

Supporting Women and Families

President Clinton's Accomplishments and Agenda

"Until all women have an equal opportunity to develop their full potential and to make contributions that are accepted and welcomed by our society, our freedom as a nation will be incomplete." -- President Clinton

Women's Equality Day, 1995, Proclamation

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Message from President Clinton

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"The United States is now a leader in the battle for the rights of women and we intend to see, in this Administration, that in that battle, there is no going back. We intend to win that battle."

-Vice President Gore

June 22, 1995

"We are here to find common ground so that we may help bring new dignity and respect to women and girls all over the world_and in so doing, bring new strength and stability to families as well."

-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women

Beijing, September 5, 1995

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 1996

It is time for us to recognize a simple but profound truth: by improving the lives of American women, we are making a vital investment in America's future. By investing in women, we enable them to reach their fullest potential as individuals and as members of our society. When women thrive, their families thrive. When families thrive, communities flourish, and our nation reaps the benefits.

We must value the contributions women make in every aspect of life: in the home, on the job, in their communities, as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, learners, caregivers, workers, citizens, and leaders. Today, 58 million American women are in the work force, comprising half of all workers. Almost every woman will work for pay sometime during her life. It isn't easy. Women still make only 72 percent of what men make in comparable jobs. Each day, women working outside the home must balance job responsibilities with family responsibilities. They struggle to arrange and pay for quality child care. They must be effective on the job and still find time to help their children with homework, to attend parent-teacher meetings, to take their children to doctors' appointments and school events. We must pursue policies that help women to be successful in the workplace and in the home.

My Administration is committed to helping women achieve that success, and the proof of our commitment is found on the following pages. We have initiated strong, practical measures to improve women's economic and educational opportunities, to provide quality health and child care, to prevent violence on the streets and at home, and to make sure that women's voices are heard at every level of our government. The unprecedented number of women I have appointed to my Cabinet and to positions of leadership throughout the federal government reflects my belief that women should be full partners in decisionmaking.

But we must do more. We have a historic opportunity -- and a solemn responsibility -- to lead the world in our efforts to better the lives of women. At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, the First Lady joined tens of thousands of women from around the globe in addressing issues vital to American women and families -- personal and economic security, access to education, health care, jobs, and credit, and the chance for every boy and girl to live up to his or her potential. My Administration is working hard to address these concerns.

I ask you to join me in our work to improve the lives of women and families in our nation and around the world. The challenges are great, but the rewards are even greater for us all.

Bill Clinton

Fact Sheet I

Expanding Economic Opportunities for America's Families

"...we need a united front for treating women all over the world with dignity and respect and giving them opportunities in the family and education and in the workplace." President Clinton, Jackson, Wyoming, August 26, 1995

More than half of low-wage workers are mothers.

Delivered the Family and Medical Leave Act

The first bill President Clinton signed after taking office, the Family and Medical Leave Act, allows workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for an infant, spouse, or ailing loved one without losing their jobs. Women and men are no longer forced to choose between their families and jobs.

Expanded Earned Income Tax Credit Making Work Pay

The President has expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit as a first step to ensure that no child of full-time working parents will have to live in poverty. The expansion gives a tax cut to more than 15 million working families.

Committed to Increasing the Minimum Wage

The President has proposed increasing the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15 over two years, through two 45-cent increases. For a full-time, year-round worker at minimum wage, a 90-cent increase would raise yearly income by \$1,800 -- as much as the average family spends on groceries over seven months. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women.

Improved Access to Child Care

The Clinton Administration has launched initiatives to make child care more affordable and accessible and has encouraged employers to address this need. The Administration has increased investments in child care and established a Child Care Bureau to streamline federal child care programs. (The Child Care Information Center: 1-800-616-2242.) The Clinton Administration has also initiated a Healthy Child Care Campaign to increase access to preventive health services for children in child care and to ensure safe child care environments.

Strengthened Equal Opportunity for All

After an extensive review of laws and regulations, the President reaffirmed his Administration's support for affirmative action as a tool to expand economic and educational opportunity. He believes that affirmative action must be designed to sustain and support our ideals of personal responsibility and merit.

Strengthened Enforcement of Child Support

Many families -- particularly those headed by women -- are forced into economic crisis and poverty when a non-custodial parent fails to pay child support. From 1992 to 1994, there has been an increase in child support collections of more than 20 percent -- from \$8 billion to a record of nearly \$10 billion. The President's child support plan, a part of his welfare reform legislation, would double child support collections by the year 2000. By executive order, federal agencies have been directed to cooperate with state efforts to identify and locate absent parents.

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Promoting Work for Low-Income Families

The Clinton Administration has approved 49 welfare reform demonstrations in 35 states, more than the two previous administrations combined. The Clinton Administration waivers are based on the President's vision for welfare reform: work responsibility and a steadfast commitment to the well-being of children and families.

Fact Sheet II

Making Our Homes and Communities Safer

"If children aren't safe in their homes, if college women aren't safe in their dorms, if mothers can't raise their children in safety, then the American Dream will never be real for them..."

-President Clinton

March 21, 1995

In a typical year, more than 4.5 million American women 12 years or older are victims of a threatened or attempted violent crime.

Initiated Programs to Combat Violence Against Women

The Violence Against Women Act, part of the President's crime bill, takes a comprehensive approach to combating violence against women. The law will help improve the responses by the police and the courts to domestic violence crimes, enhance lighting in public places, force sex offenders to pay restitution, increase funding to battered women's shelters and ensure that a "stay away" order obtained against an abuser will no longer stop at the state line. In addition, the Administration has: created the Violence Against Women Office in the Department of Justice to lead a national effort to combine tough new federal laws with help for states and localities; created a national domestic violence hotline to help ensure that battered women and their families have access to help at all times; and funded projects linking organizations working to combat domestic violence with aging agencies, an effort specifically aimed at protecting older women against domestic violence.

Signed the Brady Bill and Assault Weapons Ban

The Brady law works to keep handguns out of the reach of criminals -- including men under restraining orders for domestic threats. The law: A five-day waiting period and background check. The assault weapons ban outlaws the 19 deadliest assault weapons and their copies.

Signed Three-Strikes-And-Out Law

This law puts criminals behind bars for good if they commit three violent crimes.

Supported Notifying Communities about Release of Sex Offenders

This new law requires appropriate community notification when serious sex offenders have been released.

Introduced Operation Safe Home to Fight Crime in Public Housing

To combat crime in public and assisted housing, the Administration launched an aggressive interagency effort for a more effective Operation Safe Home Program. In one year, more than 3,000 criminals were arrested and \$1.5 million in drugs were seized.

Supported the Family Preservation and Support Act

The Clinton Administration won bipartisan support for this act -- the first federal investment in child welfare prevention in more than a decade. With federal help and support, states have been able to use these resources flexibly and creatively to strengthen families and reduce child abuse.

Fact Sheet III

Investing in Education and Training for Our Families

"Let's give our children a future. Let us take away their guns and give them books." -President Clinton
January 24, 1995

The typical college graduate earns 74 percent more than a worker with a high school degree.

Expanded Student Loans

The Student Loan Reform Act, which includes the President's Direct Lending Program, lowers interest rates for students and allows for flexible income contingent repayment plans. The act also saves taxpayers billions of dollars.

Promoted National Service and Educational Opportunity

President Clinton created AmeriCorps so young people can serve their communities -- teaching, caring for the sick, making the streets safer -- while earning money toward their education. Already, 20,000 American women and men serve in AmeriCorps.

Enhanced School-to-Work Opportunities

With bipartisan support, President Clinton signed into law the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, the most important national program ever to provide apprenticeships for students who don't go on to college. School-to-Work helps all young people -- including the 70 percent who don't get four-year degrees -- to get the education they need to obtain good jobs.

Advanced Improved Standards for Education

This legislation sets world class education standards in areas of math and science and provides voluntary assistance to states and communities to implement education reform. In addition, the President supported the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which helps to improve basic and advanced skills for low-income students.

Expanded Head Start

President Clinton has expanded Head Start services while improving the program's quality and making it more responsive to the needs of local communities. The President's increase in funding for Head Start will allow 50,000 more children to take advantage of the program by the year 2002. The Administration has also launched an innovative program to give infants and toddlers an Early Head Start.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

This President-supported program expands security and violence prevention in schools across the nation by teaching students the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and teaching them alternatives to violence.

Expanding Lifelong Learning

The President has proposed a "G.I. Bill of Rights for Workers" to reform job training programs and put resources and information directly into workers' hands. Lifelong Learning is critical for our workers to compete successfully in the new global marketplace.

Fact Sheet IV

Expanding Access to Quality Health Care

"Our families will never be secure, our businesses will never be strong, and our government will never again be fully solvent until we tackle the health care crisis."

-President Clinton

February 17, 1995

Every three minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. Every 12 minutes another woman dies from the disease.

Leading the Fight for Health Care Security for All Americans

President Clinton believes that every American should have access to quality health care and is committed to achieving this important goal.

Strengthening Medicare and Medicaid

President Clinton believes that health care for women, children and older citizens must not be diminished. He is fighting massive congressional cuts of Medicare and Medicaid, which serve approximately 20 million women. For older women, Medicaid is the largest insurer of long-term care, covering more than two-thirds of nursing home residents, the vast majority of them women. President Clinton is also a strong supporter of Medicaid nursing home quality standards, helping to assure nursing home residents a safe and healthy environment.

Redressing Inadequacies in Clinical Research

Historically, clinical research has concentrated primarily on men. Under President Clinton, this inequity has been corrected. The largest clinical study ever conducted -- a study of diseases affecting older women -- is now underway. The President signed legislation requiring that women and minorities be included in all clinical research supported by the National Institutes of Health, and the Food and Drug Administration has issued guidelines to encourage the participation of women in all phases of clinical drug development.

Focusing on Breast Cancer Research

The lifetime risk of developing breast cancer has risen from 1 in 20 to 1 in 8 in just 20 years. Funding for breast cancer research and programs has increased from approximately \$90 million in 1990 to \$600 million today. The funds span Health and Human Services and other federal agencies, including the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. A project has begun to explore how our national investment in defense, space and other imaging-related fields may provide new technological approaches to improve the early detection of breast cancer. In 1993, the Clinton Administration convened a conference to formulate a comprehensive and coherent action plan to improve detection and treatment of breast cancer. By implementing the Mammography Quality Standards Act, the Administration has put into place comprehensive standards that ensure the quality of mammograms and the more than 10,000 mammography facilities in the U.S.

Offering Free or Low-Cost Mammography Screening to Those in Need

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program offers free or low-cost mammography screening to uninsured, low-income, elderly, minority and Native American women in 35 individual states and nine tribal organizations. More than 700,000 have been screened through May, 1995.

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Researching Environmental Factors and Breast Cancer

The National Cancer Institute has funded several grants to investigate the effect of environmental and other risks contributing to the high incidence of breast cancer. The Public Health Service's Office on Women's Health has established a federal Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Environment and Women's Health that is focusing on how home, work and atmospheric pollutants, exogenous hormones and other environmental factors may contribute to the risk of breast cancer and other disorders.

Substantially Increasing Our Commitment to AIDS Funding

AIDS cases are increasing at a faster rate among women than men, and the Clinton Administration has increased resources to reach women affected by HIV/AIDS. The National Institutes of Health has created a Women's Interagency HIV Study to identify the nature and rate of HIV disease progression in women, is requiring that women and members of minority groups be included in all National Institutes of Health-supported biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects and has initiated a major research effort to develop female-controlled barrier methods, including vaginal compounds, to prevent HIV transmission.

Caring for Women Veterans

A series of Veterans Administration health-care initiatives has been implemented under President Clinton. The Veterans Administration has established four comprehensive health centers, four stress-disorder treatment teams, and hired many counselors to treat the after-effects of sexual harassment and assault.

Established Key New Positions and Offices for Women's Health

In addition to establishing the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health in the Department of Health and Human Services, the President has signed legislation to mandate the establishment of the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health, the Office for Women Services at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and administratively established other offices of women's health throughout Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration.

Researching Health of Older Women

Under President Clinton, the National Institutes of Health is implementing the Women's Health Initiative, a 15-year prevention study of the health of postmenopausal women. With three study components that will involve 160,000 women, the Women's Health Initiative is the largest clinical study ever undertaken in the U.S. The initiative is examining the major causes of death, disability and impaired quality of life: heart, disease, cancer -- especially breast and colorectal cancer -- and osteoporosis. Within the next 10 years, the initiative will provide guidance on the role of diet, the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy, Vitamin D and calcium replacements, and changing unhealthy habits to prevent these diseases.

Fact Sheet V

Promoting Reproductive Health Services for Women

"Certain choices are too personal for politics." -President Clinton and Vice President Gore

The President is committed to ensuring that all women have access to reproductive health and family planning services, that all women are able to determine the number and spacing of their children, and that abortion is safe, legal and rare.

Reversed the Gag Rule

During his first week in office, President Clinton reversed the previous administration's attempts to prevent federally funded family planning clinics from providing full information on options for resolving unintended pregnancies. A notice of proposed rule making for permanent reversal has been issued.

Supports Reproductive Health and Family Planning

Under President Clinton, the annual budget for the Title X Family Planning Program has increased from \$173.4 million to \$193.3 million. This program is the primary federal mechanism for direct provision of reproductive health and family planning services to low-income women. It is estimated that subsidized family planning services, such as those provided through Title X, prevent more than 1 million unintended pregnancies and 500,000 abortions each year. In addition, the President reversed the ban, instituted in 1987 by the Reagan Administration, on privately funded abortion services in U.S. military hospitals; and repealed the Mexico City policy, established in 1984 banning U.S. funding support to international organizations that include abortion services in their reproductive health and family planning programs. In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the United States agreed with more than 150 nations to promote reproductive health for all women and to address the threat to women's health from unsafe abortion.

Establishing Clinic Safety

President Clinton signed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act to fight the escalating violence against women and doctors at women's health clinics.

Moved Forward with Reproductive Research

President Clinton ordered that the ban on mifepristone, a drug that terminates pregnancy without surgery, be revisited. Currently, the drug is undergoing clinical trials in the U.S.

Establishing Services for Victims of Rape and Incest

Under President Clinton, the Department of Health and Human Services implemented a congressionally ordered change to Medicaid to include abortion services for women whose pregnancies result from rape or incest, in addition to saving the life of the woman.

Fact Sheet VI

Caring for Our Children

"There are certain fundamental national needs that should be addressed in every state, north and south, east and west -- school lunches in all our schools, nutrition for pregnant women and infants...All these things are in the national interest."

-President Clinton, 1995 State of the Union

More than 5 million children are hungry each month in the U.S.

Committed to Protecting Medicaid – The Health Safety Net for Our Children

President Clinton is fighting to maintain the health care protection that Medicaid provides. Medicaid is the social safety net that makes health care possible for millions of our nation's children, children who are disabled or who suffer from chronic illness. Republicans are proposing to cut \$165 billion in Medicaid benefits to millions of low-income mothers and children and elderly and disabled Americans. The President is working to ensure that Medicaid is there to provide vital health care for those who cannot afford it.

Developed the Childhood Immunization Plan

President Clinton signed the Comprehensive Childhood Immunization Initiative so that children will be vaccinated against disease. The initiative makes vaccines affordable for families and improves immunization outreach. The goal is simple: 90 percent of all two year olds should be fully vaccinated by the year 2000.

Expanded Nutrition Services for Women, Infants and Children

The Clinton Administration has increased funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) each year since fiscal year 1993 by a total of 18 percent. The Administration has also aggressively pursued cost containment initiatives such as infant formula rebates that have provided additional funds to handle more eligible participants. WIC Works: Every \$1 invested in WIC saves up to \$4.25 in health care costs.

Launched Strategies to Fight Teen Pregnancy

Under President Clinton's leadership, the Administration is developing new strategies to address the high rate of teen pregnancy in this country. The efforts are designed to encourage communities to build partnerships and to discover what strategies work. The Administration has supported new and innovative demonstration programs and expanded existing programs in communities all across the U.S.

Implementing the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children

The Clinton Administration's School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children, an integrated comprehensive plan, improves the nutrition standards for school meals by requiring that they meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This initiative also provides administrative streamlining and offers schools the implementation flexibility that best suits their program.

Protecting Women's Health by Preventing Teen Smoking

Smoking rates are alarmingly high for teenage girls. Tobacco raises a woman's risk of having cancer, heart disease, low birth weight babies, lung disease, and osteoporosis. Almost all smoking begins during the teen years, and preventing addiction during this period almost guarantees women will not smoke as adults. The Administration has launched a major, multi-pronged campaign to prevent teenagers from smoking and then becoming addicted to nicotine.

Fact Sheet VII

Generating Business and Economic Opportunities for Women

"We're working to bring people together_to unite Americans rather than divide them. We're on the side of working families. We want every citizen to be able to reach his or her God-given potential. Helping working women is key to all this."

-President Clinton

May 19, 1995

Women-owned businesses contribute more than \$1 trillion in sales to the U.S. economy annually.

Supporting the Family-Friendly Workplace

Under President Clinton's leadership, the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau launched a nationwide initiative to improve the lives of working Americans by encouraging employers to improve working conditions for working women and families. Under the Honor Roll program, the bureau is encouraging commitments from employers to improve pay and benefits, create a family-friendly workplace and value women's work through training and advancement.

Making Working Women Count

The Department of Labor's Women's Bureau surveyed over 250,000 working women to learn more about their workplace experiences. The bureau is working to address the concerns expressed by survey participants: better pay and benefits, balancing work and family, and workplace recognition.

Increased Small Business Administration Lending to Women by 86 Percent

A significant number of women business owners must use credit cards and personal resources to maintain or finance their businesses. The Small Business Administration under President Clinton has increased the volume of loans to women by 86 percent from 1993 to 1994 alone.

Increasing Federal Procurement Contracts for Women

Supported by President Clinton, in 1994 the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act for the first time explicitly opened up \$200 billion in federal procurement contracts and subcontracts to women-owned businesses.

Expanding Small Business Administration's Women's Demonstration Program

Under President Clinton, the Small Business Administration added 19 centers nationwide to its Women's Demonstration Program. The women's business sites offer financial management, marketing, procurement, technical and other assistance to women to launch a business or to run one more successfully. Each site is tailored to meet the needs of the community.

Created a Forum to Address Women's Economic Issues

The President's Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise is comprised of senior officials from 10 federal agencies, ensuring that women's economic issues are addressed at the highest policy-making levels.

Fact Sheet VIII

Supporting Women as Partners in Decision Making

"Women are beginning to participate more fully throughout this country in the life of America. As far as I know, the sky is not falling anywhere."

-President Clinton

August 26, 1995

The Baltimore Sun noted that President Clinton has delivered on his promise to make diverse appointments: "No Administration has ever produced such diversity."

Appointing Women throughout the Administration

- More than 40 percent of the President's appointees are women, by the far the highest percentage of any Administration.

- Six women hold Cabinet-level posts, the highest ever.

- The President has appointed the first woman to serve as deputy chief of staff.

- The President has appointed women for the first time to such positions as: Attorney General, Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors, Secretary of Energy and Office of Management and Budget Director.

- The President has appointed women to positions traditionally held by men, such as: Chief Scientist at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and Deputy Director at the National Science Foundation.

- Nearly 60 percent of the President's judicial nominees are women and minorities, highest proportion ever.

- The President nominated a woman to the Supreme Court, only the second president to have done so.

- Two out of the three policy-making councils in the White House are headed by women.

Providing Expanded Opportunities for Women in the Military

The Clinton Administration has opened nearly 260,000 positions previously not open to women who wish to serve in the military.

Responding to the Needs of Older Women

President Clinton established an initiative at the Department of Health and Human Services, spearheaded by the Assistant Secretary for Aging, to bring focus to issues affecting older women and their families at the grassroots level through education, technical assistance and advocacy. The major areas of focus for this effort include income security, health, care giving, housing and prevention of crime violence. The centerpiece of the initiative is the National Policy and Resource Center on Women and Aging, designed to serve as a focal point for coordinating efforts to facilitate the initiative's goals.

Convened White House Conference on Aging

President Clinton convened a White House Conference on Aging which provided specific recommendations for improving the lives of older women. These recommendations will be incorporated into the final report of the Conference which will be presented to the President and Congress for legislative and administrative action.

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Created Interagency Council on Women

The President established an intra-governmental body to bring home the agreements reached at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women to benefit American women and their families. Housed at the White House, the council is charged with coordinating the implementation of the Conference Platform for Action.

Making Sure Women Are Heard

The White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach was created by the President to ensure that his Administration better serves and listens to women. It serves as the primary liaison between the White House and women's organizations, listening to women's concerns and proposals and bringing these ideas to the President and others in the Administration.

Supporting Women and Families The Clinton Administration Record

Expanding Economic Opportunities for Families

- Signed the Family & Medical Leave Act
- Improved access to child care, established Child Care Bureau and National Child Care Information Center (1-800-616-2242)
- Expanded Earned Income Tax Credit, giving a tax cut to millions of working families
- Committed to increasing the minimum wage
- Strengthened equal opportunity through affirmative action
- Increased enforcement of child support and introduced legislation that doubles federal child support collections
- Fighting for federal budget that strengthens families, e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, education

Making our Homes and Communities Safer

- Signed Assault Weapons Ban and Brady Bill
- Signed the Violence Against Women Act
- Created the Violence Against Women Office
- Introduced Operation Safe Home to fight crime in public housing
- Put 100,000 new police on the street
- Supported Family Preservation and Support Act, providing services to prevent child abuse and neglect

Investing in Education and Training for Our Families

- Created and signed Student Loan Reform, saving students and taxpayers money
- Increased Head Start funding, improving teaching and facilities and allowing for more students
- Signed National Service Act, helping communities and students
- Signed School-to-Work Opportunities Act, preparing students for careers and advanced education
- Signed Goals 2000: Educate America Act, setting higher standards
- Signed reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing better education for impoverished students
- Supported Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act

Ensuring Safer Air, Water and Food

- Signed order requiring polluters to disclose information and expanded public's right-to-know about toxic releases
- Issued new standard to cut pollution from chemical plants 90% by 1997
- Made drinking water safer by requiring elimination of contaminants
- Launched "reinventing environmental regulation," cutting red tape and better protecting public health
- Improved meat and poultry inspection systems, increasing safety of the food supply

Expanding Access to Quality Health Care

- Made improvement of women's health a priority
- Signed legislation requiring that women and minorities are included in NIH-supported research
- Increased funding for breast cancer research by 65%
- Committed to making abortion safe, legal and rare
- Revoked Reagan-Bush restrictions on abortion counseling
- Signed Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, ensuring clinic safety
- Developed Childhood Immunization Plan, ensuring vaccination and healthy future for all children
- Developed healthy school meal initiative for students
- Placed WIC on full-funding path
- Ensured safety, effectiveness and availability of mammography
- Increased resources to reach women affected by HIV/AIDS
- Established first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health

Generating Economic Opportunities for Women

- SBA lending to women increased by 86 percent
- DOL's Women's Bureau launched Honor Roll initiative, encouraging employers to implement family-friendly policies good for women
- Expanded the public-private SBA's Women's Demonstration Program, providing business skills and training for women
- Created the Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise, eliminating barriers to economic development within federal agencies
- Increased federal procurement contracts for women in both percentage and dollar amounts

Supporting Women as Partners in Decision Making

- 42 percent of President's appointees are women, highest ever
- Six women hold Cabinet-level positions, highest ever
- 59 percent of all President's judicial nominees are women and minorities, highest ever
- Second President to nominate a woman to the Supreme Court
- Opened almost 260,000 positions for women in the military
- Established Older Women's Initiative, bringing focus on issues impacting older women and their families
- Created President's Interagency Council on Women, bringing home the agreements reached at U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women to benefit American women and families
- Established White House Office for Women's Initiatives & Outreach

White House Office for Women's Initiatives & Outreach
202-456-7300, fax 202-456-7311

12/20/95

WHITE HOUSE

Worrying About Women

To win this year, Clinton has to win them. Inside the White House strategy to woo female voters.

BY ELEANOR CLIFT
AND MARTHA BRANT

AS THE MAN IN CHARGE OF HONING Bill Clinton's re-election themes, consultant Dick Morris is always trolling for new material. Recently he asked the feminist writer Naomi Wolf for advice on how the president could boost his support among women voters.

Clinton be portrayed as "a mature cultural gatekeeper."

Morris loved it. Others in the administration cringed, furious that the touchy-feely memo projected exactly the wrong image: a White House so clueless about women's issues that it has to turn to a pop-sociology celebrity for help. "It's nothing, it's guidance for nothing, it's the basis for nothing, it's

Even so, by '94 Clinton's support among female voters was slipping in the polls. Many women, upset by Clinton's failure to pass health-care reform and the zigzags of his first two years, stayed home in the '94 congressional elections. (The female vote accounted for only 51 percent of the electorate, down from 54 percent in '92.) Today the president's numbers are especially weak among non-college-educated married women, many of whom say they have lost faith in government's ability to solve problems. They are also turned off by Hillary Clinton's in-your-face careerism and by Whitewater. She has staunch female defenders and is still popular among professional women, but even Yuppies have grown more skeptical because of the Clinton scandals. And feminists grouse that despite appearances, women have been excluded from the real inner circle. "There isn't one woman in the White House with real stroke, outside of Hillaryland," agrees one—male—administration aide.

At the White House, the shorthand for this year's winning combination is "MME"—Medicare, Medicaid, Education (and the Environment). Issues remain Clinton's best draw; many women tack toward the Democrats when confronted with Gingrichite ideology. In last week's Oregon special election to fill Bob Packwood's Senate seat, suburban women—including Republicans—were decisive in electing Ron Wyden, the state's first Democratic senator in 34 years, in a race that turned on the GOP's harsh stands on the environment and abortion.

To get the message out nationally, the White House opened an Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach. The operation airdrops female cabinet members around the country, where they host meetings to gauge women's concerns. Each month, the women's office

gives Clinton a greatest-hits memo of what they're hearing from the field. One such missive helped persuade Clinton to zero in on domestic violence in his State of the Union speech.

At the White House, one woman is finally beginning to have some real influence—in private and in public. For years, female advisers have complained that the president is flanked only by men in TV shots of Clinton striding to his helicopter. But chief of staff Leon Panetta's respected new deputy, Evelyn Lieberman, is becoming a serious inside player. Now each time Clinton strolls out to Marine One, there's at least one female staffer by his side.



BLAKE LITTLE—NYT/MA



WALLY MCNAMEE FOR NEWSWEEK

Breathless counsel: In a private memo, feminist author Naomi Wolf suggested Clinton be portrayed as 'a mature cultural gatekeeper'

The author of "The Beauty Myth" (and wife of Clinton speechwriter David Shipley) obliged with a breathless memo urging Morris to create "an overarching, pre-emptive metaphor" of Clinton as "The Good Father" protecting and defending the country. "One story for his administration, and for this fight, should be about building a house together—the American house," Wolf advises. Clinton could offer to "negotiate about the shape of the house we are building; the design; the details; but [say] I will not let anyone or anything touch the bedrock. I will DEFEND/PROTECT the foundation." The memo, which was leaked to The Washington Post, suggested that

nothing," protested a senior White House adviser. In fact, women's issues are already a top concern of the Clinton campaign, which knows how essential women are to '96. It's a matter of math. White men are abandoning the Democrats; Clinton must make up the difference among women.

This wouldn't seem like much of a problem for Clinton. In 1992 his stands on the issues women say they care about most—education, health care, the environment—won him a crucial plurality of women's votes (45 percent to Bush's 37 percent). And once in office, Clinton hired record numbers of women; 42 percent of his appointees are female.