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[Press Guidance] - June 28, 1994

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Health care - June 28

Note: We still do not know what Moynihan will actually be putting forth today. Nor do we know if there will be new paper today. There were news accounts this morning stating that there might be a new document.

What happened at last night's meeting with Moynihan, Panetta and Bentsen?

They had a good, constructive meeting to touch base on health care reform. The Administration is continuing to provide technical assistance and support to members, but we are not micromanaging the Finance Committee or any other committee.

The New York Times said today that Moynihan may be putting employer mandates in his proposal. Does the White House have any knowledge of whether he will?

Senator Moynihan is trying to move the process forward in his Committee. (Obviously, everyone knows that the Administration feels that health benefits guaranteed at work is the least disruptive, most conservative means of achieving universal coverage.)

The Washington Post poll shows declining support for the President's plan. Why is the public not supporting the President's plan?

The Washington Post poll demonstrated that there is overwhelming support for the President's bottom line of universal coverage (78%). Additionally, 72% said that they support shared responsibility. Essentially, there is strong support for the key elements of the President's approach to health care reform.

Senator Bennett of Utah has said that he would filibuster a bill that looks like the Clinton plan or the Kennedy bill. What is your reaction?

The American people want health care reform. The Washington Post poll today said that 58% of the American people want the system overhauled. A filibuster does not serve the best interests of the American people.

Health Care- June 27

What do you think about the Moynihan mark and Senate Finance committee action?

We are pleased that under the leadership of Chairman Moynihan, the Senate Finance committee is actively engaged and moving forward to produce a health care reform bill. While I have not seen a copy of Chairman Moynihan's mark, we are encouraged by the committee's efforts to work in a bi-partisan fashion to achieve reform this year.

What is the White House's reaction to the proposal being put forth by the rump group in the Senate Finance Committee?

The Finance Committee is working very hard under the leadership of Senator Moynihan to reach consensus and produce a health care reform bill. We are certainly encouraged by their ongoing discussions. The committee has not formally reported, therefore we cannot comment until we see the entire package.

Does the President support the idea of a commission?

The President supports guaranteed health insurance for every American that can never be taken away. As we have said all along, that is the bottom line. We are not discussing components of any one proposal without seeing the entire package.

What if the Senate Finance Committee reports out a bill which covers 95% of Americans by 2002 -- is this close enough to universal that the President would sign it?

The committee is working hard to put a package together, and we need to let them keep working.

How do you define universal coverage?

The President has said from the beginning that he will not sign a bill that does not guarantee EVERY American health insurance coverage that can never be taken away. Universal coverage means that every American will have a guarantee in law that they will have health care coverage that can never be taken away.

The Administration seems to be signalling that it would accept a phase in. Is this true?

We phase in coverage in our bill (January 1, 1998). The President has said all along that he would be flexible on how we got to universal coverage, but not whether we get there. But it must be within a reasonable period and by a date certain.

The Administration has to realize that you will never achieve 100% coverage. What is acceptable - 97, 98%?

We are not going to engage in a percentage debate. We will say that doing incremental reform and leaving 25 to 40 million hard-working Americans without health coverage is not acceptable. Millions of families would remain at risk and the middle class would take the hardest hit. Universal coverage means that every American will have a guarantee in law that they will have health care coverage that can never be taken away.

Some say that it is sufficient to cover 91% or 92% of the population and 97% of total medical costs. Why is this not enough?

Those that would be hit hardest would be middle class working Americans.

- Millions of Americans would be left uninsured - 25 million Americans would be uninsured and as many as 40 million would be without health insurance for some period of time each year.
- The deficit would be increased from 1996-2004- the Federal deficit would increase by over \$300 billion.
- It would place a heavy burden on middle income individuals - Many people will pay over 10% of their gross income for health insurance.
- It may encourage employers to drop coverage.

The New York Times indicates that many on the hill are frustrated with the administration's legislative strategy. Are you comfortable that your current strategy is working?

The President has held ongoing meetings with members of both houses throughout this process and members of his administration have provided ongoing technical assistance. This is certainly a complicating process, but we believe we are making great progress towards achieving health care reform this year. For the first time in history, committees in both houses of Congress have approved bills which guarantee health security for all Americans.

Is the President disengaged?

Absolutely not. Health care reform is moving forward and the president is committed to getting it done this year. He understands that hard working middle class Americans want reform and deserve health security.

EXPEDITE

AIDS (Victor Zonana, HHS: 202-690-6343) 5-28-91

FAST to Ginny Terzano for Dee Dee

* The President remains committed to strengthening the federal response against AIDS and to having an active AIDS policy coordinator in the White House.

* The President proposed, and Congress enacted, significant increases in AIDS spending for research, treatment and prevention in his first year in office. He has proposed further increases for fiscal 1995, for two-year increases of 28.5% in NIH research, 93.1% in Ryan White Act service and 9 % in CDC Prevention moneys.

* The Clinton Administration has also created a new Task Force on AIDS Drug Development to eliminate any impediments to finding AIDS treatments; launched a prevention campaign with frank messages aimed at young adults; and streamlined disability procedures for people with AIDS.

* In less than a year, Kristine Gebbie has created a new office to deal with this controversial and emotional issue and strengthened coordination among federal agencies.

* The Administration will continue to meet with and consider the views of public health experts, members of Congress and AIDS - affected communities in devising AIDS policies.

TALKING POINTS -- CRIME BILL/RACIAL JUSTICE
JUNE 28, 1994

Per Liz Bernstein, Research

On the Racial Justice Act:

The conferees have asked for more time to consider the matter of Racial Justice in the debate over the crime bill. They are in the process of exploring a number of possibilities. We are eagerly waiting to hear from them on what they have decided -- we hope they will act quickly so that the President can sign the crime bill as soon as possible.

[In general, our message on this will remain the same until a compromise has been reached]

On Timetable:

(BACKGROUND: You should not get into timetable. If pressed, we are waiting to hear from the conferees and the timetable is up to them.)

Congress
Tuesday, June 28, 1994

Per Susan Brophy:

As Congress readies for the July 4th recess, there is serious work getting done on Capitol Hill. There are a number of issues under consideration in Committees and on the Floor from Bosnia, to health care, to the space station (see attached points).

The President does not have any set meetings this week with Congressional members. At the same time, the White House is monitoring the actions on the Hill; the President and others at the White House are talking to Members about these issues through informal phone calls, as the President regularly does when the Congress is in session.

Some of the legislative highlights under discussion this week include:

- a vote on Bosnia
- Finance Committee/health care
- DOD authorization
- several appropriations bills
- Space Station
- crime bill

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS ON SPACE STATION
6/27/94

for Heidi Kukis, VP Press.

REGARDING THE HOUSE VOTE ON SPACE STATION THIS WEEK

- * The President and Vice President have been and are working very hard to secure Congressional support for the Space Station. We believe the Space Station has the support it needs to pass in the House of Representatives this week.
- * Most Members of Congress recognize that the international Space Station serves the interest of the United States and, with Russian participation, can bring other benefits that contribute to global peace and prosperity.
- * With the adoption of the Vest Commission recommendations, the Space Station is back on track -- on schedule and on budget. The bottom line is that we're going to save money and have a better space station sooner with the changes that have been made and with cooperation from other countries, particularly Russia.

REGARDING THE SAFETY OF SPACE STATION PROGRAM (ORBITAL DEBRIS)

- * NASA is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of the Space Station from orbital debris and is collecting data on and monitoring the orbital debris environment so that decisions can be made on information, not speculation.
- * As the NASA Administrator said, space travel is not without risk, but these risks can and will be managed. For example, the Russian MIR station has been in orbit for a number of years in the same orbit as the international space station and has not suffered a catastrophic impact.

NOTE: For reporters who want more information on orbital debris, they should contact NASA public affairs which is putting together a packet of information.

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Date: 06/28/94 Time: 23:41

Federal Judge Finds Part Of Gun Law Unconstitutional

(Tucson, Arizona) -- A federal judge has shot down part of the Brady gun-control law.

U-S District Judge John Roll of Tucson, Arizona, says it's unconstitutional for the government to require local police to check gun-buyers' backgrounds. And he's issued a permanent injunction to block that part of the law.

But Roll upheld the new law's requirement that potential handgun buyers wait five days before purchasing a weapon.

A federal judge in Montana issued a similar ruling last month, while a federal judge in Texas upheld the law against a challenge on similar grounds. The law also has been challenged in Mississippi, Louisiana and Vermont.

Roll acted on a lawsuit filed by a sheriff who claimed the law put an undue burden on his small department.

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