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Folder Title:

ACORN [[Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now]: ACORN

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Row:

17

Section:

3

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1

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ACORN

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: *Melissa Green*

DATE: _____

FAX NUMBER: _____

NUMBER OF PAGES (including cover sheet): _____

FROM: _____

ACORN
845 Flatbush Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11226

718-693-6700 EXT:
718-693-3367 FAX

MESSAGE:

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

- Organizing & Support Center: 1024 Elysian Fields Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70117 • 504-843-0044 FAX 504-944-7078
- Home Office: 523 West 15th Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202 • 501-378-7151
- National Office (DC): 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-8282 FAX 202-548-2483
- National Office (NY): 845 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11228 • 718-693-6700 FAX 718-693-3367



ACORN

Mr. Gene Sperling
Director
National Economic Council
The White House
Washington DC 20502

March 25th, 1997

Dear Mr. Sperling:

We appreciated your attendance at our ACORN Legislative Conference last week, and we would like to take you up on your offer to continue the conversation about the rights and status of welfare workers, the President's jobs program, and other issues related to the new welfare law which we began that day.

We would like to schedule a meeting, to be attended by myself, a few other leaders from New York and other cities - who exactly would depend on the scheduling of the meeting, because we need to work around our work schedules - and a member of the ACORN legislative staff. We would be interested in meeting on Wednesday April 2nd or Thursday April 3rd, or if necessary two weeks after that, on Tuesday the 15th or any other day that week. Thank you; we look forward to discussing these questions which are so important to our members and their communities.

Maude Hurd

ACORN National President

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

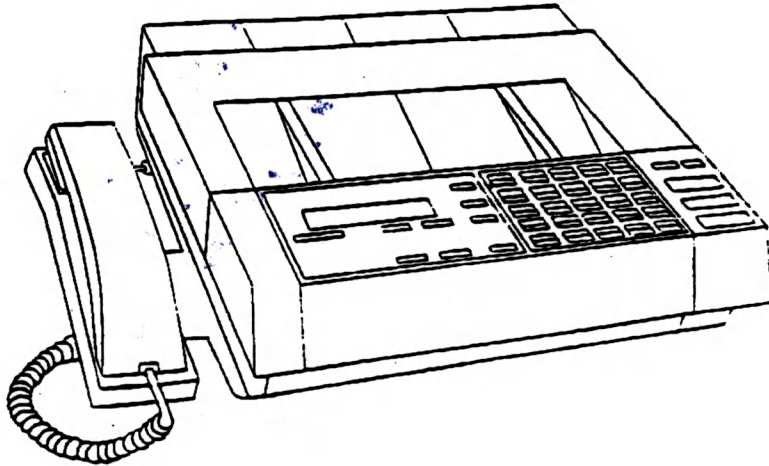
National Office: 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-2500 FAX 202-546-2483

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of the Assistant
Secretary for Policy
Washington DC 20210



FAX COVER SHEET



DATE: 3-14

TO: Anna Gomez
COMPANY: NEC
FROM: Emil Parker

FAX NO: 456-2223
PHONE NO: _____
PHONE NO: 219-6197 x122

FAX NO: (202) 219-9216

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 5

MESSAGE: I also sent this via e-mail; please
call w/ questions

[Talking points for public consumption are indented; background information is left-justified]

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) is a national advocacy group for low-income people/communities. ACORN is one of the leaders in the effort to organize welfare recipients required to participate in unpaid work experience (i.e., "workfare") as a condition of receiving benefits.

There will be about 75 ACORN members (individuals) at the legislative conference over the weekend; they will be joined as many as 400 others on Monday, primarily from the Northeast (e.g., New York, Philadelphia). New York ACORN members have been particularly active in organizing workfare participants. According to press reports, as many as 2,700 of New York City's 30,000 workfare participants have signed forms authorizing ACORN to represent them in their dealings with the City. A substantial share of the 400 Northeast members arriving on Monday will be actual workfare participants.

The ACORN members at the legislative conference will probably be primarily interested in the following issues:

1. Worker protections for workfare participants. In particular, Administration policy regarding the application of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and other employment laws, including those concerning union organizing, to workfare participants;
2. Administration plans for job creation, especially jobs at "living wages"; and
3. Status of Administration fixes to the welfare reform bill.

Worker Protections

- The Administration is concerned that welfare recipients participating in work activities receive all the protection required by the law.
- Staff at the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services are conducting extensive research to determine if employment laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Act apply to welfare recipients participating in unpaid work experience, or "workfare," as a condition of receiving their grants. This research continues. We have also been consulting with States and other interested parties on this question, and we seek ACORN's active participation in these discussions.
- As you know, the application of labor laws, especially the minimum wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, could have a significant impact on the ability of States to achieve the admittedly ambitious work participation rates in the bill. The work participation rates are the percentages of recipients that States are required, by the new welfare law, to enroll in work activities. We earnestly hope to reach a solution that will

afford recipients important worker protections while also allowing States and localities to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the bill to construct a work-based system.

- The issue of organizing rights for workfare participants is under study at the Labor Department. We are anxious to consult with ACORN members on this point in particular, since ACORN has been at the forefront of these organizing efforts.

The Department of Labor position, arrived at in consultation with HHS (and laid out in a draft guide to States) is that Federal employment laws such as the FLSA and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) will, generally speaking, apply to workfare participants.

The welfare law fails to explicitly exempt welfare recipients in workfare programs from Federal employment laws. Consequently, questions of applicability must be decided on a case-by-case basis, determined by the circumstances of the workfare position and the language of the various employment statutes. For example, there is a six-factor test to determine if an individual is an employee under the FLSA--this test would be applied to workfare positions.

Neither the guide nor the policy have been approved by the Domestic Policy Council.

The interagency working group on worker protections has apparently not addressed the question of union organizing. Workfare laborers may have been determined by the courts to be ineligible for collective bargaining under Federal employment laws--even this is not an official DOL finding.

Administration Plans for Job Creation

- As you know all too well, the standard for success in reforming the welfare system is not the passage of legislation or even reducing the cash assistance caseload--it is helping recipients who are able to work move from welfare into the jobs most of them are eager to take.
- While the President believes that on balance the changes made to welfare--what was the AFDC program--by last summer's bill were positive, he is concerned about the inadequate level of funding in the bill for the employment and training activities. This funding is essential to the success of the welfare reform endeavor--particularly in high-poverty areas where there may be few entry-level jobs available.
- The President's budget includes two major proposals to address this lack of resources.
- **The President's Welfare-to-Work Jobs Challenge** is designed to help States and cities move one million welfare recipients into lasting jobs by the year 2000--the program would be limited to those most in need of help finding employment. The Welfare-to-Work Jobs Challenge would provide \$3 billion in funding over 3 years for job placement and job creation. States and cities could use these funds to provide subsidies and other incentives to both for-profit businesses and non-profits to encourage them to hire recipients.

- The Welfare to Work Jobs Challenge is still under development. The design, including the method by which funds will be distributed to States and cities, has not been finalized. The input of ACORN members, many of whom are on the front lines of welfare reform, would be enormously helpful as we attempt to craft a program that will address the very real need in our communities.
- The welfare-to-work tax credit is an enhanced version of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which is available for the hiring of disadvantaged individuals. Employers could claim a credit of 50 percent of the first \$10,000 paid in wages during a year (for a maximum credit of \$5,000 per year) to workers who had been on welfare for a substantial period of time (generally, 18 consecutive months).
- Tax-exempt non-profits could not qualify for the welfare-to-work tax credit. States and localities could, however, use dollars provided under the Welfare to Work Jobs Challenge, as well as funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, to provide subsidies to enable non-profits to hire welfare recipients. The TANF block grant, set at over \$16 billion per year, is of course much larger than the contemplated Jobs Challenge. Nonprofits could also receive Jobs Challenge or TANF funds to find jobs for recipients (e.g., with for-profit businesses) or to provide recipients who have found jobs with the supportive services needed to keep them. It is becoming increasingly clear that job retention services can be enormously helpful in the effort to place recipients in lasting employment.

ACORN has also been active in living wage campaigns around the country. The campaign aims to raise local minimum wages or, at the least, require firms that do business with the city or State to meet a higher minimum wage requirement. Baltimore and Milwaukee have passed living wage laws of the latter type--the Minnesota legislature passed a similar statute in 1996 but it was vetoed by Governor Arne Carlson.

- The President is committed to the proposition that those who work full-time should not be poor. As of early 1996, the minimum wage was approaching a 40-year low in purchasing power. Thanks to the vigorous efforts by the President, Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Senator Kennedy and others, a law was passed last summer increasing the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15--in two steps.

Status of Welfare Fixes

- The President signed the welfare reform bill with serious reservations. The new law does give States and individuals the opportunity to build a system that requires and, just as important, rewards work. Unfortunately, the bill also includes overly deep budget cuts--primarily affecting nutrition programs and assistance for legal immigrants and children--that are unrelated to reforming the welfare system--what was AFDC.

- **The President's 1998 budget included \$18 billion in funding over five years to alleviate the impact of the most egregious cuts. The President proposed, for example, restoring Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid benefits for disabled immigrant children and adult immigrants who become disabled after entering this country. The President's budget also calls for giving childless adults on food stamps more time to find work before they are denied assistance (6 months in 12, rather than 3 in 36), and provides funding for almost 400,000 Food Stamp program work slots for those who have made a good faith effort to find work but have been unable to do so.**
- **The Administration and Congressional leaders are in the early stages of discussions regarding the shape of an overall balanced budget agreement. The President will be advocating vigorously for the inclusion of these proposals in a balanced budget agreement.**

ACORN

File on
←

To: Chris
From: Lisa, ACORN
Re: ACORN Legislative Conference

On Monday the 17th we will be at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation 212 East Capitol Street. The Church has an entry way, with doors into the sanctuary, and a raised platform in front. Our plan is to arrange seats for the speakers, including Mr. Sperling, ACORN President Maude Hurd, and a few other ACORN members, on the stage, and to have people speak from the pulpit placed just to the side of the chairs. We expect at least 400 members to be there.

Senator Wellstone will speak, and take some questions, before Mr. Sperling, and we expect that he will be finished and leaving as Mr. Sperling arrives. An ACORN member will meet Mr. Sperling at the door of the Church, and Mrs. Hurd will introduce him and open the session when he arrives.

What we would most like to do while Mr. Sperling is at the ACORN Legislative Conference is have a few ACORN members speak very briefly about what welfare reform looks like in their communities, and the larger search for jobs and jobs at living wages in their neighborhoods, and what their local ACORN group is doing to respond. In this context, members would like to ask Mr. Sperling about the Administrations plans. Then, we hope that Mr. Sperling can lay out the Administration's plans, and respond to the particular questions that members have asked.

Please let me know if there is more information that would be helpful to you, or if you have any concerns about the arrangements. Thanks.

Chairs: Maude Hurd
ACORN headers

pulpit. microphone

people getting up, talking about welfare reform in their communities

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

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ACORN

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: MELISSA GREEN

FROM: MILOREO BROWN

DATE: 3/4/97

FAX # OF RECEIVER: 456-2828

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 4

NOTE:

Anna for next

*Mon
@ 12 noon*

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

National Office: 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-2500 FAX 202-546-2483

Draft: 3/3/97

ACORN

LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL CONFERENCE

PROGRAM

March 15 - March 19, 1997

**4-H Center
7100 Connecticut Avenue NW
Chevy Chase, MD
301-961-2800**

Saturday

5:30-6:30

Dinner

7:00-9:00

Opening Session
(Missouri Room)

- Welcome and introductions
- Reports from each city

Sunday

7:00-8:00

Breakfast

8:30-12:00

Legislative Workshops
(Missouri Room)

- Saving Housing programs and Public Housing
- Banking: Save CRA

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:30-4:30

Workshop on ACORN's Response to Welfare Reform
(Missouri Room)

5:30-6:30

Dinner

7:00-9:00

Workshop on ACORN's Living Wage Campaigns
(Missouri Room)

Monday

7:00-8:00

Breakfast

8:30-10:00

Optional Meetings with Federal Officials

10:15

Buses leave for Capitol Hill meeting site

11:30-2:00

Plenary: Jobs and Welfare Reform
Church of the Reformation, 212 E. Capitol

- Paul Wellstone, Senator, Minnesota
- Gene Sperling, Director, National Economic Council

2:00-4:00 **Rally for Jobs and Higher Wages!**

5:30-6:30 Dinner

7:00-9:00 **Workshop: Preparing for Lobby Visits**
(Missouri Room)

Tuesday

7:00-8:00 Breakfast

8:15 On the bus to the Capitol

9:30-11:30 **Congressional Visits**

12:00-2:00 **Speeches by ACORN friends in Congress**
Methodist Building, 110 Maryland Avenue NE
(Note: Box lunches will be available at the Mott Building)

2:00-5:00 **Congressional Visits**

5:30 On the buses -- back to 4H

6:00-7:00 Dinner

7:30-9:30 **Workshop: ACORN's Political Program**
(Missouri Room)
• With Steve Rosenthal, COPE Director, AFL-CIO

Wednesday

7:00-8:00 Breakfast

9:00-11:00 **Meeting with HUD officials**



ACORN

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: *MELISSA GREEN*

FROM: *MILOREO BROWN*

DATE: *3/4/97*

FAX # OF RECEIVER: *456-2828*

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: *4*

NOTE:

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

National Office: 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-2500 FAX 202-546-2483

Draft: 3/3/97

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5:30-6:30

Dinner



ACORN

January 30, 1997

Secretary Robert Rubin
United States Department of Treasury
15th St. & Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to ask to meet with you about our shared concern of increasing the access of underserved communities to the credit they need and deserve and an initiative at your agency which bears directly upon that concern. Your support for the Community Reinvestment Act was crucial to save it from the attacks in the previous Congress. Now we need you on this new front.

We understand that the Department of Treasury is considering sending legislation to Congress that would allow cross-ownership of banks and commercial enterprises. Such action will concentrate capital to a previously unheard of degree and further separate low and moderate income and minority communities from the credit their families and neighborhoods need to survive. Cross-ownership of giant financial corporations and giant non-financial corporations will deepen the grooves which direct the flow of resources only towards those who already control them, and leave even less for those in any way outside of the economic mainstream. Moreover, it will link nationally insured deposit to riskier ventures, and thus, put the taxpayer at seriously increased risks and diminish the resources available to the government to deal with other problems. We cannot envision safeguards that could prevent these tragic possibilities, and therefore we strongly urge you not to embrace this policy.

We are also deeply concerned that any changes in banking industry structure which broaden the activities permitted by financial institutions threaten to steadily drain away the resources covered by CRA and leave it a meaningless shell. This is particularly troubling and difficult given that some anti-CRA members of Congress are likely to take any opportunity to weaken the law.

We, along with other organizations concerned with community access to credit, would like to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this matter further,

Sincerely,

Bernard B. Fulton, III
ACORN, Legislative Representative

cc: Eugene Sperling

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

National Office: 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-2500 FAX 202-546-2483



ACORN

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: Eugene Spurling

FROM: Bernard Fulton

DATE: 1-30-97

FAX # OF RECEIVER:

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 2

NOTE:

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

National Office: 739 8th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202-547-2500 FAX 202-546-2483



ACORN

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United States Department of Treasury
15th St. & Pennsylvania Ave., NW
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