for the elderly. But it is perverse to treat food for seniors as deserving of protection but food for children as a waste of national resources. We can afford to feed both.

Income support for children. The House Ways and Means Committee's Human Resources Subcommittee voted to take away the guarantee that poor children can get AFDC; voted to order states to deny throughout childhood any aid to children born out of wedlock to young mothers (even though the mother may eventually requalify for aid); and voted to limit to five years the receipt of welfare for those children who might still qualify despite the other rule changes. In the year 2000, \$3.7 billion will be taken away from poor children. Is this aimed at parents and personal responsibility? Not really. The plan cuts off children even when parents can get benefits, cuts off families even when they have been working and complying with all rules, and tells a child who has been living with his low income, elderly grandparents since birth that he'll get no help after the age of five. Cutting fat? No! In the year 2000, 1.7 million children who by definition do not have enough for food or shelter are projected to lose AFDC. Even more will lose help if states cut back further or divert state and federal AFDC funds to other purposes. Sharing the pain? Hardly. No other government income program for the rich, or middle class -- or the adult poor -- has been cut so deeply as this most basic safety net program for children, although the other programs cost many times more than AFDC.

Foster care and adoption assistance. Some of the millions of children being cut off AFDC may well end up at the door of the already overburdened child protection system for help, but they will likely find the door slammed in their faces. The House Republicans have amended their initial Contract to take away the guarantee, which they had originally preserved, that an eligible abused or neglected child who cannot live safely at home will be assured a foster home, group home, or adoptive family. Even as caseloads continue to rise, the new Child Protection Block Grant further endangers children by cutting more than \$5 billion over five years from foster care, adoption assistance, and a range of child abuse prevention and treatment services, and ending any federal oversight of the protection for these children. Beginning in FY 1998, states will have less available to them for the entire block grant than they are now projected to be spending that year for foster care and adoption assistance alone. The cuts in FY 2000 could force states to deny foster care to more than 100,000 abused and neglected children.

Children with Disabilities. The House is not even letting indigent children with severe disabilities escape the omnibus assault. It is virtually eliminating the program of cash assistance to children with disabilities whose parents cannot support them. Just cutting the fat? The plan will cut 250,000 out of 900,000 children with disabilities off the program now, and stop all cash assistance to almost all children entering the program in the future. No matter how bad a child's condition and no matter how poor the family, the child won't get cash assistance unless it is necessary to keep him from being institutionalized. Blind children, deaf children, children with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy all have been found to be unworthy of help in meeting their needs for food, clothing or shelter. Sharing the pain? The subcommittee made only small cuts in the program for disabled adults. No poor, disabled American should see assistance withdrawn -- our society is wealthy enough to help all low-income people with disabilities. The House seems to agree -- if you are an adult on Social Security, veterans benefits, civil service or military retirement, or SSI. But they have decided to single out children with disabilities, people who do not vote, as unworthy of help.

Children in Child Care. A child care block grant that ends child care entitlements targeted at getting and keeping families off welfare sweeps these programs in with other child care funds and then cuts the total \$2.5 billion over five years -- 24 percent in the fifth year. This and other cuts show that the House leadership is not truly interested in putting welfare recipients to work or supporting lower-income families in their work efforts. A far higher priority is simply slashing programs for children.

This report focuses on the massive damage to children's entitlements -- the destruction by the House of the decades-old promise that children and families in need can count on modest help in obtaining the most basic necessities. The targeting of these safety net programs, if it prevails in the House and Senate, will be the most damaging action Congress can take with regard to children. But as the House turns to other authorization, budget and appropriations issues, it is demonstrating that it will single out children for the harshest pain there as well. As just one example, during the week of February 20th House appropriations subcommittees singled out low-income Americans, but particularly low-income children, for the brunt of the \$17.1 billion in rescissions they propose. Employment training and jobs programs capture the essence of this anti-child frenzy. ~~The~~ one largest employment program rescissions came in ~~the~~ adult programs and four youth programs. The adult programs were cut an average of 3.2 percent. The youth programs were cut 87.8 percent.

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Program	FY 1995 Budget Authority (in millions)	Proposed Rescission (in millions)	Percent Cut
Adult Training Grants	\$1055	\$33	3.1%
Older Americans Employment	411	14	3.4%
<i>Dislocated Workers Assistance</i> → Total Adult	1,296 2762	99.3 146.3	7.6 53%
Youth Training Grants	\$599	\$310	51.8%
1995 Summer Youth Employment	867	867	100
1995 Summer Youth Employment	871	871	100
Youth Fair Chance	25	25	100
Total Youth	\$2362	\$2073	87.8

Overall, the Department of Labor says 90 percent of the ^{employment-} ~~job~~ related rescission were directed at youths. The summer youth jobs cut alone means 1,200,000 fewer jobs for America's needy teenagers -- another clear message to America's children and families that at least the House of Representatives is interested neither in their economic well-being nor their development into good workers who will contribute the most they can in their adult years.

In 1948 Senator Robert Taft, the pre-eminent conservative Republican of his generation, said that the American economy was rich enough "to prevent extreme hardship and maintain a minimum standard floor under subsistence, education, medical care and housing, to give to all a minimum standard of decent living and to all children a fair opportunity to get a start in life." This nation is far wealthier than when Senator Taft spoke. But the House of Representatives' leadership is far less generous than Senator Taft and seems to have decided that the wealthiest nation on earth cannot commit to give a school lunch or a public assistance grant to every child who needs the food or a roof over his head, cannot give a foster home to every child who needs refuge from abusive parents, and cannot afford to give disability assistance to every poor child with disabilities.

Fortunately in the weeks and months ahead there will be opportunities to stop this assault on children -- in the House as a whole, and in the Senate, and through Presidential vetoes. There are far better ways to balance the budget than dismantling the safety net for children. There are consolidations of discretionary programs that can be designed to improve services for children (see description in Appendix), but the House of Representatives' block-

granting of the safety net entitlement programs goes in precisely the wrong direction. Only if the House of Representatives' course of action so far is drastically changed will America's children be safe and healthy and able to learn in the years ahead, and America's future secure in the 21st century.

Aid To Families With Dependent Children

On February 13, the majority members of the Human Resources subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means passed a bill that -- if it were to become law -- essentially would destroy the nation's basic safety net program for very poor children and their families, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

The bill, the Personal Responsibility Act (the "PRA"), would break a 60-year promise to America's children that subsistence benefits will be made available for families poor enough to qualify. The program has provided since its inception that needy families (with need defined by each state) could not be turned away or put on waiting lists, and that the growth of need during recessions would not be met by arbitrary denials of aid by cash-strapped states. This AFDC "entitlement" represented no more -- and no less -- than a *promise* to children and families in need that they can count on help with necessities. The PRA would break that promise. It would convert the program into a "block grant" and leave the states free to turn impoverished families away at any time.

The PRA would then assure that hundreds of thousands or millions of children in fact *will* be turned away, by freezing funding at FY 1994 levels for the next five years. Funds would be cut \$12.8 billion below projected costs in the five years through FY 2000. The projected additional costs being cut are for caseload growth, not for keeping benefits up with inflation. Even though the typical AFDC family receives only \$366 per month, all states have let inflation further erode benefits. (In fact, typical benefits have plummeted 47 percent since 1970.) The \$12.8 billion cut means that states would have to reduce benefits even further, and would have to terminate them altogether for millions of children and families. In the fifth year of the cuts, -- millions, or -- percent of AFDC children and caretaker relatives, are projected to lose benefits.

The PRA also specifies sweeping changes in eligibility, new federal mandates that restrict the children who can qualify for assistance. Here are some of the ways children would be hurt:

- Families could not receive assistance for more than five years cumulatively, even if their stays on welfare are only a few months at a time, followed by periods of work. Families would have to be cut off after five years, whether or not jobs were available. States would have the option to cut families off much sooner, even after only a number of months. Millions of children would lose help when their parents can't find work. If all states manage consistently to run welfare-to-work programs as well as the best that have been run to date, there still would be more than 3 million children (about one-third of the caseload) cut off AFDC because of the five year time limit, even though their parents had not found jobs.

- The PRA would limit states' ability to exempt disabled adults or children from the five-year time limit. While all the details of the bill have not yet been released, states apparently would be able to exempt only up to 10 percent of their caseloads from the five-year limit. But over 19 percent of mothers on AFDC are disabled, and another 8.4 percent care for children with disabilities. Many other AFDC children live with elderly grandparents. The PRA's rigid mandate would prevent states from meeting the needs of families for which work is virtually impossible.
- Children of mothers younger than 18 would be barred from receiving aid for their entire childhood; their mothers would not qualify, either. This provision does not simply require a minor mother to live at home, or in a supervised setting. Even if she lives with her parents, her child is disqualified from receiving aid. The mother apparently can qualify for AFDC if she has another child as an adult, but the child she bore as a teen *cannot* get help.
- Children born to families already on welfare would not receive any cash assistance.
- As is true in many other welfare reform proposals, parents would be required to participate in a "work activity" after no more than two years on AFDC, and states could choose to require work after a shorter period. But unlike many other reform proposals, there is *no* provision that child care help must be provided to the parent and child while the parent is in training or at work.

Except for these punitive provisions, the federal funding has few strings attached -- states do not even have to put up any of their own money to run the program. States could in fact add to the \$12.8 billion in federal reductions with cuts of their own. Further, states would be allowed to transfer as much as 30 percent of the federal block grant funds to other block grants for nutrition, child welfare, child care, or social services. States would be encouraged to cut even more, by taking an unspecified amount of their annual federal allotment and placing it in a "rainy day" fund, to cover increased expenses in the future (theoretically to meet caseload growth during a recession). But states would not be obliged to use these funds to assure that victims of recession receive a basic minimum of assistance, and the fund is structured to allow use of AFDC funds as a form of general revenue sharing: anything over 120 percent of the annual federal block grant portion that accumulates in the rainy day fund can be used by the state for any unrelated purpose (for example, building roads).

The PRA includes a range of other objectionable provisions. But at its heart, it has little to do with personal responsibility and a lot to do just with cutting supports to children. Among the ways in which it punishes families with children no matter how much the mother tries to "play by the rules" and take responsibility are:

- No matter how quickly and fully the mother cooperates in identifying the father, the family loses \$50 a month or 15 percent of the grant for as long as six months if the state does not establish paternity. In many states, it takes longer than six months for the child support bureaucracy to complete paternity establishment, so this becomes simply a back-door way of reducing assistance.
- No matter how much the mother is willing to work, the family would be cut off all cash assistance if it exceeds the state's time limit.

Supplemental Security Income For Children

As part of the Personal Responsibility Act, the majority members of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means also dismantled the children's portion of the cash assistance program serving poor people with severe disabilities, Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The bill would eliminate *all* SSI eligibility and benefits for more than 250,000 children with severe disabilities (out of the current children's SSI population of almost 900,000) who now receive help. Many of these children would lose Medicaid coverage as well. These 250,000 children were determined eligible because their level of functioning was judged to be significantly below age or grade level. Instead, the only children who would qualify must have a condition appearing on an official list, which, according to pediatric experts, often does not capture serious disability.

Most disabled children meeting the narrow new child disability standards of the PRA and entering the program in the future would receive no SSI cash assistance (the maximum federal monthly grant is now \$446; some states offer a small supplement in addition). Instead, states would receive a federal block grant funding medical and non-medical services for the children, such as therapy or the purchase of wheelchair ramps or other accessibility equipment. States would be free to design their own list of services offered, with no assurance that all services a disabled child might need would be made available. The block grant would grow with increases in the number of eligible children, but it would be set at a base much lower than current expenditures. Cash SSI would only go to new applicants whose disabilities are so severe that the children are judged likely to be institutionalized if the family does not receive this aid.

Only children in families with low-income qualify for the current SSI program. While children with disabilities need medical care and related services, they also need food, clothing, and shelter. The SSI children's program has been a lifeline to parents faced with the struggle of caring for a disabled child. Moreover, these low-income disabled children who will be "eligible" but can only receive medical services still are deemed to be receiving SSI (an important point, because this qualifies the child for Medicaid). But the bill states in another section that no one could receive both SSI and Aid to Families With Dependent Children. Therefore, even poor children with disabilities living in wholly destitute families would be barred by the Personal Responsibility Act from receiving cash assistance from *any* source.

Over the five years ending in FY 2000, the PRA cuts \$12.1 billion below what the children's disability component of SSI currently is projected to spend.

Services for Abused and Neglected Children

In Title II of the Personal Responsibility Act, called the Child Protection Block Grant, the majority on the Human Ways and Means subcommittee moved to slash federal services and protections for abused and neglected children.

The Child Protection Block Grant would take away the entitlement nature of the federal Foster Care Program, which has assured for more than 30 years a safe haven in foster family homes and other settings for eligible abused and neglected children who cannot be protected by their parents. It also would end the entitlement nature of the federal Adoption Assistance Program, which helps ensure permanent families for children whose disabilities, race, age, or membership in a sibling group prevent them from being adopted without help. These programs, together with a number of other programs aimed at addressing abuse and neglect, would be repealed and replaced by the block grant. Eligible children who cannot live safely at home or are waiting for adoptive families no longer would be assured of federal assistance.

The funding cuts in the block grant would make it impossible to serve even the children currently receiving care, much less the increasing numbers of children in need of protection. States would receive at least \$5.5 billion less over five years through the Child Protection Block Grant than they would have received through the programs replaced by the block grant. In FY 2000, \$1.7 billion less than current law estimates would be available, a reduction of 26.3 percent. If all of the reduction that year were to come from foster care, there would be room for 111,000 fewer foster children.

Funds for child protection activities also could be reduced further because states have the option in the new block grant to transfer up to 30 percent of this already limited pot to other block grants. There also would no longer be any federal requirement that states match federal dollars with state dollars or maintain state and local expenditures for these purposes.

If changes are not made in the Child Protection Block Grant, it will endanger tens of thousands of children and deny many others the care and support they need:

- Abused and severely neglected children may have to be put on waiting lists for foster care and left at home because funds are not sufficient to accommodate all the children in need of care and no child will have a right to obtain such care.

- Children with special needs who are ready for adoption may be left in foster care, often at greater cost, because potential adoptive parents will be deterred from making permanent commitments to waiting children due to the uncertainty about continued assistance for adoption.
- Children in foster care will be more likely to be in inappropriate and unsafe placements, to stay in care longer, not to have their individual cases reviewed regularly, and to be denied access to trained staff.
- Children likely will be denied the benefits of family support, family preservation, and other child abuse prevention services because the pressures to use the limited block grant funds for foster care will give states no flexibility to expand other services and may require them to cut back dollars for services to prevent abuse and neglect when foster care caseloads grow and additional resources are needed.
- Children who will be put at risk by other provisions in the Personal Responsibility Act, such as the denial of aid to children born to unmarried teens and the elimination of cash assistance for children with disabilities, will not be able to turn to the child welfare system for the services and supports they need.
- There will be no federal accountability or responsibility for the care children receive. All the enforceable federal protections to ensure that children enter care appropriately and receive quality care while in placement will be eliminated. The Secretary of Health and Human Services is specifically prohibited from reviewing the adequacy of state child protection procedures or from enforcing any provision of the Child Protection Block Grant.

Separate 1-2 page pieces will

follow on: child care
school lunches
child care food/WIC

then appendices with, e.g., the numbers.