

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. bios	Adoptive Families and Children Attending the President's Radio Address (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)
002. list	Participants in Adoption Radio Address (partial) (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)
003. list	[participant families' clearance information] (2 pages)	nd	P6/b(6)
004. bios	Adoptive Families and Children Attending the President's Radio Address (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
 First Lady's Office
 Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
 OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S

kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
 P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
 P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
 P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
 P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
 P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
 b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
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 b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

LIVE WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

DATE: December 14, 1996
LOCATION: Oval Office
TIME: 10:06AM EDT
FROM: Nicole Rabner, Laura Schwartz

I. PURPOSE

To deliver your weekly radio address on the importance of adoption and announce a Presidential memorandum directing members of your Cabinet to take specific steps to increase adoptions and move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes.

II. BACKGROUND

Surrounded by adoptive families and children in local foster care, you and the First Lady will deliver the weekly radio address, in which you will announce a memorandum to members of your Cabinet.

Presidential Memorandum

The Presidential memorandum instructs the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor, Commerce and the Director of Personnel Management to undergo wide consultation and report to you in sixty days with a specific proposal to move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. Specifically, the memorandum:

- calls for the creation of state-specific numerical targets and financial incentives to states to increase the number of adoptions. The bonus payments will be offset by decreases in foster care costs and will nearly pay for themselves.
- asks for proposed changes to federal regulations and legislation to emphasize permanency and decrease delays.
- calls for the Departments to take appropriate action to disseminate materials, challenge businesses to support adoptive parents, and raise public awareness on the importance of adoption.

Your FY98 budget proposal will include the necessary funding allocation for the memorandum.

You will sign the memorandum just prior to the radio address during the event briefing.

Discussion

Following the radio address, you and the First Lady will lead a brief discussion with the assembled families and waiting children (see attached bios).

Invited Guests

Approximately 70 leaders on adoption issues in the foundation and advocacy communities have been invited to the event. They will gather in the Roosevelt Room where, prior to the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, HHS, will conduct a briefing on the initiative you will announce. They will then watch your radio address on closed-circuit television, and, following your address and discussion, have an opportunity to meet you and the First Lady in the Oval Office.

Press Notes

The press pool will be in the Oval Office for your radio address. **You do NOT need to look at the camera while reading the radio address; please note that the cameras will start to roll as soon as you and the First Lady walk through the door.** There will be a cough button on the water table next to you should you need it.

PLEASE NOTE: the press pool will remain in the Oval Office for this discussion.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The President
The First Lady

Adoptive Families and Waiting Children (see attached bios)
Foundation and Advocacy Leaders (see attached list)

White House Communications Agency (WHCA) staff
White House Television(WHTV)
White House photographer
Special guests (See attached)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Your radio address and discussion following will be covered by the White House press pool. The networks will have the opportunity to take it LIVE.

The ABC, CNN, AP, C-SPAN, CBS, NBC, Mutual, UPI, USA, American Urban Radio Network, and Standard News radio networks will carry the address live in its entirety to their thousands of stations across the country Saturday at 10:06 AM EDT.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

9:45am Briefing (Oval study)
10:06am **Live Radio Address with the First Lady (on camera in Oval)**
Discussion with families and children (on camera in Oval)
App.10:30am Greet Guests (off camera in Oval)

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by David Shipley.

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DISCUSSION WITH FAMILIES AFTER THE RADIO ADDRESS

FLOTUS OPENS DISCUSSION: We have here in this room adoptive families and some children in foster care who are looking for permanent homes. I want to thank you each for coming here today. To the families, I want to say a special thank you for opening your hearts and your homes to children who needed and deserved one. I know first hand that raising a child is a huge responsibility.

Question #1 TELEVISION SHOWS (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Two of the families here today met their adoptive children through television programs highlighting children in foster care who were looking for permanent homes. Can the **Borié** [Ba-ree] and **Bryant Families** tell us a little bit about that?

POTUS FOLLOW-UP COMMENT: I hope that every local TV station will consider doing what the Bryant's local station and others across the nation are already doing -- regularly featuring children waiting for loving and safe, permanent homes.

Question #2 MOTIVATION TO ADOPT (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Can you tell us what motivated you personally to want to adopt a child in foster care? [Bryant and Gray families; NOT the Ingleses if possible]

Question #3 CHANGES SINCE ADOPTED (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We have had the opportunity to know children both before and after they were adopted and have often been astonished by the difference it has made in their lives and how they have changed. Has that been true for any of you?

[Mr. Ingles's [In-gee-zee's] son Jason has gone from doing poorly in school and often getting in trouble to being chosen at Student of the Month]

Question #4 FOR THE WAITING CHILDREN (EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

With us today are some of the children who this event is really all about -- children in foster care who are waiting for permanent homes -- would any of you like to say something?

[Note: If no one immediately answers, you could ask **Daniel**, a 13 year old Hispanic boy who has been in foster care since 1992 because of his mother's terminal illness.]

Question #5 PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We all have an opportunity and responsibility -- families, communities, government, religious organizations, and the private sector -- to do our part to help every child have the loving, permanent family they deserve. Businesses nationwide have established policies to support their employees who adopt children. **Fredrica Gray** works for such a company, the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hartford, CT, one of the company's on the Honor Roll of the Women's Bureau at the Labor Department. Fredrica is here with her adoptive son, Michael. Can you tell us about your employer's policies and the motivation behind those policies?

Questions and Answers on Adoption
• DO NOT DISTRIBUTE - FOR BACKGROUND ONLY •

Q. What is the purpose of the President's directive?

A. The purpose of the President's directive is to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in the foster care system who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. It also will increase public awareness on the importance and benefits of adoption.

Since 1993, the Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to promote and encourage adoption. President Clinton is committed to giving the 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. This directive builds on these commitments and accomplishments.

Q. Now that the President signed the directive, what will happen?

A. The Department of Health and Human Services, working with the Departments of Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management, will conduct an intensive consultation process on a bipartisan basis with Congress, states, civic and business leaders to develop a plan to meet the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and increasing the number of children adopted or permanently placed. The Secretary of Health and Human Services will report back to the President in sixty days on specific steps to reach the directive's goals. And many of their recommendations will be incorporated into the President's budget to be presented to Congress in February.

Q. Is this directive ambitious enough?

A. Today there are 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. These children are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home-life that is neither safe nor secure. While most of these children eventually return home, nearly 100,000 of them will not. These children that cannot be reunited with their parents wait typically 3 years or more to find permanent homes. More than half of waiting children have special needs, such as minorities, children with disabilities, sibling groups and older children.

Given these circumstances, the President's goal in this directive to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the foster care system is extremely ambitious and exciting. Of course, our ultimate goal is that all children in foster care find what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. Why didn't the President take this step earlier?

A. Since taking office, President Clinton has made increasing adoption and improving the foster care system a priority. He has signed critical legislation that have removed significant financial and racial barriers to adoption. The Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 provides a \$5,000 tax credit for families who adopt children and a \$6,000 tax credit for families who adopt children with special needs. Building on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity. He has championed programs like the Family and Medical Leave Act which supports adopting families and signed a welfare reform law that preserves the guarantee of and resources for child protection and adoption. The President and the First Lady have promoted and encouraged the importance and benefits of adoption through speeches, events and public service announcements. This directive builds on the President's strong commitment to and accomplishments on this issue.

Q. Are you trying to preempt Congress on adoption?

A. No. We are committed to working with Congress in a bipartisan manner to develop a plan to increase the number of children adopted or permanently placed from foster care and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. Finding safe and permanent homes for all children is a goal to which we know everyone is committed and should be addressed in a bipartisan way. There is increasing consensus on this on a bipartisan level.

The President's directive presents an extraordinary opportunity for the Federal government, Congress, states, communities, and advocacy organizations to work together toward giving children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. How much will this initiative cost?

A. The directive does not carry any cost right now, as it simply directs members of the President's Cabinet to consult with Congress, states, and civic leaders to develop a plan to increase adoptions and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. The President's FY 1998 budget will contain the necessary funding for this initiative.

The provision of offering financial incentives to states will nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system.

Q. Which Cabinet agencies are involved in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management were directed by the President to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, from 27,000 to 54,000, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system.

Q. What role do you see for States in implementing the President's directive on Adoption?

A. States are the operators of the public welfare system and therefore are critical to ensuring the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and doubling the number of children adopted and or permanently placed by the year 2002. We plan to work extremely closely with states, consulting with them on every aspect of the President's directive. We know that the states share the President's commitment to increasing adoption and improving the foster care system and we are counting on them to directly assist HHS in the formulation and implementation of the new action plan on adoption.

Q. What role do you see for advocacy groups and foundations in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. Today, before the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families (HHS) will brief key advocacy groups and foundations on the directive. We have worked closely with advocacy groups and foundations on past adoption initiatives and we plan to consult with them on the President's new directive. We welcome advocacy groups and foundations' participation in developing and helping states implement new strategies on adoption, as they have immense knowledge and experience in this area.

Q. What were the adoption-related provisions in the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. The Small Business Job Protection Act does three things:

- Strengthens the language of the 1994 Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) to make it even clearer that neither foster placements nor adoptions may be delayed or denied solely on the basis of the cultural, ethnic or racial background of the child or the prospective foster or adoptive parents;
- Imposes financial penalties for States (and other agencies receiving federal funds) which fail to comply with MEPA; and
- Provides a \$5,000 adoption tax credit for all adoptions, and a \$6,000 tax credit for special needs adoptions.

MEPA also included the State Plan requirement for States to provide for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Q. What has HHS done to implement these new inter-ethnic provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. On November 14, the Department issued an Information Memorandum to give the States and the public the details of the inter-ethnic adoption legislation. That issuance (which also announced the new kinship preference which Congress added to the child welfare laws) informed the public that the procedures for applying the penalty would be published at a later date.

The Department has taken or begun a number of other actions to implement the provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act. These include meeting with the Internal Revenue Service to develop a public information strategy on the adoption tax credit, and establishing a working group of Children's Bureau and Office of Civil Rights staff to begin work on a procedure and protocol to ensure consistent application of the new penalty provisions.

Q. What is the Draft National Adoption Strategic Plan and how does it relate to the President's Directive?

A. Last year, HHS's Children's Bureau organized a national meeting, which included State adoption managers, representatives from national advocacy organizations and private non-profit organizations, adoptive parents and Federal staff to draft a strategic plan to increase the number of children adopted from the public child welfare system. This Plan was written as a draft or working document to provide an outcome-focused framework for all those involved with the adoption of special needs children from the public child welfare system. The President's directive will build on many ideas put forth in Draft Plan

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION: SAFE AND PERMANENT HOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

Today, President Clinton issued a challenge to the nation and signed a directive to members of his Cabinet to take new actions to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes. The goal of the President's ambitious new initiative is to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in foster care who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. After consulting with Congressional, state and civic leaders, agencies will report back to the President within 60 days on steps to reach the directive's goals, which include:

I. Doubling the Number of Children Adopted or Permanently Placed by 2002:

Create Incentives for States: To shift the focus from paperwork to successful outcomes, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will work with states to set specific targets for increases in the number of children adopted or found permanent placement. In return, the federal government will provide a new per child financial incentive to states to increase the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. This action should nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system. Progress in meeting the numerical targets will be compiled and published in a state-by-state annual report. Successful states will be recognized for their accomplishments.

Breakdown Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption: HHS will continue to aggressively implement the laws signed by President Clinton in 1994 and 1996, which prohibit adoption agencies from denying or delaying placement of a waiting child based on race, color, or national origin, and encourage recruitment of adoptive parents.

II. Moving Children More Rapidly From Foster Care to Permanent Homes:

Decrease Procedural Delays: President Clinton is directing HHS to consult with Congress, states and civic leaders to propose changes to federal laws, policies and regulations and clarification of the "reasonable effort" requirement, to help states focus on finding permanent homes for children from the moment they enter the foster care system.

Help States Identify and Address Barriers to Permanency: As part of his budget proposal in February, the President will propose financial assistance for states to identify barriers to permanency and to develop strategies for children who have been waiting for a particularly long time. The President's initiative also directs HHS to encourage alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship and kinship care, for children for whom adoption is not a viable option.

III. Increasing Public Awareness:

Call to American Families, Communities and Business: The Clinton Administration will launch a new campaign in partnership with state, civic and business leaders, to increase public awareness about children waiting for adoption and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption -- in new public service announcements, print materials, and on the Internet.

Provide Information on the Benefits of Adoption: Federal agencies will form partnerships to inform people of the new adoption tax credits, the Family and Medical Leave Act benefits, and other supports for adoptive parents, as well as recognize private sector companies with model policies to encourage adoption. The Office of Personnel Management will provide support and information to federal employees who are interested in becoming adoptive parents.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

Our Nation has no greater responsibility than to ensure that every child has the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. We can help meet that challenge by identifying a permanent, loving family for every child waiting in the foster care system.

-- President Clinton, National Adoption Month Proclamation, November 1996

President Clinton is committed to giving the over 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. The President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations.

Today the President announced a new directive to the Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor and Commerce and the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan to: increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, and create a new public awareness campaign on the importance of adoption. These actions build on previous initiatives, including:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

In August, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which provides a \$5000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This policy will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

GIVING STATES FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT

The Clinton Administration has granted child protection waivers to Delaware, Illinois, North Carolina, and Oregon, giving the states more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. Up to six more states will receive approval for waivers. In addition, this administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations so they can focus on successful outcomes. To prevent children from entering foster care in the first place, in 1993 the Clinton Administration secured federal funding to work with states, local governments and service providers to develop effective programs to serve children and families at risk.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents, and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption; and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home life that is neither safe, nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer

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can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be uncertain about what the word "family" or "parents" or "home" mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

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The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up* to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

MRS. CLINTON: We are so happy to have all of you here in the Oval Office with us today. And I know that the families that are here and the children and teenagers who are here all have a story to tell about how your families were created. And I would like to ask if I could -- I know that several of you actually were united with the children who are here because of television shows that you saw the children on. And perhaps you could tell us what happened and how that came to be.

Would you like to start? And maybe you should tell everyone who you are and introduce yourself.

Yes.

MR. BORIE: My name is Glenn Borie. My wife is Carolyn, and these are our four children -- John, Crystal, Charity and Dawn.

MRS. BORIE: We had been foster parents and were looking to adopt and knew that there were a lot of options. But seeing how children often get lost in the system, our hearts went towards them, knowing that -- very desirable and young and end up in the system for a long time and are less desirable to people at that point when they are available.

So we have been, by chance, by God's will, had the television on on a particular day when there was a talk show about adoption. And for a brief 20 seconds we saw Crystal on TV and just caught in our heart at that time. And as we saw the number for the National Adoption Center we found out she had three siblings.

Within a month the two older ones, John and Crystal, had moved in. We started visits with Charity and Dawn and two months later they moved in as well. Before they were separated in two foster homes for five years, so when the two younger ones moved in the week before

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Thanksgiving it was the first time in five years that they'd spent that together. And we just had a very thankful time to just thank God for an incredible family.

MRS. CLINTON: We're glad you're here today.

Did you also have a television?

MS. GRAY: Actually, no. I had adopted Michael when he was only eight years old -- I was 44 at the time, a divorced woman, wanted a child, and I was totally lost. This is the most amazing thing that I've ever experienced in my life, is having the gift of this beautiful child here.

And work for a company, Phoenix Insurance Company, which is an incredibly supportive company. And we have a subsidy for people up to \$2,000 for adoption of children. And the company has been supportive in a lot of ways. Me, as a single parent -- so it's just -- I'm delighted that you're doing this. Because as I go around and I tell people I adopted a child and I was 44 and he came from the state, I get all of these surprised looks -- how could you get him as a single parent, you know, are there children in the system. I think we have a huge job ahead of us in terms of educating people about getting children out of the public system. Kids are there and they need us.

MRS. CLINTON: I absolutely agree.

MS. GRAY: And they need companies like mine to support us.

MRS. CLINTON: And what about your family story.

MR. INGLESE: Hi, my name is Larry Inglese, and we were a foster family to start off with. I always loved children and wanted to have a lot of children. I saw this commercial on TV to open up your heart and your home to a special needs child. So I responded to that commercial and, of course, being a foster parent who liked having children in Pennsylvania, St. Joseph's called about adopting. And I went through with adoption of -- they set us up in a match party. And I met Jason there, who was 13 at the time.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you now, Jason?

JASON INGLESE: I'm 15.

MR. INGLESE: He's going to be 16 next month.

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And him and I, we just, like, made eye contact. We sat down, we had lunch, we looked at each other in the eye and we both knew at that minute I was his father and he was my son. There was no doubt, no doubt whatsoever. But they had another family that had wanted Jason with two parent -- I'm a single parent, and they had a two-parent home. But that lady there kept changing her mind back and forth, so I said -- the two of us came to -- you know, this isn't for sure with her, I think I should get first choice over Jason because I'm willing to make a commitment now. And she agreed.

He was sure and I was sure, and through adoption got him. And then sometime later I was ready for the next one, and the caseworker was calling around, trying to find a home for Michael. Michael has got cerebral palsy and he's got mild mental retardation. He has a lot of problems with -- he came out, it was hard to find him a home. Anyway, finally, I accepted, I said I would take him.

But there were some race issues at the time, but they wouldn't let me have him right away. It took about -- it was about five or six months. They contacted me back and they couldn't get another family to take him so they accepted us. But I was kind of upset at the time because we were ready to give him a loving home and it didn't happen -- because of one caseworker, it didn't happen as fast as it should have. But we finally got him.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MR. INGLESE: And we finalized with him in November, November 15th of this year.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that's wonderful -- in time for Thanksgiving. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: You have -- how many kids do you have now?

MR. INGLESE: I have three biological children, two adopted, and I've had 23 foster children.

MRS. CLINTON: That's great.

And what about your story?

MRS. BRYANT: My name is Frances Bryant. This is my husband, Michael Bryant. And we also saw Trey on the television program. We were watching the news one night, and normally I don't actually watch this particular channel, and for some reason I was just glued to this news. And I had never seen a commercial with children on

MORE

it asking for a home. And then I saw Trey and he was on there and just touched my heart so much. And I wrote down the number and it was 1-800-KIDS hotline -- and I got up right after it went off and I told my husband about it. I said, you wouldn't believe what I just saw on TV. You know, I had never seen a child asking for a home.

There was no way that I could refuse this. I mean, it just touched my heart so. And we called the very next day and found out the information, and we went through the process and it only took about two months and we got Trey in our home. And what the amazing thing is that I realized how many children are out there waiting to be adopted. And I encourage anyone who can open up their heart and their home to a child -- it's a wonderful, rewarding experience. And I'm also going to do it again.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we have some children here who are waiting for homes, and maybe you could introduce yourself. Which ones -- who wants to go first? Anybody want to say anything?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

DANIEL: My name is Daniel, and I've been waiting for a family for quite a long time. And hopefully, in a short amount of time I will probably get what I'm looking for in a family. My brother has already been adopted, and hopefully I'll get adopted by his family at one point of time. And if not, I'll still be able to get in contact with him.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you?

DANIEL: Thirteen.

THE PRESIDENT: How old is your brother?

DANIEL: Seventeen.

MRS. CLINTON: How long have you been in foster care?

DANIEL: About two, three years.

MRS. CLINTON: Two or three years?

DANIEL: I'm not sure, but --

THE PRESIDENT: Where's your home? Where do you live?

DANIEL: Where do I live now? Alexandria.

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THE PRESIDENT: Anybody else want to talk?

MRS. CLINTON: What's your name? I'm glad you're here this morning.

One of the goals that we have with trying to do this and, as you say, talk more about education of people about adoption, and something the Secretary and the President and all of us are committed to, is so that more people know what your experience has been like. And anytime you raise a child, it is not all easy. We know that. I mean, there are going to be ups and downs no matter what. But I think that your stories about the emotional feeling that you had when you met your children is something that if we can get more people to see, we'll have more response. Do you agree with that, too?

MS. GRAY: Absolutely. I saw Michael the first time, he was four weeks old, and, as you say, I knew that this is my little boy. I was all pumped up thinking, oh, I'm going to adopt a little girl because I know about girls -- then I saw this little boy and it was all over.

But it has been an enormous blessing for me and for my family. He's just an incredible, an incredible gift. And I just wish that more and more people could have that experience. There is such a mythology about adoption, and if we could just get the word out and just get people to go and see and talk to these beautiful children, we could find them all homes, and have stable, loving parents who care about them and will raise them as strong citizens. And it's the greatest thing I've ever done in my whole entire life.

MRS. CLINTON: That's what we're going to try to do. And you all are experts because you've been through the system. What are some of the changes that we need to make in the system that each of you has dealt with so that we can perhaps encourage more people to be involved? Any thoughts about that?

MS. BORIE: Just the length of time that it takes. In my situation, I'm thankful that it took longer only because I would not have had them otherwise. But it breaks my heart to know that -- these are my children and to know that they were separated from each other for that long. It's heart-wrenching. And I may not have been their parent at that time, but having them now, in my heart I was their parent all that time. And to think that they had to go without each other, as a parent, it's just very sad. And it shouldn't have taken that long.

MRS. CLINTON: How long did it take?

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MRS. BORIE: They were in care for about five years. Our experience -- happened more quickly than usual. It was very speedy, thankfully. But to know that they were apart for that long was unnecessary.

MS. GRAY: I'd like to see us do a lot more with companies. I'm sure that -- I'm speaking on behalf my company because it's very supportive getting started, Phoenix Insurance. And anybody who wants to talk to me about it, please call because I want to help other companies do the same thing. If we could just get companies to tell their employees about these kinds of opportunities -- to do more through their newsletters and to say we're offering a benefit -- that would be great.

MRS. CLINTON: And the new legislation that the President signed to give people the \$5,000 tax credit -- that's something we need to make sure people know about, too, because you obviously don't do these things because of that, but there are expenses associated with taking a child into your home, especially a child with medical problems. Have you found that?

MR. INGLESE: Well, I'm lucky as far as my problems because Michael's medication alone comes to about \$800 a month and I could never afford that on my own. But I have a Pennsylvania Medical Access Card which covers his medical, and he needs many operations that he's been in even before I got him and he still -- he just got an operation, I think it was last month. They cover everything, totally. All his needs are met and paid for by the state. And I think it would be, like, impossible for me to adopt him if the state didn't pay for his needs and medical care because it's a tremendous amount and it's a tremendous expense.

Also what I want to say to others who are thinking about adopting, I think it's -- from what I find with some of the children, that they gave the parents too many years, they keep the children in foster care too many years. Jason was first in foster care from an infant. And he didn't get put up for adoption until he was 13 years old. It went so many years back and forth that he went back to the birth family and then taken away and back and forth. And Michael was also five years. His mother abandoned him at birth. He was put in foster care right from the hospital when he was born. And he's been in through foster homes in the five years before I adopted him.

I think it should be a lesser amount of time a child -- don't give the parents that long to try to get their children back. I think a year should be good

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enough. If a parent don't clean up their act within the year, then that child should be put in a loving home where he will get all the love that his natural parents can't give him.

MRS. CLINTON: How do you feel about that, Jason? Do you have an opinion about that?

JASON: Yes. Basically, I agree on the same. It shouldn't take that much time because with a child, of course, he's going to think that it should because he's going to want to go back with his biological parents, but to sit here and think about it, I would have liked it that way than to keep going back, keep taken away, keep going back -- for it to keep happening like that.

MR. INGLESE: Each time a new foster home. The other foster homes, they fill up. So he was like in, I think, about 12 or 13 foster homes and it was new one each time. He couldn't even go back to the same foster home where he knew the people. So he had to go through that struggle of trying to fit in with new family all over again and over and over and over again.

THE PRESIDENT: How many foster homes have you lived with?

DANIEL: About three.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you feel it's hard when you change?

DANIEL: It's a bit. After a while, you get sort of used to it, but it's still hard.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for what you're doing and thank you for the example.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END

10:26 A.M. EST

Adoption Event
Saturday December 14, 1996

Invited Guests

Jane Barowitz
Kathy Sylvester
Sheryl Dicker
Norman Stein
Ron Field
James Weill
Susan Bales
Zena Oglesby
Kathy Bonk
Velora Washington
Carolyn Johnson
Ann Sullivan
Dixie van de Flier Davis
Mary Bellor
Jann Heffner
Ruth Massinga
Douglas Nelson
Susan Notkin
Julie Rogers
Howard Davidson
Frank Farrow
William Pierce
Laurie Rankin
Gloria Hockman
Calvin Cafritz
Diane Bernstein
John Williams
Susan Cox
Gerald Peter Digre
Wendy Walker Whitworth
Ralph Whitworth
Michael Thorton
Ida Castro
Joseph Kroll
Marc Tucker
Max Stein
Drenda Lakin
Lester Cash
Ellen Carey
Michael O'Connor

Organization

Jewish Child Care
Progressive Policy
Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
Family Service America
Children's Defense Fund
America's Children
Institute for Black Parenting
Communications Consortium
Kellogg Foundation
Nat'l Adoption Ctr
Child Welfare League
Adoption Exchange
Phillip Graham Fund
Wendy's Foundation
Casey Family Program
Annie Casey Found.
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Eugene & Agnes Meyer Foundation
ABA Center for Family
Center for Social Policy
Nat'l Council for Adoption
Blatner Associates
Nat'l Adoption Center
Cafritz Foundation
DC Action for Children
Holt Child Services
Holt Child Services
Dept. of Children & Family Services
Adoptive Parent
Adoptive Parent
Treasury
Labor
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Communications Consortium
son of Norman Stein
Spaulding Center
OMB
HHS
Center for Law & Human Services

Elizabeth Meitner
skandar Alexander
Tom Richards
Stanley Hockman
Steve Humerickhouse

Child Welfare League
Child Welfare League
Adoptive Families of America
husband- Gloria Hockman
Adoption Exchange

Beverly Jones
Karen Ballard
Betty Graham
Carolyn Deeter-Evans
Calvin Johnson
Joyce Shepherd
Beth Walker
Ruth Kaplan
Steve Minner

Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Associate Professor
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Assistant Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Manager
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Area Manager
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Title IVE Coordinator
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Assistant Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Director

Health and Human Services Staff

Ellen Carey	HHS
Olivia Golden	HHS
Mike Ambrose	HHS
Lucille McCluney	HHS
Toby Graff	HHS
Ann Rosewater	HHS

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. list	Participants in Adoption Radio Address (partial) (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S
kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
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b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Partipants in Adoption Radio Address December 14, 1996

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>SS#</u>	<u>DOB</u>
✓ Jane Barowitz	Jewish Child Care	(212) 303-4613		
✓ Kathy Sylvester	Progressive Policy	(202) 547-0001		
Sheryl Dicker	Judicial Commission	(914) 422-4425		
Norman Stein	on Justice for Children			
	Judicial Commission	(914) 422-4425		
	on Justice for Childeren			
Ron Field	Family Service America	(202) 347-1124		
✓ James Weill	Children's Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787		
Susan Bales	America's Children	(202) 638-5770		
✓ Zena Oglesby	Institute for Black	(310) 348-1400		
	Parenting			
✓ Kathy Bonk	Communications	(202) 326-8700		
	Consortium			
✓ Velora Washington	Kellogg Foundation	(616) 969-2337		
✓ Carolyn Johnson	Nat'l Adoption Ctr	(215) 735-9988		
✓ Ann Sullivan	Child Welfare League	(202) 638-2952		
✓ Dixie van de Flier	Adoption Exchange	(303) 333-0845		
Davis				
Mary Bellor	Phillip Graham Fund	(202) 334-6640		
anna Heffner	Wendy's Foundation	(614) 764-8454		
Ruth Massinga	Casey Family Program	(206) 282-7300		
✓ Douglas Nelson	Annie Casey Found.	(410) 223-2931		
✓ Susan Notkin	Edna McConnell Clark	(212) 551-9100		
	Foundation			
Julie Rogers	Eugene & Agnes Meyer	(202) 483-8294		
	Foundation			
✓ Howard Davidson	ABA Center for Family	(202) 662-1740		
✓ Frank Farrow	Center for Social Policy	(202) 371-1565		
✓ William Pierce	Nat'l Council for Adoption	(202) 328-1200		
✓ Laurie Rankin	Blatner Associates	(609) 466-0200		
✓ Gloria Hockman	Nat'l Adoption Center	(215) 735-9988		
✓ Calvin Cafritz	Cafritz Foundation	(202) 296-0866		
Diane Bernstein	DC Action for Children	(202) 234-9404		
John Williams	Holt Shild Services	(541) 687-2202		
✓ Susan Cox	Holt Child Services	(541) 687-2202		
✓ Gerald Peter Digre	Dept. of Children &	(213) 351-5601		
	Family Services			
Wendy Walker	Larry King Live	(202) 898-7696		
Whitworth				
Ralph Whitworth	Larry King Live	(202) 898-7696		
Michael Thorton	Treasury	(202) 622-1336		

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Ida Castro	Labor	(202) 219-6611
Joseph Kroll	North American Council on Adoptable Children	(612) 644-3036
Marc Tucker	Communications Consortium	
Max Stein	son of Norman Stein	
✓ Brenda Lakin	Spaulding Center	
Lester Cash	OMB	(202) 395-7763
Michael O'Connor	Center for Law & Human Services	(312) 341-1666
Elizabeth Meitner	Child Welfare League	(202) 942-0257
Iskandar Alexander	Child Welfare League	(202) 942-0257
Tom Richards	Adoptive Families of America	(612) 535-4829
Stanley Hockman	husband- Gloria Hockman	(215) 735-9988
✓ Steve Humerickhouse	Adoption Exchange	(612) 521-1098

Ellen Carey	HHS	(202) 205- 8652
Olivia Golden	HHS	(202) 401-6953
✓ Mike Ambrose	HHS	(202) 205-8618
Lucille McCluney	HHS	(202) 690-8618
✓ Toby Graff	HHS	(202) 690-7854
Ann Rosewater	HHS	(202) 690-7409

Beverly Jones	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
Karen Ballard	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
Betty Graham	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
Carolyn Deeter-Evans	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
Calvin Johnson	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
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Beth Walker	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
Ruth Kaplan	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
Steve Minner	Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation

P6/(b)(6)

STATE OF COLORADO

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

136 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203-1792
Phone (303) 866-2421



December 13, 1996

Roy Romer
Governor

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I congratulate you on your policy on adoption, particularly your efforts to expedite the placement of children with supportive families. This is an issue which is critically important to the State of Colorado and I welcome the support of your office as we attempt to deal with this vital issue.

Colorado is anxious to work with you as you develop a national forum for planning and implementation of state and federal systems to better serve children and help to move them quickly out of foster care to permanent and supportive families. We are very concerned that we minimize the disruption in the lives of children when they experience difficulties in their families of origin.

In Colorado, we are focusing intently on these issues. We are working with our state judicial system, with the assistance of the chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court, with the Colorado General Assembly, and with representatives of county governments, private providers, and representatives of the juvenile corrections, mental health, substance abuse treatment and developmental disability systems to develop a procedure that will minimize disruption in the lives of children, assure their safety, and see that they do not languish in foster care. Your emphasis on strengthening and supporting adoptions for children who cannot be reunited with their families of origin is a most important effort.

Again, I welcome your national leadership on the issue of adoption and on the broad issue of helping children find and flourish in permanent, supportive families.

Sincerely,

Roy Romer
Governor



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
RALEIGH 27603-8001

JAMES B. HUNT JR.
GOVERNOR

December 13, 1996

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I have been made aware that you will be spearheading an initiative in the near future to focus attention on reducing the time children are in foster care and removing the existing barriers that impede adoption. I applaud your concern for children who need permanent, loving families.

In North Carolina, this is a priority for us. We are now implementing a Child Welfare Demonstration Project that seeks to reduce the number of children who stay in foster care for longer than a year. This cooperative effort involves county departments of social services, local officials and representatives from private organizations. It takes the concerted effort of all sectors of the community to help ensure that children grow up healthy and safe.

We look forward to hearing more about your initiative and are anxious to work with you in addressing the needs of these children. All children deserve to be raised in nurturing, loving homes.

My warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Hunt".

James B. Hunt, Jr.

JBH:atl

END



THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

LAWTON CHILES

December 13, 1996

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Rhea and I want to commend you and the First Lady for your personal efforts to promote adoption initiatives in our country. Florida shares your deep concern about the well-being of our children. In fact, my top priority, as governor of Florida, is strengthening our children and families. Helping the nearly 1,700 Florida foster children awaiting adoption find a permanent home is an important part of my Children's Initiative.

I'm committed to promoting adoption because I believe every child deserves a place to call home -- a home where someone will remember their birthdays and a home to celebrate the holidays. That's why I'm pleased by your strong commitment to set an agenda, goals and strategy to weave the benefits of adoption into the nation's overall children's policies and programs. I know your leadership on this issue will help enrich the lives of countless adoptive families and children in our country.

In our home, we know the joy adoption can bring to a family. About 30 years ago, my wife and I adopted a beautiful little girl and named her Rhea. In the years since she joined our family, I've had the satisfaction of watching her grow from a child to a young woman. She is now a mother and a strong advocate for adoption. I'm very proud of her and I cherish the joy she has brought into our lives. Today, my daughter Rhea is playing a leading role in helping our foster kids find permanent homes by spearheading the Governor's Partnership for Adoption.

We're working hard to promote adoption in Florida. Thanks to our partnership with churches and private organizations we've increased Florida's adoption rate by more than 80 percent over the past five years. One project that we're excited about is our Internet adoption home page that we established in July.

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The Honorable Bill Clinton
December 13, 1996
Page Two

Our adoption home page provides our foster children in need of a permanent home with an address on the World Wide Web. It also gives prospective parents an easy way to consider adoption by featuring photographs and brief biographies of children in need of a loving home. Since our adoption effort went "on line" we've had nearly 8,000 visits to our home page -- and we receive about 100 requests each month for further information about how to adopt a child. Thanks to our Internet effort we currently have people going through the process to adopt a child featured on our home page.

Again, thank you Mr. President for being a strong champion for our children. Your work to encourage adoption will help enhance the lives of the families and children all across our country. Please know that we in Florida stand ready to work with all states and the federal government to ensure every child has a loving family and home.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely


LAWTON CHILES



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • TTY/TDD (360) 753-6466

December 13, 1996

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I applaud the effort you are spearheading to help children move from foster care to permanent families. This is an issue of great importance in Washington State, and I know that other Governors join me in welcoming any assistance the federal government can share with potential adoptive families.

More than twenty years ago, Washington was one of the first states to provide financial assistance to families to remove barriers to the adoption of children from the child welfare system. More recently, we have implemented the Families for Kids program, a joint effort of public and private agencies and the courts, to move children from long-term foster care into adoptive families more quickly.

I look forward to hearing more about your plans, and applaud your leadership and commitment to helping children find stable, loving homes.

Sincerely,

Mike Lowry
Mike Lowry
Governor

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
003. list	[participant families' clearance information] (2 pages)	nd	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

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2012-1035-S
kc1000

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 14, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF LABOR
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Steps to Increase Adoptions and Alternate
Permanent Placement for Waiting Children
in the Public Child Welfare System

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working

with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

- I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
 - (a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;
 - (b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby offsetting much if not all of the incentive payments;
 - (c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;
 - (d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and
 - (e) Plans to recognize successful States.

II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

- (a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;
- (b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;
- (c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of "dispositional hearings" is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;
- (d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;
- (e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and
- (f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month -- a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

- (a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort, including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;
- (b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;
- (c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and
- (d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

William J. Clinton

Clinton Seeks Doubling Of Adoptions

HHS Ordered to Find Foster Care Solutions

AI

By Al Kamen
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton yesterday ordered administration officials to find ways to double by 2002 the number of children adopted from foster homes in hopes of reducing the time that children languish in that system.

Clinton's call for changes in the process comes as Congress is working on overhauling legislation of adoption policies that promise to be one of the major social policy debates in the next session.

"I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child to a family and a family to a child," Clinton said in his weekly radio address from the Oval Office.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system, Clinton said, placed there because of abuse, neglect or other reasons. Most eventually return to their homes, he said, but nearly 100,000 do not. "Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes," he said.

Clinton said his goal was to make adoption easier and "to make moving children out of foster care easier," in order to increase adoptions of foster children each year from 27,000 to 54,000.

As a first step, Clinton ordered Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala to report back to him in 60 days on what new measures, including financial incentives to the states, will be needed to meet the administration's new goal.

The recommendations coincide with draft legislation circulating in Congress that aims to accelerate the adoption process. Among its sponsors are Sens. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio) and John D. "Jay" Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.) and Reps. Dave Camp (R-Mich.) and Barbara B. Kennelly (D-Conn.).

Some of the areas likely to be addressed in the legislation, and in Shalala's report include:

- Making it far easier for states to remove children from families where the child has been tortured, subject to severe physical or sexual abuse or where a sibling has died from abuse or neglect.

- Requiring states to evaluate the

See CLINTON, A19, Col. 1

CLINTON, From A1

status of children in foster homes earlier and more frequently so that they will not languish there for unnecessarily long periods.

- Providing financial bonuses to states that move children out of long-term foster care and into permanent, adoptive families. The money most likely will come from reducing the federal assistance available for foster care after a certain period of time. HHS officials expect any new financial incentive would pay for itself, because increasing adoptions would reduce foster care costs, which are about \$15,000 a year per child.

The current adoption law, passed in 1980, requires states to pursue "reasonable efforts" to keep families together to qualify for federal money for foster care.

"Reasonable efforts" have been broadly interpreted by the courts, and some members of Congress feel that too often little emphasis is put on "reasonable."

Despite the bipartisan support for change, adoption legislation is may be controversial because of concerns by the "parental rights" movement that the states will too quickly put a child up for adoption without consideration of the biological parents' rights. States may also object to proposed penalties for failing to move children out of foster care fast enough, according to social policy specialists who have followed the issue.

In his Oval Office address yesterday, attended by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Shalala, several adoptive parents and their children as well as and four children waiting to be adopted, Clinton said that he was "proud" to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt and to ban racial preferences in adoption. That measure passed Congress earlier this year.

There had been some speculation, fueled by a comment by Hillary Clinton in a Time magazine interview last May, that the Clintons were considering adopting a child.

The White House yesterday said the Clintons had decided against adopting a child while they are in the White House because they would not be able to give the child enough attention.

A spokesman said Clinton, in several pre-Christmas interviews not yet made public, "didn't rule it out for later in life but he basically said it wouldn't work here in the White House," Reuter reported.

Hillary Clinton ignored a question yesterday about their adopting a child.

Staff writer Judith Havemann contributed to this report.

The Washington Post

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1996

President Tells Government To Promote More Adoptions

By ALISON MITCHELL

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 — President Clinton today directed the Federal Government to take steps to double the number of children moved from foster care to adoption over the next six years.

He announced the initiative in his weekly radio address, and was joined on the air by his wife, Hillary, by adoptive families and by children hoping for a permanent home.

"I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family, and a family to a child," Mr. Clinton said.

This drive to increase adoption continues the family-centered themes that he promoted throughout his election campaign, and it is not likely to be contentious. House Republicans made an adoption tax-credit a plank in their Contract With America campaign agenda in 1994. Earlier this year, Mr. Clinton signed Republican-initiated legislation that gave a tax credit of \$5,000 to families adopting children and made it easier for parents to adopt children of a different race.

There are now 450,000 children in the nation's foster-care system, which is run by the states with Federal aid and supervision. Of those children, 100,000 are considered to have no parent to return to and are ready to be placed in a permanent new home. But only 27,000 of those children a year are moved from foster care to adoption, officials say.

Mr. Clinton today told the Department of Health and Human Services to report to him in 60 days on steps that can be taken to insure that 54,000 foster children a year are adopted by the year 2002. He said the department should consider possible changes in Federal laws and regulations.

Officials said that among steps the department is examining, the Federal Government would work with states to set specific targets for adoptions. In return, the Government would provide a new financial incentive per child for states to increase the number of adoptions from the public welfare system.

The officials said that as part of his budget proposal in February, Mr. Clinton would propose financial assistance to states for developing strategies to promote the adoption of difficult-to-place children who have been languishing in the foster care system and for studying what barriers block states from finding permanent homes for children.

Melissa T. Skolfield, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services, said the amount of financial assistance that would be proposed for the states had not yet been determined. And although she said the financial incentive to states for each child adopted had not yet been settled on, the action was not expected to require new Federal funds because increased adoptions would reduce foster care spending.

Mr. Clinton today also called for a Government-wide public relations campaign to make Americans aware of adoption opportunities. As if beginning that campaign themselves, the Clintons asked the parents and children accompanying them to tell their

*A goal is set for
doubling the number
of children moved
from foster care.*

stories on the air.

"My name is Daniel," said one 13-year old boy from a local foster care program, who was not further identified because he is a minor. "And I've been waiting for a family for a long time. And hopefully in a short amount of time I will probably get what I'm looking for in a family. My brother has already been adopted, and hopefully I'll get adopted by his family at one point of time."

Mrs. Clinton has been a strong proponent of adoption, even telling Time magazine earlier this year that she and her husband might consider an adoption because they would love to have another child. White House officials said the Clintons had decided to postpone any decision on an adoption until after the President is out of office because he would not have the time to devote to a new child.

DO NOT FORGET THE NEEDIEST!

The New York Times

Sunday, December 15, 1996 /

Clinton vows to speed children into adoption

By Joyce Price
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton yesterday pledged to double the number of children moved from foster care to permanent adoptive homes in the next five years, but ruled out adopting a child of his own until after he leaves the White House.

"No child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care, particularly when there are families with open arms waiting," the president said in his weekly radio address.

Mr. Clinton said there are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. About 100,000 of them will wait years to be placed.

"Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them," Mr. Clinton said.

In hopes of reducing the waiting period, the president said he had "just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal" of "doubling the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes — from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002.

"This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one."

The directive orders Health and Human Services Secretary Donna

E. Shalala to report back in 60 days on how best to promote and increase adoptions, including "what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates," Mr. Clinton said.

As for his plans, Mr. Clinton said through his staff that his duties as president would not permit him to adopt, at least not now.

During the presidential campaign, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton told Time magazine she and her husband had discussed the possibility of adopting. They now have one daughter, Chelsea, 16.

But Assistant White House Press Secretary Barry Toiv told reporters the Clintons won't be adopting any time soon, because they believe "they would not be able to devote the time and attention a baby would need."

In an interview with Reuters news agency, Mr. Toiv cited a number of pre-Christmas presidential interviews, not yet published or aired, in which Mr. Clinton said he "didn't rule out" adoption "later in life" but that he felt "it wouldn't work here in the White House."

Mrs. Clinton ignored a question about the possibility of adoption at the radio address event yesterday, according to published reports. But she chatted with many of the guests on the air, asking them how they came to find their new families and homes.

The Washington Times

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1996

Clinton Backs Tax Credit For Adoption

GOP Bill Is Endorsed; Interracial Placements Could Be Expedited

By Barbara Vobejda
Washington Post Staff Writer

A1

In a letter he will send to House Republican leaders today, President Clinton will endorse Republican legislation that would allow most adoptive families to claim a \$5,000 tax credit and penalize states whose adoption agencies delay placement of a child to find a family of the same race, White House sources said yesterday.

The president will embrace provisions that have traditionally been in the Republican domain. The adoption tax credit was part of the House GOP's "Contract With America," and Republicans have been most vocal in opposing racial matching in adoption placements.

"Promoting adoption is one of the most important things we can do to strengthen American families and give more children what every child in America deserves—loving parents and a healthy home," the president says in his letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post.

It will be the second time in three days that the president has gotten involved in measures affecting families, a topic likely to play a major role in this year's presidential election. And both times, the president staked out positions likely to alienate some liberals.

On Saturday, he announced he would require states to end welfare payments to teenage parents who refuse to stay in school or to live with a parent or guardian.

In endorsing the adoption bill, Clinton said he "strongly supported" the tax credit—which would be \$5,000 for families earning up to \$75,000 a year. The size of the credit would gradually decline for families earning between \$75,000 and \$115,000; families earning more than \$115,000 would not be eligible for a credit.

Also, he goes further than he has in the past to interject himself directly into the emotional and divisive issue of interracial adoption.

The bill, slated to go to the House floor this week, would prohibit states or adoption agencies from discriminating on the basis of race

See ADOPT, A5, Col. 1

ADOPT, From A1

against families who want to adopt. Agencies could consider race in placing a child if there are two or more qualified families, but may not delay placement while waiting for a parent of the same race.

That language, Clinton says in his letter, is consistent with "my long-standing goal to end the historical bias against interracial adoptions, which too often has meant interminable waits for children to be matched with parents of the same race."

Republicans said they welcome the endorsement, but pointed out that the president had vetoed a welfare bill last year that contained similar language on interracial adoptions.

"We're happy to have it," Rep. Susan Molinari (R-N.Y.) said of the endorsement. "I know he had tentative problems with trans-racial adoptions in the past. . . . I hope this signals to Democrats to join with us."

More than 400,000 children are in the foster care system, about half of whom are minorities. Minority children wait longer to be adopted than do white children, according to studies.

Among children in foster care, only about 21,000 are legally available for adoption, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. And of those, two out of three have "special needs," including emotional or physical disabilities or the need to be placed as part of a sibling group.

Many Republicans and some Democrats, including former senator Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), have contended that the policy of race matching has kept thousands of African American children languishing in foster care for years. But social workers say that the high number in foster care stems from the difficulty in placing children with special needs.

Legislation was adopted in 1994

with the intention of banning race matching, but Metzenbaum and others were dissatisfied with Clinton administration regulations interpreting the law because they allowed agencies to consider race. Administration

*"The only reason
the president's
doing all of this is
... because he wants
to make it clear he's
not opposed to
interracial
adoption."*

— Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.)

officials say the law has been aggressively enforced, reducing the number of states that give an automatic preference to black families in the adoption of black children.

Still, Republicans have pushed for a new law that would ban racial placement outright, essentially establishing a colorblind system that would match children and families without regard to race.

While that was the original language in the bill when it went before

the Ways and Means Committee, it was amended to allow race to be considered when there is more than one qualified family seeking to adopt a child. The bill, which was approved by the committee on a voice vote, would also go further than current law to penalize states that do not comply.

Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.), who has argued vociferously against a "first-come, first-served" approach, said the new language does not change the current law. "The only reason the president's doing all of this is . . . because he wants to make it clear he's not opposed to interracial adoption. . . . But if he feels good saying it, okay."

David Liederman, executive director of the Child Welfare League of America, called the tax credit a "misdirection" of resources in a tight fiscal climate, essentially helping middle-class families while other proposals would cut funding for programs meant to help those willing to adopt special-needs children.

"I would have hoped the president would have spoken to that," Liederman said.

It is estimated the credit would cost the government \$1.7 billion over seven years, and the GOP bill would offset the revenue loss with income gained in enforcing new anti-fraud provisions on foreign trusts and from repeal of a tax exclusion for businesses purchasing energy conservation measures.

THE WASHINGTON POST

MONDAY, MAY 6, 1996

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

"We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be." -- President Clinton, Radio Address, December 12, 1996

President Clinton is following an ambitious legislative and administrative agenda to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes. This agenda is laid out in a report submitted to the President on February 14, 1997 by the Department of Health and Human Services, in response to an Executive Memorandum signed by President Clinton on December 14, 1996. The report, entitled "Adoption 2002," takes its name from one of the President's central goals -- to at least double by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. "Adoption 2002" is a blueprint for bipartisan Federal leadership in adoption and other permanency planning for children in the public child welfare system.

In receiving the "Adoption 2002" report, the President committed to following its ambitious action plan for federal leadership, including new assistance to states to set and meet urgent new adoption targets. Additionally, the President pledged to clarify, through legislation and guidelines to states, the laws, such as the "reasonable efforts" standard, that govern whether and when to remove a child from his or her family and when to reunify them. The President also committed to creating sensible financial incentives to states to increase adoption rates, and to providing technical assistance to states, courts and communities to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes.

The Clinton Administration has previously taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. Since taking office in 1993, the President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations. These steps include:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

In August, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which provides a \$5000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This policy will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs. Since President Clinton took office, the number of children with special needs who were adopted with Federal adoption assistance has risen by 60 percent.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

ADOPTION ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Increase the adoption placement rate for hard-to-place children. Set numerical targets to double the number of children who are adopted over the next three years. This would eliminate the backlog of waiting children.

ACTIONS:

1. Goal-oriented Planning and Technical Assistance. Work with states that commit to meet numerical targets by providing technical assistance on the development of outcome measures and automated data systems to help reach these goals. Estimated cost: \$10 million/year.
2. Non-financial Incentives for Improved Performance. Recognize successful states through special commendations or White House events and foster competition by issuing an annual state-by-state report card.
3. Financial Incentives. Increase reimbursement for adoption subsidies for special needs adoptions by \$1,000 in states that reach or come within 5% of reaching of the annual target. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$75 million over 3 years.

Raise federal match to states for recruiting adoptive families from 50% to 75%.
Estimated cost: \$150 million over 3 years, assuming states continue to spend at current levels for recruitment.

GOAL 2: Find permanent homes for waiting children within one year of entering the child welfare system.

ACTIONS:

1. Statutory Changes. Under current law, states are required to hold a dispositional hearing 18 months after a child has been placed in foster care. Develop legislation to shorten that period to 12 months and require administrative hearings every six months.
2. Regulatory Changes. Currently, the federal government requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent placement and reunify families before a parent's rights can be legally terminated. Clarify and expand definition of reasonable efforts so that it allows arrangement for a permanent home for a child in a timely manner.

Change "dispositional hearings" to "permanency planning" hearings by clarifying that planning can include referrals for termination of parental rights or to legal guardianship or other permanent placement.

3. Financial Assistance. Make funds available through the Adoption Opportunities Act to states for a "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project" to identify barriers, propose and implement solutions, and target funds to place children who have been waiting particularly long times and to implement the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act. Estimated cost: \$30 million.

GOAL 3: Increase public awareness of the benefits of adoption. Undertake a high visibility education and awareness campaign and promote "adoption-friendly" policies in the public and private sectors.

ACTIONS:

1. Direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to lead a public awareness effort, including public service announcements, use of the internet, and the appointment of a high-profile advisory council with members chosen for their ability to represent and work with various "sectors" of the community (e.g., faith community, business, entertainment industry, etc.).
2. Direct the Secretary of the Treasury to disseminate information about tax benefits and other adoption benefits.
3. Direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to promote adoption among Federal employees and make the Federal government a model of adoption-friendly policies.

This would include: (1) developing legislation to reimburse Federal employees if they adopt a child (proposed during the Bush Administration but not passed); and (2) directing all agencies to provide information and support (e.g., a bank of federal employees who have adopted to act as mentors for prospective adoptive parents).

4. Direct the Secretaries of Labor and Commerce to identify and recognize model adoption-friendly policies in the private sector.

POSSIBLE ADOPTION ACTIONS
September 12, 1996

GOAL 1: Increase the adoption placement rate for hard-to-~~find~~^{place} children. Set numerical targets so that the number of children with (special needs) who are adopted over the next three years would be doubled. This would eliminate the backlog of waiting children.

ACTIONS:

1. Goal-oriented Planning and Technical Assistance. Work with states that commit to meet numerical targets by providing technical assistance on the development of outcome measures and automated data systems to help reach these goals. Estimated cost: \$10 million/year.
 2. Non-financial Incentives for Improved Performance. Recognize successful states through special commendations or White House events and foster competition by issuing an annual state-by-state report card.
 3. Financial Incentives. Increase reimbursement for adoption subsidies for special needs adoptions by \$1,000 in states that reach or come within 5% of reaching of the annual target. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$75 million over 3 years.
- above
base?*
*structure
of
program
design*
- Raise federal match to states for recruiting adoptive families from 50% to 75%. Estimated cost: \$150 million over 3 years, assuming states continue to spend at current levels for recruitment.

GOAL 2: Find permanent homes for waiting children within one year of entering the child welfare system.

ACTIONS: *Direct HHS*

1. Statutory Changes. Under current law, states are required to hold a dispositional hearing 18 months after a child has been placed in foster care. Develop legislation to shorten that period to 12 months.
2. Regulatory Changes. Currently, the federal government requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent placement and reunify families before a parent's rights can be legally terminated. Clarify and expand definition of reasonable efforts so that it allows arrangement for a permanent home for a child in a timely manner.

*Develop reg. on 4 Aug 97:
reg / admin.
authority*

Change "dispositional hearings" to "permanency planning" hearings by clarifying that planning can include referrals for termination of parental rights or to legal guardianship or other permanent placement.

3. Financial Assistance. Make funds available through the Adoption Opportunities Act to states for a "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project" to identify barriers, propose and implement solutions, and target funds to place children who have been waiting particularly long times and to implement the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act. Estimated cost: \$30 million. *see 37.*

GOAL 3: Increase public awareness of the benefits of adoption. Undertake a high visibility education and awareness campaign and promote "adoption-friendly" policies in the public and private sectors. *Exec order*

ACTIONS:

1. Direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to lead a public awareness effort, including public service announcements, use of the internet, and the appointment of a high-profile advisory council with members chosen for their ability to represent and work with various "sectors" of the community (e.g., faith community, business, entertainment industry, etc.).
2. Direct the Secretary of the Treasury to disseminate information about tax benefits and other adoption benefits.
3. Direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to promote adoption among Federal employees and make the Federal government a model of adoption-friendly policies.

leg - in place
This would include: (1) developing legislation to create a new category of leave benefits for Federal employees to provide 5 days of paid leave for adoptive parents and an additional 5 days for parents who adopt children with special needs (in addition to current leave benefits); (2) developing legislation to reimburse Federal employees if they adopt a child (proposed during the Bush Administration but not passed); and (3) directing all agencies to provide information and support (e.g., a bank of federal employees who have adopted to act as mentors for prospective adoptive parents).

4. Direct the Secretaries of Labor and Commerce to identify and recognize model adoption-friendly policies in the private sector.

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
370 L'ENFANT PROMENADE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20447**

TO:*Melanne Verveer / Nicole Rabner***Telephone:****Fax:***452-6244***Number of Pages (excluding cover):***4***FROM:**

**Wendy Jacobson
Special Assistant to the
Deputy Assistant Secretary**

Telephone:**(202) 260-1853****Fax:****(202) 205-3848****MESSAGE:**

*Memo for Melanne
as requested by Jennifer
Klein.*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

TO: Melanne Verveer
FROM: Ann Rosewater *Ann Rosewater*
SUBJECT: Adoption Information

As requested, the attached document details more fully two priority action steps to advance adoption of children. The first action addresses increasing the number of children who are adopted; the second addresses expediting permanency for waiting children.

Let me know the next steps, and of course call me if you have questions.

Adoption Actions

GOAL #1: Increase the number of children who are adopted. In 1999, 40,000 special needs children will be adopted -- about twice as many children as were adopted in 1994 (most recent year for which data are available). By the end of 1997, 25,000 children will be adopted, an increase of 25%; by the end of 1998, 30,000 children will be adopted, an increase of 50% and by the end of 1999, 40,000 children will be adopted, an increase of 100% over the three years.

ACTIONS. Direct HHS to: 1) work with states through intensive planning and technical assistance to help them meet specified targets; 2) create non-financial incentives for improved performance by states; and 3) develop legislation to provide financial incentives to states to meet established targets.

1) Planning and technical assistance

- Move to an outcome orientation. Engage in planning with states that commit to meeting specific numerical targets, and provide technical assistance on the development and utilization of outcome measures, and on the use of automated data systems to track progress toward these goals.

Propose legislation which would make 0.25% of the Title IV-E foster care and adoption budget available to provide significantly enhanced technical assistance to the states in the areas of foster care and adoption assistance. ESTIMATED COST: \$10 million/year.

2) Non-financial incentives for improved performance

- Provide for recognition. Recognize successful states through special certificates or White House events.
- Foster positive competition. Issue an annual state-by-state report card, which may encourage states to improve their status.

3) Financial incentives (would require legislative action)

- Increase reimbursement for adoption subsidies. Currently, the Federal government reimburses states for a portion of the cost of providing adoption subsidies to families that adopt special needs children. As states achieve, or come within 5% of the annual target for special needs adoptions, they would receive an extra \$1000 per child, for every special needs child adopted that year. These funds should be used for increased subsidies for adoptive families or other adoption-related activities.

ESTIMATED COST: Between \$50 million and \$100 million over

three years, depending on how many states reach the annual targets.

- Provide an enhanced match for recruiting of adoptive families. To more substantially reimburse states for their efforts to recruit adoptive families, the federal match rate could be raised from 50 percent to 75 percent. ESTIMATED COST: \$375 million over 5 years, assuming states continue to spend what they currently spend on recruitment.

GOAL #2: Expedite permanency for waiting children. Make "establishing permanency for children within a year" a reality.

ACTIONS. Through a series of statutory and regulatory changes, as well as financial assistance, help states focus effectively on establishing permanency for children.

1) Statutory change

- Expedite hearings. Under current law, states are required to ensure a dispositional hearing 18 months after a child has been placed in foster care, and every 12 months thereafter. Develop legislation to shorten the time frame for the initial dispositional hearing to 12 months.

2) Regulatory changes

- Expand "Reasonable Efforts". The federal government currently requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent placement and to reunify families before a parent's rights can be legally terminated. Amend current "reasonable efforts" policy so that it also applies to arranging for a permanent home for a child in a timely manner.

Clarify the fact that current law does not require "infinite" efforts to reunify families, or presume that reunification must be the initial goal in every case. Provide states with guidance and information on state statutes that specify time limits or contain "not at all" provisions for reunification for certain children/family situations.

- Reorient "Dispositional Hearings" Make permanency planning the central focus of these hearings by changing "dispositional hearings" to "permanency planning" hearings. Currently these hearings seek to determine the future status of the child through three options: a) return to parent; b) place for adoption; or c) due to special circumstances, continue in foster care on a permanent basis. Clarify these options such that b) includes referring for termination of parental rights, and c) includes referral to legal guardianship or other permanent placement.

3) Financial assistance

- Make funds available to states to undertake a "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project" through which they would assess the average delays, identify barriers and propose and implement solutions. This would be the agency-related counterpart to the court-improvement project, through which the Administration is working with state courts in 49 states to improve the timeliness and quality of decision-making that leads to adoption. ESTIMATED COST: \$10 million.
- Based on assessments completed through the "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project," make funds available to states to focus on placing those children who have been waiting a particularly long time -- provide funds to do additional recruitment, homestudies or whatever is needed. ESTIMATED COST: \$20 million.
- Make funds available to help states carry out the recruitment provisions specified in the Multiethnic Placement Act. ESTIMATED COST: This activity could be undertaken as part of the recruiting incentives identified in the second bullet under Goal #1 (3) above.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

LIVE WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

DATE: December 14, 1996
LOCATION: Oval Office
TIME: 10:06AM EDT
FROM: Nicole Rabner, Laura Schwartz

I. PURPOSE

To deliver your weekly radio address on the importance of adoption and announce a Presidential memorandum directing members of your Cabinet to take specific steps to increase adoptions and move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes.

II. BACKGROUND

Surrounded by adoptive families and children in local foster care, you and the First Lady will deliver the weekly radio address, in which you will announce a memorandum to members of your Cabinet.

Presidential Memorandum

The Presidential memorandum instructs the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor, Commerce and the Director of Personnel Management to undergo wide consultation and report to you in sixty days with a specific proposal to move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. Specifically, the memorandum:

- calls for the creation of state-specific numerical targets and financial incentives to states to increase the number of adoptions. The bonus payments will be offset by decreases in foster care costs and will nearly pay for themselves.
- asks for proposed changes to federal regulations and legislation to emphasize permanency and decrease delays.
- calls for the Departments to take appropriate action to disseminate materials, challenge businesses to support adoptive parents, and raise public awareness on the importance of adoption.

Your FY98 budget proposal will include the necessary funding allocation for the memorandum.

You will sign the memorandum just prior to the radio address during the event briefing.

Discussion

Following the radio address, you and the First Lady will lead a brief discussion with the assembled families and waiting children (see attached bios).

Invited Guests

Approximately 70 leaders on adoption issues in the foundation and advocacy communities have been invited to the event. They will gather in the Roosevelt Room where, prior to the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, HHS, will conduct a briefing on the initiative you will announce. They will then watch your radio address on closed-circuit television, and, following your address and discussion, have an opportunity to meet you and the First Lady in the Oval Office.

Press Notes

The press pool will be in the Oval Office for your radio address. **You do NOT need to look at the camera while reading the radio address; please note that the cameras will start to roll as soon as you and the First Lady walk through the door.** There will be a cough button on the water table next to you should you need it.

PLEASE NOTE: the press pool will remain in the Oval Office for this discussion.

III. PARTICIPANTS

**The President
The First Lady**

Adoptive Families and Waiting Children (see attached bios)
Foundation and Advocacy Leaders (see attached list)

White House Communications Agency (WHCA) staff
White House Television(WHTV)
White House photographer
Special guests (See attached)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Your radio address and discussion following will be covered by the White House press pool. The networks will have the opportunity to take it LIVE.

The ABC, CNN, AP, C-SPAN, CBS, NBC, Mutual, UPI, USA, American Urban Radio Network, and Standard News radio networks will carry the address live in its entirety to their thousands of stations across the country Saturday at 10:06 AM EDT.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

9:45am Briefing (Oval study)
10:06am **Live Radio Address with the First Lady (on camera in Oval)**
Discussion with families and children (on camera in Oval)
App.10:30am Greet Guests (off camera in Oval)

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by David Shipley.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004. bios	Adoptive Families and Children Attending the President's Radio Address (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S

kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

DISCUSSION WITH FAMILIES AFTER THE RADIO ADDRESS

FLOTUS OPENS DISCUSSION: We have here in this room adoptive families and some children in foster care who are looking for permanent homes. I want to thank you each for coming here today. To the families, I want to say a special thank you for opening your hearts and your homes to children who needed and deserved one. I know first hand that raising a child is a huge responsibility.

Question #1 TELEVISION SHOWS (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Two of the families here today met their adoptive children through television programs highlighting children in foster care who were looking for permanent homes. Can the **Borié** [Ba-ree] and **Bryant Families** tell us a little bit about that?

POTUS FOLLOW-UP COMMENT: I hope that every local TV station will consider doing what the Bryant's local station and others across the nation are already doing -- regularly featuring children waiting for loving and safe, permanent homes.

Question #2 MOTIVATION TO ADOPT (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Can you tell us what motivated you personally to want to adopt a child in foster care?
[**Bryant and Gray families**; NOT the Ingleses if possible]

Question #3 CHANGES SINCE ADOPTED (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We have had the opportunity to know children both before and after they were adopted and have often been astonished by the difference it has made in their lives and how they have changed. Has that been true for any of you?

[**Mr. Inglese's** [In-gee-zee's] son Jason has gone from doing poorly in school and often getting in trouble to being chosen at Student of the Month]

Question #4 FOR THE WAITING CHILDREN (EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

With us today are some of the children who this event is really all about -- children in foster care who are waiting for permanent homes -- would any of you like to say something?

[Note: If no one immediately answers, you could ask **Daniel**, a 13 year old Hispanic boy who has been in foster care since 1992 because of his mother's terminal illness.]

Question #5 PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We all have an opportunity and responsibility -- families, communities, government, religious organizations, and the private sector -- to do our part to help every child have the loving, permanent family they deserve. Businesses nationwide have established policies to support their employees who adopt children. **Fredrica Gray** works for such a company, the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hartford, CT, one of the company's on the Honor Roll of the Women's Bureau at the Labor Department. Fredrica is here with her adoptive son, Michael. Can you tell us about your employer's policies and the motivation behind those policies?

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

Radio Address By The President
The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents, and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption; and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home life that is neither safe, nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be

uncertain about what the word "family" or "parents" or "home" mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

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This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

MRS. CLINTON: We are so happy to have all of you here in the Oval Office with us today. And I know that the families that are here and the children and teenagers who are here all have a story to tell about how your families were created. And I would like to ask if I could -- I know that several of you actually were united with the children who are here because of television shows that you saw the children on. And perhaps you could tell us what happened and how that came to be.

Would you like to start? And maybe you should tell everyone who you are and introduce yourself.

Yes.

MR. BORIE: My name is Glenn Borie. My wife is Carolyn, and these are our four children -- John, Crystal, Charity and Dawn.

MRS. BORIE: We had been foster parents and were looking to adopt and knew that there were a lot of options. But seeing how children often get lost in the system, our hearts went towards them, knowing that -- very desirable and young and end up in the system for a long time and are less desirable to people at that point when they are available.

So we have been, by chance, by God's will, had the television on on a particular day when there was a talk show about adoption. And for a brief 20 seconds we saw Crystal on TV and just caught in our heart at that time. And as we saw the number for the National Adoption Center we found out she had three siblings.

Within a month the two older ones, John and Crystal, had moved in. We started visits with Charity and Dawn and two months later they moved in as well. Before they were separated in two foster homes for five years, so when the two younger ones moved in the week before

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Thanksgiving it was the first time in five years that they'd spent that together. And we just had a very thankful time to just thank God for an incredible family.

MRS. CLINTON: We're glad you're here today.

Did you also have a television?

MS. GRAY: Actually, no. I had adopted Michael when he was only eight years old -- I was 44 at the time, a divorced woman, wanted a child, and I was totally lost. This is the most amazing thing that I've ever experienced in my life, is having the gift of this beautiful child here.

And work for a company, Phoenix Insurance Company, which is an incredibly supportive company. And we have a subsidy for people up to \$2,000 for adoption of children. And the company has been supportive in a lot of ways. Me, as a single parent -- so it's just -- I'm delighted that you're doing this. Because as I go around and I tell people I adopted a child and I was 44 and he came from the state, I get all of these surprised looks -- how could you get him as a single parent, you know, are there children in the system. I think we have a huge job ahead of us in terms of educating people about getting children out of the public system. Kids are there and they need us.

MRS. CLINTON: I absolutely agree.

MS. GRAY: And they need companies like mine to support us.

MRS. CLINTON: And what about your family story.

MR. INGLESE: Hi, my name is Larry Inglese, and we were a foster family to start off with. I always loved children and wanted to have a lot of children. I saw this commercial on TV to open up your heart and your home to a special needs child. So I responded to that commercial and, of course, being a foster parent who liked having children in Pennsylvania, St. Joseph's called about adopting. And I went through with adoption of -- they set us up in a match party. And I met Jason there, who was 13 at the time.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you now, Jason?

JASON INGLESE: I'm 15.

MR. INGLESE: He's going to be 16 next month.

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And him and I, we just, like, made eye contact. We sat down, we had lunch, we looked at each other in the eye and we both knew at that minute I was his father and he was my son. There was no doubt, no doubt whatsoever. But they had another family that had wanted Jason with two parent -- I'm a single parent, and they had a two-parent home. But that lady there kept changing her mind back and forth, so I said -- the two of us came to -- you know, this isn't for sure with her, I think I should get first choice over Jason because I'm willing to make a commitment now. And she agreed.

He was sure and I was sure, and through adoption got him. And then sometime later I was ready for the next one, and the caseworker was calling around, trying to find a home for Michael. Michael has got cerebral palsy and he's got mild mental retardation. He has a lot of problems with -- he came out, it was hard to find him a home. Anyway, finally, I accepted, I said I would take him.

But there were some race issues at the time, but they wouldn't let me have him right away. It took about -- it was about five or six months. They contacted me back and they couldn't get another family to take him so they accepted us. But I was kind of upset at the time because we were ready to give him a loving home and it didn't happen -- because of one caseworker, it didn't happen as fast as it should have. But we finally got him.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MR. INGLESE: And we finalized with him in November, November 15th of this year.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that's wonderful -- in time for Thanksgiving. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: You have -- how many kids do you have now?

MR. INGLESE: I have three biological children, two adopted, and I've had 23 foster children.

MRS. CLINTON: That's great.

And what about your story?

MRS. BRYANT: My name is Frances Bryant. This is my husband, Michael Bryant. And we also saw Trey on the television program. We were watching the news one night, and normally I don't actually watch this particular channel, and for some reason I was just glued to this news. And I had never seen a commercial with children on

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it asking for a home. And then I saw Trey and he was on there and just touched my heart so much. And I wrote down the number and it was 1-800-KIDS hotline -- and I got up right after it went off and I told my husband about it. I said, you wouldn't believe what I just saw on TV. You know, I had never seen a child asking for a home.

There was no way that I could refuse this. I mean, it just touched my heart so. And we called the very next day and found out the information, and we went through the process and it only took about two months and we got Trey in our home. And what the amazing thing is that I realized how many children are out there waiting to be adopted. And I encourage anyone who can open up their heart and their home to a child -- it's a wonderful, rewarding experience. And I'm also going to do it again.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we have some children here who are waiting for homes, and maybe you could introduce yourself. Which ones -- who wants to go first? Anybody want to say anything?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

DANIEL: My name is Daniel, and I've been waiting for a family for quite a long time. And hopefully, in a short amount of time I will probably get what I'm looking for in a family. My brother has already been adopted, and hopefully I'll get adopted by his family at one point of time. And if not, I'll still be able to get in contact with him.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you?

DANIEL: Thirteen.

THE PRESIDENT: How old is your brother?

DANIEL: Seventeen.

MRS. CLINTON: How long have you been in foster care?

DANIEL: About two, three years.

MRS. CLINTON: Two or three years?

DANIEL: I'm not sure, but --

THE PRESIDENT: Where's your home? Where do you live?

DANIEL: Where do I live now? Alexandria.

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THE PRESIDENT: Anybody else want to talk?

MRS. CLINTON: What's your name? I'm glad you're here this morning.

One of the goals that we have with trying to do this and, as you say, talk more about education of people about adoption, and something the Secretary and the President and all of us are committed to, is so that more people know what your experience has been like. And anytime you raise a child, it is not all easy. We know that. I mean, there are going to be ups and downs no matter what. But I think that your stories about the emotional feeling that you had when you met your children is something that if we can get more people to see, we'll have more response. Do you agree with that, too?

MS. GRAY: Absolutely. I saw Michael the first time, he was four weeks old, and, as you say, I knew that this is my little boy. I was all pumped up thinking, oh, I'm going to adopt a little girl because I know about girls -- then I saw this little boy and it was all over.

But it has been an enormous blessing for me and for my family. He's just an incredible, an incredible gift. And I just wish that more and more people could have that experience. There is such a mythology about adoption, and if we could just get the word out and just get people to go and see and talk to these beautiful children, we could find them all homes, and have stable, loving parents who care about them and will raise them as strong citizens. And it's the greatest thing I've ever done in my whole entire life.

MRS. CLINTON: That's what we're going to try to do. And you all are experts because you've been through the system. What are some of the changes that we need to make in the system that each of you has dealt with so that we can perhaps encourage more people to be involved? Any thoughts about that?

MS. BORIE: Just the length of time that it takes. In my situation, I'm thankful that it took longer only because I would not have had them otherwise. But it breaks my heart to know that -- these are my children and to know that they were separated from each other for that long. It's heart-wrenching. And I may not have been their parent at that time, but having them now, in my heart I was their parent all that time. And to think that they had to go without each other, as a parent, it's just very sad. And it shouldn't have taken that long.

MRS. CLINTON: How long did it take?

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MRS. BORIE: They were in care for about five years. Our experience -- happened more quickly than usual. It was very speedy, thankfully. But to know that they were apart for that long was unnecessary.

MS. GRAY: I'd like to see us do a lot more with companies. I'm sure that -- I'm speaking on behalf my company because it's very supportive getting started, Phoenix Insurance. And anybody who wants to talk to me about it, please call because I want to help other companies do the same thing. If we could just get companies to tell their employees about these kinds of opportunities -- to do more through their newsletters and to say we're offering a benefit -- that would be great.

MRS. CLINTON: And the new legislation that the President signed to give people the \$5,000 tax credit -- that's something we need to make sure people know about, too, because you obviously don't do these things because of that, but there are expenses associated with taking a child into your home, especially a child with medical problems. Have you found that?

MR. INGLESE: Well, I'm lucky as far as my problems because Michael's medication alone comes to about \$800 a month and I could never afford that on my own. But I have a Pennsylvania Medical Access Card which covers his medical, and he needs many operations that he's been in even before I got him and he still -- he just got an operation, I think it was last month. They cover everything, totally. All his needs are met and paid for by the state. And I think it would be, like, impossible for me to adopt him if the state didn't pay for his needs and medical care because it's a tremendous amount and it's a tremendous expense.

Also what I want to say to others who are thinking about adopting, I think it's -- from what I find with some of the children, that they gave the parents too many years, they keep the children in foster care too many years. Jason was first in foster care from an infant. And he didn't get put up for adoption until he was 13 years old. It went so many years back and forth that he went back to the birth family and then taken away and back and forth. And Michael was also five years. His mother abandoned him at birth. He was put in foster care right from the hospital when he was born. And he's been in through foster homes in the five years before I adopted him.

I think it should be a lesser amount of time a child -- don't give the parents that long to try to get their children back. I think a year should be good

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enough. If a parent don't clean up their act within the year, then that child should be put in a loving home where he will get all the love that his natural parents can't give him.

MRS. CLINTON: How do you feel about that, Jason? Do you have an opinion about that?

JASON: Yes. Basically, I agree on the same. It shouldn't take that much time because with a child, of course, he's going to think that it should because he's going to want to go back with his biological parents, but to sit here and think about it, I would have liked it that way than to keep going back, keep taken away, keep going back -- for it to keep happening like that.

MR. INGLESE: Each time a new foster home. The other foster homes, they fill up. So he was like in, I think, about 12 or 13 foster homes and it was new one each time. He couldn't even go back to the same foster home where he knew the people. So he had to go through that struggle of trying to fit in with new family all over again and over and over and over again.

THE PRESIDENT: How many foster homes have you lived with?

DANIEL: About three.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you feel it's hard when you change?

DANIEL: It's a bit. After a while, you get sort of used to it, but it's still hard.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for what you're doing and thank you for the example.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END

10:26 A.M. EST

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION: SAFE AND PERMANENT HOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

Today, President Clinton issued a challenge to the nation and signed a directive to members of his Cabinet to take new actions to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes. The goal of the President's ambitious new initiative is to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in foster care who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. After consulting with Congressional, state and civic leaders, agencies will report back to the President within 60 days on steps to reach the directive's goals, which include:

I. Doubling the Number of Children Adopted or Permanently Placed by 2002:

Create Incentives for States: To shift the focus from paperwork to successful outcomes, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will work with states to set specific targets for increases in the number of children adopted or found permanent placement. In return, the federal government will provide a new per child financial incentive to states to increase the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. This action should nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system. Progress in meeting the numerical targets will be compiled and published in a state-by-state annual report. Successful states will be recognized for their accomplishments.

Breakdown Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption: HHS will continue to aggressively implement the laws signed by President Clinton in 1994 and 1996, which prohibit adoption agencies from denying or delaying placement of a waiting child based on race, color, or national origin, and encourage recruitment of adoptive parents.

II. Moving Children More Rapidly From Foster Care to Permanent Homes:

Decrease Procedural Delays: President Clinton is directing HHS to consult with Congress, states and civic leaders to propose changes to federal laws, policies and regulations and clarification of the "reasonable effort" requirement, to help states focus on finding permanent homes for children from the moment they enter the foster care system.

Help States Identify and Address Barriers to Permanency: As part of his budget proposal in February, the President will propose financial assistance for states to identify barriers to permanency and to develop strategies for children who have been waiting for a particularly long time. The President's initiative also directs HHS to encourage alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship and kinship care, for children for whom adoption is not a viable option.

III. Increasing Public Awareness:

Call to American Families, Communities and Business: The Clinton Administration will launch a new campaign in partnership with state, civic and business leaders, to increase public awareness about children waiting for adoption and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption -- in new public service announcements, print materials, and on the Internet.

Provide Information on the Benefits of Adoption: Federal agencies will form partnerships to inform people of the new adoption tax credits, the Family and Medical Leave Act benefits, and other supports for adoptive parents, as well as recognize private sector companies with model policies to encourage adoption. The Office of Personnel Management will provide support and information to federal employees who are interested in becoming adoptive parents.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

Our Nation has no greater responsibility than to ensure that every child has the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. We can help meet that challenge by identifying a permanent, loving family for every child waiting in the foster care system.

-- President Clinton, National Adoption Month Proclamation, November 1996

President Clinton is committed to giving the over 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. The President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations.

Today the President announced a new directive to the Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor and Commerce and the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan to: increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, and create a new public awareness campaign on the importance of adoption. These actions build on previous initiatives, including:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

In August, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which provides a \$5000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This policy will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

GIVING STATES FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT

The Clinton Administration has granted child protection waivers to Delaware, Illinois, North Carolina, and Oregon, giving the states more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. Up to six more states will receive approval for waivers. In addition, this administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations so they can focus on successful outcomes. To prevent children from entering foster care in the first place, in 1993 the Clinton Administration secured federal funding to work with states, local governments and service providers to develop effective programs to serve children and families at risk.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

Text of Presidential Directive on Adoption

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Following is a memorandum from President Clinton to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce and the director of the Office of Personnel Management:

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;

(b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby offsetting much if not all of the incentive payments;

(c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;

(d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and

(e) Plans to recognize successful States.

II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;

(b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;

(c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of "dispositional hearings" is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;

(d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;

(e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and

(f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month -- a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

(a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort, including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;

(b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;

(c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and

(d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Questions and Answers on Adoption
• DO NOT DISTRIBUTE - FOR BACKGROUND ONLY •

Q. What is the purpose of the President's directive?

A. The purpose of the President's directive is to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in the foster care system who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. It also will increase public awareness on the importance and benefits of adoption.

Since 1993, the Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to promote and encourage adoption. President Clinton is committed to giving the 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. This directive builds on these commitments and accomplishments.

Q. Now that the President signed the directive, what will happen?

A. The Department of Health and Human Services, working with the Departments of Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management, will conduct an intensive consultation process on a bipartisan basis with Congress, states, civic and business leaders to develop a plan to meet the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and increasing the number of children adopted or permanently placed. The Secretary of Health and Human Services will report back to the President in sixty days on specific steps to reach the directive's goals. And many of their recommendations will be incorporated into the President's budget to be presented to Congress in February.

Q. Is this directive ambitious enough?

A. Today there are 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. These children are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home-life that is neither safe nor secure. While most of these children eventually return home, nearly 100,000 of them will not. These children that cannot be reunited with their parents wait typically 3 years or more to find permanent homes. More than half of waiting children have special needs, such as minorities, children with disabilities, sibling groups and older children.

Given these circumstances, the President's goal in this directive to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the foster care system is extremely ambitious and exciting. Of course, our ultimate goal is that all children in foster care find what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. Why didn't the President take this step earlier?

A. Since taking office, President Clinton has made increasing adoption and improving the foster care system a priority. He has signed critical legislation that have removed significant financial and racial barriers to adoption. The Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 provides a \$5,000 tax credit for families who adopt children and a \$6,000 tax credit for families who adopt children with special needs. Building on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity. He has championed programs like the Family and Medical Leave Act which supports adopting families and signed a welfare reform law that preserves the guarantee of and resources for child protection and adoption. The President and the First Lady have promoted and encouraged the importance and benefits of adoption through speeches, events and public service announcements. This directive builds on the President's strong commitment to and accomplishments on this issue.

Q. Are you trying to preempt Congress on adoption?

A. No. We are committed to working with Congress in a bipartisan manner to develop a plan to increase the number of children adopted or permanently placed from foster care and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. Finding safe and permanent homes for all children is a goal to which we know everyone is committed and should be addressed in a bipartisan way. There is increasing consensus on this on a bipartisan level.

The President's directive presents an extraordinary opportunity for the Federal government, Congress, states, communities, and advocacy organizations to work together toward giving children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. How much will this initiative cost?

A. The directive does not carry any cost right now, as it simply directs members of the President's Cabinet to consult with Congress, states, and civic leaders to develop a plan to increase adoptions and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. The President's FY 1998 budget will contain the necessary funding for this initiative.

The provision of offering financial incentives to states will nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system.

Q. Which Cabinet agencies are involved in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management were directed by the President to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, from 27,000 to 54,000, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system.

Q. What role do you see for States in implementing the President's directive on Adoption?

A. States are the operators of the public welfare system and therefore are critical to ensuring the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and doubling the number of children adopted and or permanently placed by the year 2002. We plan to work extremely closely with states, consulting with them on every aspect of the President's directive. We know that the states share the President's commitment to increasing adoption and improving the foster care system and we are counting on them to directly assist HHS in the formulation and implementation of the new action plan on adoption.

Q. What role do you see for advocacy groups and foundations in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. Today, before the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families (HHS) will brief key advocacy groups and foundations on the directive. We have worked closely with advocacy groups and foundations on past adoption initiatives and we plan to consult with them on the President's new directive. We welcome advocacy groups and foundations' participation in developing and helping states implement new strategies on adoption, as they have immense knowledge and experience in this area.

Q. What were the adoption-related provisions in the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. The Small Business Job Protection Act does three things:

- Strengthens the language of the 1994 Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) to make it even clearer that neither foster placements nor adoptions may be delayed or denied solely on the basis of the cultural, ethnic or racial background of the child or the prospective foster or adoptive parents;
- Imposes financial penalties for States (and other agencies receiving federal funds) which fail to comply with MEPA; and
- Provides a \$5,000 adoption tax credit for all adoptions, and a \$6,000 tax credit for special needs adoptions.

MEPA also included the State Plan requirement for States to provide for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Q. What has HHS done to implement these new inter-ethnic provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. On November 14, the Department issued an Information Memorandum to give the States and the public the details of the inter-ethnic adoption legislation. That issuance (which also announced the new kinship preference which Congress added to the child welfare laws) informed the public that the procedures for applying the penalty would be published at a later date.

The Department has taken or begun a number of other actions to implement the provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act. These include meeting with the Internal Revenue Service to develop a public information strategy on the adoption tax credit, and establishing a working group of Children's Bureau and Office of Civil Rights staff to begin work on a procedure and protocol to ensure consistent application of the new penalty provisions.

Q: What is the Draft National Adoption Strategic Plan and how does it relate to the President's Directive?

A: Last year, HHS's Children's Bureau organized a national meeting, which included State adoption managers, representatives from national advocacy organizations and private non-profit organizations, adoptive parents and Federal staff to draft a strategic plan to increase the number of children adopted from the public child welfare system. This Plan was written as a draft or working document to provide an outcome-focused framework for all those involved with the adoption of special needs children from the public child welfare system. The President's directive will build on many ideas put forth in Draft Plan

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. bios	Adoptive Families and Children Attending the President's Radio Address (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)
002. list	Participants in Adoption Radio Address (partial) (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)
003. list	[participant families' clearance information] (2 pages)	nd	P6/b(6)
004. bios	Adoptive Families and Children Attending the President's Radio Address (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
 First Lady's Office
 Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
 OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S

kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
 P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
 P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
 P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
 P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
 P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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 b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

LIVE WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

DATE: December 14, 1996
LOCATION: Oval Office
TIME: 10:06AM EDT
FROM: Nicole Rabner, Laura Schwartz

I. PURPOSE

To deliver your weekly radio address on the importance of adoption and announce a Presidential memorandum directing members of your Cabinet to take specific steps to increase adoptions and move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes.

II. BACKGROUND

Surrounded by adoptive families and children in local foster care, you and the First Lady will deliver the weekly radio address, in which you will announce a memorandum to members of your Cabinet.

Presidential Memorandum

The Presidential memorandum instructs the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor, Commerce and the Director of Personnel Management to undergo wide consultation and report to you in sixty days with a specific proposal to move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. Specifically, the memorandum:

- calls for the creation of state-specific numerical targets and financial incentives to states to increase the number of adoptions. The bonus payments will be offset by decreases in foster care costs and will nearly pay for themselves.
- asks for proposed changes to federal regulations and legislation to emphasize permanency and decrease delays.
- calls for the Departments to take appropriate action to disseminate materials, challenge businesses to support adoptive parents, and raise public awareness on the importance of adoption.

Your FY98 budget proposal will include the necessary funding allocation for the memorandum.

You will sign the memorandum just prior to the radio address during the event briefing.

Discussion

Following the radio address, you and the First Lady will lead a brief discussion with the assembled families and waiting children (see attached bios).

Invited Guests

Approximately 70 leaders on adoption issues in the foundation and advocacy communities have been invited to the event. They will gather in the Roosevelt Room where, prior to the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, HHS, will conduct a briefing on the initiative you will announce. They will then watch your radio address on closed-circuit television, and, following your address and discussion, have an opportunity to meet you and the First Lady in the Oval Office.

Press Notes

The press pool will be in the Oval Office for your radio address. **You do NOT need to look at the camera while reading the radio address; please note that the cameras will start to roll as soon as you and the First Lady walk through the door.** There will be a cough button on the water table next to you should you need it.

PLEASE NOTE: the press pool will remain in the Oval Office for this discussion.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The President

The First Lady

Adoptive Families and Waiting Children (see attached bios)

Foundation and Advocacy Leaders (see attached list)

White House Communications Agency (WHCA) staff

White House Television(WHTV)

White House photographer

Special guests (See attached)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Your radio address and discussion following will be covered by the White House press pool. The networks will have the opportunity to take it LIVE.

The ABC, CNN, AP, C-SPAN, CBS, NBC, Mutual, UPI, USA, American Urban Radio Network, and Standard News radio networks will carry the address live in its entirety to their thousands of stations across the country Saturday at 10:06 AM EDT.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

9:45am Briefing (Oval study)

10:06am Live Radio Address with the First Lady (on camera in Oval)

Discussion with families and children (on camera in Oval)

App.10:30am Greet Guests (off camera in Oval)

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by David Shipley.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DISCUSSION WITH FAMILIES AFTER THE RADIO ADDRESS

FLOTUS OPENS DISCUSSION: We have here in this room adoptive families and some children in foster care who are looking for permanent homes. I want to thank you each for coming here today. To the families, I want to say a special thank you for opening your hearts and your homes to children who needed and deserved one. I know first hand that raising a child is a huge responsibility.

Question #1 TELEVISION SHOWS (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Two of the families here today met their adoptive children through television programs highlighting children in foster care who were looking for permanent homes. Can the **Borié** [Ba-ree] and **Bryant Families** tell us a little bit about that?

POTUS FOLLOW-UP COMMENT: I hope that every local TV station will consider doing what the Bryant's local station and others across the nation are already doing -- regularly featuring children waiting for loving and safe, permanent homes.

Question #2 MOTIVATION TO ADOPT (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Can you tell us what motivated you personally to want to adopt a child in foster care? [Bryant and Gray families; NOT the Ingleses if possible]

Question #3 CHANGES SINCE ADOPTED (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We have had the opportunity to know children both before and after they were adopted and have often been astonished by the difference it has made in their lives and how they have changed. Has that been true for any of you?

[Mr. Inglesc's [In-gee-zee's] son Jason has gone from doing poorly in school and often getting in trouble to being chosen at Student of the Month]

Question #4 FOR THE WAITING CHILDREN (EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

With us today are some of the children who this event is really all about -- children in foster care who are waiting for permanent homes -- would any of you like to say something?

[Note: If no one immediately answers, you could ask **Daniel**, a 13 year old Hispanic boy who has been in foster care since 1992 because of his mother's terminal illness.]

Question #5 PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We all have an opportunity and responsibility -- families, communities, government, religious organizations, and the private sector -- to do our part to help every child have the loving, permanent family they deserve. Businesses nationwide have established policies to support their employees who adopt children. **Fredrica Gray** works for such a company, the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hartford, CT, one of the company's on the Honor Roll of the Women's Bureau at the Labor Department. Fredrica is here with her adoptive son, Michael. Can you tell us about your employer's policies and the motivation behind those policies?

Questions and Answers on Adoption
• DO NOT DISTRIBUTE - FOR BACKGROUND ONLY •

Q. What is the purpose of the President's directive?

A. The purpose of the President's directive is to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in the foster care system who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. It also will increase public awareness on the importance and benefits of adoption.

Since 1993, the Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to promote and encourage adoption. President Clinton is committed to giving the 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. This directive builds on these commitments and accomplishments.

Q. Now that the President signed the directive, what will happen?

A. The Department of Health and Human Services, working with the Departments of Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management, will conduct an intensive consultation process on a bipartisan basis with Congress, states, civic and business leaders to develop a plan to meet the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and increasing the number of children adopted or permanently placed. The Secretary of Health and Human Services will report back to the President in sixty days on specific steps to reach the directive's goals. And many of their recommendations will be incorporated into the President's budget to be presented to Congress in February.

Q. Is this directive ambitious enough?

A. Today there are 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. These children are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home-life that is neither safe nor secure. While most of these children eventually return home, nearly 100,000 of them will not. These children that cannot be reunited with their parents wait typically 3 years or more to find permanent homes. More than half of waiting children have special needs, such as minorities, children with disabilities, sibling groups and older children.

Given these circumstances, the President's goal in this directive to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the foster care system is extremely ambitious and exciting. Of course, our ultimate goal is that all children in foster care find what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. Why didn't the President take this step earlier?

A. Since taking office, President Clinton has made increasing adoption and improving the foster care system a priority. He has signed critical legislation that have removed significant financial and racial barriers to adoption. The Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 provides a \$5,000 tax credit for families who adopt children and a \$6,000 tax credit for families who adopt children with special needs. Building on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity. He has championed programs like the Family and Medical Leave Act which supports adopting families and signed a welfare reform law that preserves the guarantee of and resources for child protection and adoption. The President and the First Lady have promoted and encouraged the importance and benefits of adoption through speeches, events and public service announcements. This directive builds on the President's strong commitment to and accomplishments on this issue.

Q. Are you trying to preempt Congress on adoption?

A. No. We are committed to working with Congress in a bipartisan manner to develop a plan to increase the number of children adopted or permanently placed from foster care and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. Finding safe and permanent homes for all children is a goal to which we know everyone is committed and should be addressed in a bipartisan way. There is increasing consensus on this on a bipartisan level.

The President's directive presents an extraordinary opportunity for the Federal government, Congress, states, communities, and advocacy organizations to work together toward giving children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. How much will this initiative cost?

A. The directive does not carry any cost right now, as it simply directs members of the President's Cabinet to consult with Congress, states, and civic leaders to develop a plan to increase adoptions and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. The President's FY 1998 budget will contain the necessary funding for this initiative.

The provision of offering financial incentives to states will nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system.

Q. Which Cabinet agencies are involved in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management were directed by the President to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, from 27,000 to 54,000, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system.

Q. What role do you see for States in implementing the President's directive on Adoption?

A. States are the operators of the public welfare system and therefore are critical to ensuring the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and doubling the number of children adopted and or permanently placed by the year 2002. We plan to work extremely closely with states, consulting with them on every aspect of the President's directive. We know that the states share the President's commitment to increasing adoption and improving the foster care system and we are counting on them to directly assist HHS in the formulation and implementation of the new action plan on adoption.

Q. What role do you see for advocacy groups and foundations in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. Today, before the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families (HHS) will brief key advocacy groups and foundations on the directive. We have worked closely with advocacy groups and foundations on past adoption initiatives and we plan to consult with them on the President's new directive. We welcome advocacy groups and foundations' participation in developing and helping states implement new strategies on adoption, as they have immense knowledge and experience in this area.

Q. What were the adoption-related provisions in the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. The Small Business Job Protection Act does three things:

- Strengthens the language of the 1994 Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) to make it even clearer that neither foster placements nor adoptions may be delayed or denied solely on the basis of the cultural, ethnic or racial background of the child or the prospective foster or adoptive parents;
- Imposes financial penalties for States (and other agencies receiving federal funds) which fail to comply with MEPA; and
- Provides a \$5,000 adoption tax credit for all adoptions, and a \$6,000 tax credit for special needs adoptions.

MEPA also included the State Plan requirement for States to provide for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Q. What has HHS done to implement these new inter-ethnic provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. On November 14, the Department issued an Information Memorandum to give the States and the public the details of the inter-ethnic adoption legislation. That issuance (which also announced the new kinship preference which Congress added to the child welfare laws) informed the public that the procedures for applying the penalty would be published at a later date.

The Department has taken or begun a number of other actions to implement the provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act. These include meeting with the Internal Revenue Service to develop a public information strategy on the adoption tax credit, and establishing a working group of Children's Bureau and Office of Civil Rights staff to begin work on a procedure and protocol to ensure consistent application of the new penalty provisions.

Q: What is the Draft National Adoption Strategic Plan and how does it relate to the President's Directive?

A: Last year, HHS's Children's Bureau organized a national meeting, which included State adoption managers, representatives from national advocacy organizations and private non-profit organizations, adoptive parents and Federal staff to draft a strategic plan to increase the number of children adopted from the public child welfare system. This Plan was written as a draft or working document to provide an outcome-focused framework for all those involved with the adoption of special needs children from the public child welfare system. The President's directive will build on many ideas put forth in Draft Plan

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION: SAFE AND PERMANENT HOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

Today, President Clinton issued a challenge to the nation and signed a directive to members of his Cabinet to take new actions to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes. The goal of the President's ambitious new initiative is to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in foster care who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. After consulting with Congressional, state and civic leaders, agencies will report back to the President within 60 days on steps to reach the directive's goals, which include:

I. Doubling the Number of Children Adopted or Permanently Placed by 2002:

Create Incentives for States: To shift the focus from paperwork to successful outcomes, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will work with states to set specific targets for increases in the number of children adopted or found permanent placement. In return, the federal government will provide a new per child financial incentive to states to increase the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. This action should nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system. Progress in meeting the numerical targets will be compiled and published in a state-by-state annual report. Successful states will be recognized for their accomplishments.

Breakdown Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption: HHS will continue to aggressively implement the laws signed by President Clinton in 1994 and 1996, which prohibit adoption agencies from denying or delaying placement of a waiting child based on race, color, or national origin, and encourage recruitment of adoptive parents.

II. Moving Children More Rapidly From Foster Care to Permanent Homes:

Decrease Procedural Delays: President Clinton is directing HHS to consult with Congress, states and civic leaders to propose changes to federal laws, policies and regulations and clarification of the "reasonable effort" requirement, to help states focus on finding permanent homes for children from the moment they enter the foster care system.

Help States Identify and Address Barriers to Permanency: As part of his budget proposal in February, the President will propose financial assistance for states to identify barriers to permanency and to develop strategies for children who have been waiting for a particularly long time. The President's initiative also directs HHS to encourage alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship and kinship care, for children for whom adoption is not a viable option.

III. Increasing Public Awareness:

Call to American Families, Communities and Business: The Clinton Administration will launch a new campaign in partnership with state, civic and business leaders, to increase public awareness about children waiting for adoption and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption -- in new public service announcements, print materials, and on the Internet.

Provide Information on the Benefits of Adoption: Federal agencies will form partnerships to inform people of the new adoption tax credits, the Family and Medical Leave Act benefits, and other supports for adoptive parents, as well as recognize private sector companies with model policies to encourage adoption. The Office of Personnel Management will provide support and information to federal employees who are interested in becoming adoptive parents.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

Our Nation has no greater responsibility than to ensure that every child has the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. We can help meet that challenge by identifying a permanent, loving family for every child waiting in the foster care system.

-- President Clinton, National Adoption Month Proclamation, November 1996

President Clinton is committed to giving the over 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. The President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations.

Today the President announced a new directive to the Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor and Commerce and the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan to: increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, and create a new public awareness campaign on the importance of adoption. These actions build on previous initiatives, including:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

In August, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which provides a \$5000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This policy will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

GIVING STATES FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT

The Clinton Administration has granted child protection waivers to Delaware, Illinois, North Carolina, and Oregon, giving the states more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. Up to six more states will receive approval for waivers. In addition, this administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations so they can focus on successful outcomes. To prevent children from entering foster care in the first place, in 1993 the Clinton Administration secured federal funding to work with states, local governments and service providers to develop effective programs to serve children and families at risk.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents, and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption; and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home life that is neither safe, nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer

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can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be uncertain about what the word "family" or "parents" or "home" mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

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The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up* to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

MRS. CLINTON: We are so happy to have all of you here in the Oval Office with us today. And I know that the families that are here and the children and teenagers who are here all have a story to tell about how your families were created. And I would like to ask if I could -- I know that several of you actually were united with the children who are here because of television shows that you saw the children on. And perhaps you could tell us what happened and how that came to be.

Would you like to start? And maybe you should tell everyone who you are and introduce yourself.

Yes.

MR. BORIE: My name is Glenn Borie. My wife is Carolyn, and these are our four children -- John, Crystal, Charity and Dawn.

MRS. BORIE: We had been foster parents and were looking to adopt and knew that there were a lot of options. But seeing how children often get lost in the system, our hearts went towards them, knowing that -- very desirable and young and end up in the system for a long time and are less desirable to people at that point when they are available.

So we have been, by chance, by God's will, had the television on on a particular day when there was a talk show about adoption. And for a brief 20 seconds we saw Crystal on TV and just caught in our heart at that time. And as we saw the number for the National Adoption Center we found out she had three siblings.

Within a month the two older ones, John and Crystal, had moved in. We started visits with Charity and Dawn and two months later they moved in as well. Before they were separated in two foster homes for five years, so when the two younger ones moved in the week before

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Thanksgiving it was the first time in five years that they'd spent that together. And we just had a very thankful time to just thank God for an incredible family.

MRS. CLINTON: We're glad you're here today.

Did you also have a television?

MS. GRAY: Actually, no. I had adopted Michael when he was only eight years old -- I was 44 at the time, a divorced woman, wanted a child, and I was totally lost. This is the most amazing thing that I've ever experienced in my life, is having the gift of this beautiful child here.

And work for a company, Phoenix Insurance Company, which is an incredibly supportive company. And we have a subsidy for people up to \$2,000 for adoption of children. And the company has been supportive in a lot of ways. Me, as a single parent -- so it's just -- I'm delighted that you're doing this. Because as I go around and I tell people I adopted a child and I was 44 and he came from the state, I get all of these surprised looks -- how could you get him as a single parent, you know, are there children in the system. I think we have a huge job ahead of us in terms of educating people about getting children out of the public system. Kids are there and they need us.

MRS. CLINTON: I absolutely agree.

MS. GRAY: And they need companies like mine to support us.

MRS. CLINTON: And what about your family story.

MR. INGLESE: Hi, my name is Larry Inglese, and we were a foster family to start off with. I always loved children and wanted to have a lot of children. I saw this commercial on TV to open up your heart and your home to a special needs child. So I responded to that commercial and, of course, being a foster parent who liked having children in Pennsylvania, St. Joseph's called about adopting. And I went through with adoption of -- they set us up in a match party. And I met Jason there, who was 13 at the time.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you now, Jason?

JASON INGLESE: I'm 15.

MR. INGLESE: He's going to be 16 next month.

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And him and I, we just, like, made eye contact. We sat down, we had lunch, we looked at each other in the eye and we both knew at that minute I was his father and he was my son. There was no doubt, no doubt whatsoever. But they had another family that had wanted Jason with two parent -- I'm a single parent, and they had a two-parent home. But that lady there kept changing her mind back and forth, so I said -- the two of us came to -- you know, this isn't for sure with her, I think I should get first choice over Jason because I'm willing to make a commitment now. And she agreed.

He was sure and I was sure, and through adoption got him. And then sometime later I was ready for the next one, and the caseworker was calling around, trying to find a home for Michael. Michael has got cerebral palsy and he's got mild mental retardation. He has a lot of problems with -- he came out, it was hard to find him a home. Anyway, finally, I accepted, I said I would take him.

But there were some race issues at the time, but they wouldn't let me have him right away. It took about -- it was about five or six months. They contacted me back and they couldn't get another family to take him so they accepted us. But I was kind of upset at the time because we were ready to give him a loving home and it didn't happen -- because of one caseworker, it didn't happen as fast as it should have. But we finally got him.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MR. INGLESE: And we finalized with him in November, November 15th of this year.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that's wonderful -- in time for Thanksgiving. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: You have -- how many kids do you have now?

MR. INGLESE: I have three biological children, two adopted, and I've had 23 foster children.

MRS. CLINTON: That's great.

And what about your story?

MRS. BRYANT: My name is Frances Bryant. This is my husband, Michael Bryant. And we also saw Trey on the television program. We were watching the news one night, and normally I don't actually watch this particular channel, and for some reason I was just glued to this news. And I had never seen a commercial with children on

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it asking for a home. And then I saw Trey and he was on there and just touched my heart so much. And I wrote down the number and it was 1-800-KIDS hotline -- and I got up right after it went off and I told my husband about it. I said, you wouldn't believe what I just saw on TV. You know, I had never seen a child asking for a home.

There was no way that I could refuse this. I mean, it just touched my heart so. And we called the very next day and found out the information, and we went through the process and it only took about two months and we got Trey in our home. And what the amazing thing is that I realized how many children are out there waiting to be adopted. And I encourage anyone who can open up their heart and their home to a child -- it's a wonderful, rewarding experience. And I'm also going to do it again.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we have some children here who are waiting for homes, and maybe you could introduce yourself. Which ones -- who wants to go first? Anybody want to say anything?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

DANIEL: My name is Daniel, and I've been waiting for a family for quite a long time. And hopefully, in a short amount of time I will probably get what I'm looking for in a family. My brother has already been adopted, and hopefully I'll get adopted by his family at one point of time. And if not, I'll still be able to get in contact with him.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you?

DANIEL: Thirteen.

THE PRESIDENT: How old is your brother?

DANIEL: Seventeen.

MRS. CLINTON: How long have you been in foster care?

DANIEL: About two, three years.

MRS. CLINTON: Two or three years?

DANIEL: I'm not sure, but --

THE PRESIDENT: Where's your home? Where do you live?

DANIEL: Where do I live now? Alexandria.

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THE PRESIDENT: Anybody else want to talk?

MRS. CLINTON: What's your name? I'm glad you're here this morning.

One of the goals that we have with trying to do this and, as you say, talk more about education of people about adoption, and something the Secretary and the President and all of us are committed to, is so that more people know what your experience has been like. And anytime you raise a child, it is not all easy. We know that. I mean, there are going to be ups and downs no matter what. But I think that your stories about the emotional feeling that you had when you met your children is something that if we can get more people to see, we'll have more response. Do you agree with that, too?

MS. GRAY: Absolutely. I saw Michael the first time, he was four weeks old, and, as you say, I knew that this is my little boy. I was all pumped up thinking, oh, I'm going to adopt a little girl because I know about girls -- then I saw this little boy and it was all over.

But it has been an enormous blessing for me and for my family. He's just an incredible, an incredible gift. And I just wish that more and more people could have that experience. There is such a mythology about adoption, and if we could just get the word out and just get people to go and see and talk to these beautiful children, we could find them all homes, and have stable, loving parents who care about them and will raise them as strong citizens. And it's the greatest thing I've ever done in my whole entire life.

MRS. CLINTON: That's what we're going to try to do. And you all are experts because you've been through the system. What are some of the changes that we need to make in the system that each of you has dealt with so that we can perhaps encourage more people to be involved? Any thoughts about that?

MS. BORIE: Just the length of time that it takes. In my situation, I'm thankful that it took longer only because I would not have had them otherwise. But it breaks my heart to know that -- these are my children and to know that they were separated from each other for that long. It's heart-wrenching. And I may not have been their parent at that time, but having them now, in my heart I was their parent all that time. And to think that they had to go without each other, as a parent, it's just very sad. And it shouldn't have taken that long.

MRS. CLINTON: How long did it take?

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MRS. BORIE: They were in care for about five years. Our experience -- happened more quickly than usual. It was very speedy, thankfully. But to know that they were apart for that long was unnecessary.

MS. GRAY: I'd like to see us do a lot more with companies. I'm sure that -- I'm speaking on behalf my company because it's very supportive getting started, Phoenix Insurance. And anybody who wants to talk to me about it, please call because I want to help other companies do the same thing. If we could just get companies to tell their employees about these kinds of opportunities -- to do more through their newsletters and to say we're offering a benefit -- that would be great.

MRS. CLINTON: And the new legislation that the President signed to give people the \$5,000 tax credit -- that's something we need to make sure people know about, too, because you obviously don't do these things because of that, but there are expenses associated with taking a child into your home, especially a child with medical problems. Have you found that?

MR. INGLESE: Well, I'm lucky as far as my problems because Michael's medication alone comes to about \$800 a month and I could never afford that on my own. But I have a Pennsylvania Medical Access Card which covers his medical, and he needs many operations that he's been in even before I got him and he still -- he just got an operation, I think it was last month. They cover everything, totally. All his needs are met and paid for by the state. And I think it would be, like, impossible for me to adopt him if the state didn't pay for his needs and medical care because it's a tremendous amount and it's a tremendous expense.

Also what I want to say to others who are thinking about adopting, I think it's -- from what I find with some of the children, that they gave the parents too many years, they keep the children in foster care too many years. Jason was first in foster care from an infant. And he didn't get put up for adoption until he was 13 years old. It went so many years back and forth that he went back to the birth family and then taken away and back and forth. And Michael was also five years. His mother abandoned him at birth. He was put in foster care right from the hospital when he was born. And he's been in through foster homes in the five years before I adopted him.

I think it should be a lesser amount of time a child -- don't give the parents that long to try to get their children back. I think a year should be good

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enough. If a parent don't clean up their act within the year, then that child should be put in a loving home where he will get all the love that his natural parents can't give him.

MRS. CLINTON: How do you feel about that, Jason? Do you have an opinion about that?

JASON: Yes. Basically, I agree on the same. It shouldn't take that much time because with a child, of course, he's going to think that it should because he's going to want to go back with his biological parents, but to sit here and think about it, I would have liked it that way than to keep going back, keep taken away, keep going back -- for it to keep happening like that.

MR. INGLESE: Each time a new foster home. The other foster homes, they fill up. So he was like in, I think, about 12 or 13 foster homes and it was new one each time. He couldn't even go back to the same foster home where he knew the people. So he had to go through that struggle of trying to fit in with new family all over again and over and over and over again.

THE PRESIDENT: How many foster homes have you lived with?

DANIEL: About three.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you feel it's hard when you change?

DANIEL: It's a bit. After a while, you get sort of used to it, but it's still hard.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for what you're doing and thank you for the example.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END

10:26 A.M. EST

Adoption Event
Saturday December 14, 1996

Invited Guests

Jane Barowitz
Kathy Sylvester
Sheryl Dicker
Norman Stein
Ron Field
James Weill
Susan Bales
Zena Oglesby
Kathy Bonk
Velora Washington
Carolyn Johnson
Ann Sullivan
Dixie van de Flier Davis
Mary Bellor
Jann Heffner
Ruth Massinga
Douglas Nelson
Susan Notkin
Julie Rogers
Howard Davidson
Frank Farrow
William Pierce
Laurie Rankin
Gloria Hockman
Calvin Cafritz
Diane Bernstein
John Williams
Susan Cox
Gerald Peter Digre
Wendy Walker Whitworth
Ralph Whitworth
Michael Thorton
Ida Castro
Joseph Kroll
Marc Tucker
Max Stein
Drenda Lakin
Lester Cash
Ellen Carey
Michael O'Connor

Organization

Jewish Child Care
Progressive Policy
Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
Family Service America
Children's Defense Fund
America's Children
Institute for Black Parenting
Communications Consortium
Kellogg Foundation
Nat'l Adoption Ctr
Child Welfare League
Adoption Exchange
Phillip Graham Fund
Wendy's Foundation
Casey Family Program
Annie Casey Found.
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Eugene & Agnes Meyer Foundation
ABA Center for Family
Center for Social Policy
Nat'l Council for Adoption
Blatner Associates
Nat'l Adoption Center
Cafritz Foundation
DC Action for Children
Holt Child Services
Holt Child Services
Dept. of Children & Family Services
Adoptive Parent
Adoptive Parent
Treasury
Labor
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Communications Consortium
son of Norman Stein
Spaulding Center
OMB
HHS
Center for Law & Human Services

Elizabeth Meitner
Skandar Alexander
Tom Richards
Stanley Hockman
Steve Humerickhouse

Child Welfare League
Child Welfare League
Adoptive Families of America
husband- Gloria Hockman
Adoption Exchange

Beverly Jones
Karen Ballard
Betty Graham
Carolyn Deeter-Evans
Calvin Johnson
Joyce Shepherd
Beth Walker
Ruth Kaplan
Steve Minner

Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Associate Professor
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Assistant Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Manager
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Area Manager
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Title IVE Coordinator
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Assistant Director
Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare, Director

Health and Human Services Staff

Ellen Carey	HHS
Olivia Golden	HHS
Mike Ambrose	HHS
Lucille McCluney	HHS
Toby Graff	HHS
Ann Rosewater	HHS

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. list	Participants in Adoption Radio Address (partial) (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S
kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

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RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
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Participants in Adoption Radio Address December 14, 1996

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>SS#</u>	<u>DOB</u>
✓ Jane Barowitz	Jewish Child Care	(212) 303-4613		
✓ Kathy Sylvester	Progressive Policy	(202) 547-0001		
Sheryl Dicker	Judicial Commission	(914) 422-4425		
Norman Stein	on Justice for Children			
	Judicial Commission	(914) 422-4425		
	on Justice for Childeren			
Ron Field	Family Service America	(202) 347-1124		
✓ James Weill	Children's Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787		
Susan Bales	America's Children	(202) 638-5770		
✓ Zena Oglesby	Institute for Black	(310) 348-1400		
	Parenting			
✓ Kathy Bonk	Communications	(202) 326-8700		
	Consortium			
✓ Velora Washington	Kellogg Foundation	(616) 969-2337		
✓ Carolyn Johnson	Nat'l Adoption Ctr	(215) 735-9988		
✓ Ann Sullivan	Child Welfare League	(202) 638-2952		
✓ Dixie van de Flier	Adoption Exchange	(303) 333-0845		
Davis				
Mary Bellor	Phillip Graham Fund	(202) 334-6640		
anna Heffner	Wendy's Foundation	(614) 764-8454		
Ruth Massinga	Casey Family Program	(206) 282-7300		
✓ Douglas Nelson	Annie Casey Found.	(410) 223-2931		
✓ Susan Notkin	Edna McConnell Clark	(212) 551-9100		
	Foundation			
Julie Rogers	Eugene & Agnes Meyer	(202) 483-8294		
	Foundation			
✓ Howard Davidson	ABA Center for Family	(202) 662-1740		
✓ Frank Farrow	Center for Social Policy	(202) 371-1565		
✓ William Pierce	Nat'l Council for Adoption	(202) 328-1200		
✓ Laurie Rankin	Blatner Associates	(609) 466-0200		
✓ Gloria Hockman	Nat'l Adoption Center	(215) 735-9988		
✓ Calvin Cafritz	Cafritz Foundation	(202) 296-0866		
Diane Bernstein	DC Action for Children	(202) 234-9404		
John Williams	Holt Shild Services	(541) 687-2202		
✓ Susan Cox	Holt Child Services	(541) 687-2202		
✓ Gerald Peter Digre	Dept. of Children &	(213) 351-5601		
	Family Services			
Wendy Walker	Larry King Live	(202) 898-7696		
Whitworth				
Ralph Whitworth	Larry King Live	(202) 898-7696		
Michael Thorton	Treasury	(202) 622-1336		

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✓ Ida Castro Labor (202) 219-6611
 ✓ Joseph Kroll North American Council (612) 644-3036
 on Adoptable Children
 Marc Tucker Communications Consortium
 Max Stein son of Norman Stein
 ✓ Brenda Lakin Spaulding Center
 Lester Cash OMB (202) 395-7763
 Michael O'Connor Center for Law & (312) 341-1666
 Human Services
 Elizabeth Meitner Child Welfare League (202) 942-0257
 Iskandar Alexander Child Welfare League (202) 942-0257
 Tom Richards Adoptive Families (612) 535-4829
 of America
 Stanley Hockman husband- Gloria Hockman (215) 735-9988
 ✓ Steve Humerickhoufe Adoption Exchange (612) 521-1098

Ellen Carey HHS (202) 205- 8652
 Olivia Golden HHS (202) 401-6953
 ✓ Mike Ambrose HHS (202) 205-8618
 Lucille McCluney HHS (202) 690-8618
 ✓ Toby Graff HHS (202) 690-7854
 Ann Rosewater HHS (202) 690-7409

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Beverly Jones Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Karen Ballard Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Betty Graham Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Carolyn Deeter-Evans Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Calvin Johnson Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Joyce Shepherd Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Beth Walker Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Ruth Kaplan Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation
 Steve Minner Arkansas Partnership in Public Child Welfare Delegation

STATE OF COLORADO

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

136 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203-1792
Phone (303) 866-2421



December 13, 1996

Roy Romer
Governor

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I congratulate you on your policy on adoption, particularly your efforts to expedite the placement of children with supportive families. This is an issue which is critically important to the State of Colorado and I welcome the support of your office as we attempt to deal with this vital issue.

Colorado is anxious to work with you as you develop a national forum for planning and implementation of state and federal systems to better serve children and help to move them quickly out of foster care to permanent and supportive families. We are very concerned that we minimize the disruption in the lives of children when they experience difficulties in their families of origin.

In Colorado, we are focusing intently on these issues. We are working with our state judicial system, with the assistance of the chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court, with the Colorado General Assembly, and with representatives of county governments, private providers, and representatives of the juvenile corrections, mental health, substance abuse treatment and developmental disability systems to develop a procedure that will minimize disruption in the lives of children, assure their safety, and see that they do not languish in foster care. Your emphasis on strengthening and supporting adoptions for children who cannot be reunited with their families of origin is a most important effort.

Again, I welcome your national leadership on the issue of adoption and on the broad issue of helping children find and flourish in permanent, supportive families.

Sincerely,

Roy Romer
Governor



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
RALEIGH 27603-8001

JAMES B. HUNT JR.
GOVERNOR

December 13, 1996

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I have been made aware that you will be spearheading an initiative in the near future to focus attention on reducing the time children are in foster care and removing the existing barriers that impede adoption. I applaud your concern for children who need permanent, loving families.

In North Carolina, this is a priority for us. We are now implementing a Child Welfare Demonstration Project that seeks to reduce the number of children who stay in foster care for longer than a year. This cooperative effort involves county departments of social services, local officials and representatives from private organizations. It takes the concerted effort of all sectors of the community to help ensure that children grow up healthy and safe.

We look forward to hearing more about your initiative and are anxious to work with you in addressing the needs of these children. All children deserve to be raised in nurturing, loving homes.

My warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Hunt".

James B. Hunt, Jr.

JBH:atl

END



THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

LAWTON CHILES

December 13, 1996

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Rhea and I want to commend you and the First Lady for your personal efforts to promote adoption initiatives in our country. Florida shares your deep concern about the well-being of our children. In fact, my top priority, as governor of Florida, is strengthening our children and families. Helping the nearly 1,700 Florida foster children awaiting adoption find a permanent home is an important part of my Children's Initiative.

I'm committed to promoting adoption because I believe every child deserves a place to call home -- a home where someone will remember their birthdays and a home to celebrate the holidays. That's why I'm pleased by your strong commitment to set an agenda, goals and strategy to weave the benefits of adoption into the nation's overall children's policies and programs. I know your leadership on this issue will help enrich the lives of countless adoptive families and children in our country.

In our home, we know the joy adoption can bring to a family. About 30 years ago, my wife and I adopted a beautiful little girl and named her Rhea. In the years since she joined our family, I've had the satisfaction of watching her grow from a child to a young woman. She is now a mother and a strong advocate for adoption. I'm very proud of her and I cherish the joy she has brought into our lives. Today, my daughter Rhea is playing a leading role in helping our foster kids find permanent homes by spearheading the Governor's Partnership for Adoption.

We're working hard to promote adoption in Florida. Thanks to our partnership with churches and private organizations we've increased Florida's adoption rate by more than 80 percent over the past five years. One project that we're excited about is our Internet adoption home page that we established in July.

The Honorable Bill Clinton
December 13, 1996
Page Two

Our adoption home page provides our foster children in need of a permanent home with an address on the World Wide Web. It also gives prospective parents an easy way to consider adoption by featuring photographs and brief biographies of children in need of a loving home. Since our adoption effort went "on line" we've had nearly 8,000 visits to our home page -- and we receive about 100 requests each month for further information about how to adopt a child. Thanks to our Internet effort we currently have people going through the process to adopt a child featured on our home page.

Again, thank you Mr. President for being a strong champion for our children. Your work to encourage adoption will help enhance the lives of the families and children all across our country. Please know that we in Florida stand ready to work with all states and the federal government to ensure every child has a loving family and home.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely


LAWTON CHILES



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • TTY/TDD (360) 753-6466

December 13, 1996

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

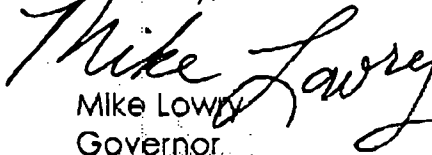
Dear Mr. President:

I applaud the effort you are spearheading to help children move from foster care to permanent families. This is an issue of great importance in Washington State, and I know that other Governors join me in welcoming any assistance the federal government can share with potential adoptive families.

More than twenty years ago, Washington was one of the first states to provide financial assistance to families to remove barriers to the adoption of children from the child welfare system. More recently, we have implemented the Families for Kids program, a joint effort of public and private agencies and the courts, to move children from long-term foster care into adoptive families more quickly.

I look forward to hearing more about your plans, and applaud your leadership and commitment to helping children find stable, loving homes.

Sincerely,


Mike Lowmy
Governor

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
003. list	[participant families' clearance information] (2 pages)	nd	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S
kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

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RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 14, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF LABOR
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Steps to Increase Adoptions and Alternate
Permanent Placement for Waiting Children
in the Public Child Welfare System

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working

with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

- I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
 - (a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;
 - (b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby offsetting much if not all of the incentive payments;
 - (c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;
 - (d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and
 - (e) Plans to recognize successful States.

- II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
- (a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;
 - (b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;
 - (c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of "dispositional hearings" is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;
 - (d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;
 - (e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and
 - (f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month -- a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

- (a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort, including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;
- (b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;
- (c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and
- (d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

William J. Clinton

Clinton Seeks Doubling Of Adoptions

HHS Ordered to Find Foster Care Solutions

AI By Al Kamen
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton yesterday ordered administration officials to find ways to double by 2002 the number of children adopted from foster homes in hopes of reducing the time that children languish in that system.

Clinton's call for changes in the process comes as Congress is working on overhauling legislation of adoption policies that promise to be one of the major social policy debates in the next session.

"I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child to a family and a family to a child," Clinton said in his weekly radio address from the Oval Office.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system, Clinton said, placed there because of abuse, neglect or other reasons. Most eventually return to their homes, he said, but nearly 100,000 do not. "Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes," he said.

Clinton said his goal was to make adoption easier and "to make moving children out of foster care easier," in order to increase adoptions of foster children each year from 27,000 to 54,000.

As a first step, Clinton ordered Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala to report back to him in 60 days on what new measures, including financial incentives to the states, will be needed to meet the administration's new goal.

The recommendations coincide with draft legislation circulating in Congress that aims to accelerate the adoption process. Among its sponsors are Sens. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio) and John D. "Jay" Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.) and Reps. Dave Camp (R-Mich.) and Barbara B. Kennelly (D-Conn.).

Some of the areas likely to be addressed in the legislation, and in Shalala's report include:

- Making it far easier for states to remove children from families where the child has been tortured, subject to severe physical or sexual abuse or where a sibling has died from abuse or neglect.
- Requiring states to evaluate the

See CLINTON, A19, Col. 1

CLINTON, From A1

status of children in foster homes earlier and more frequently so that they will not languish there for unnecessarily long periods.

■ Providing financial bonuses to states that move children out of long-term foster care and into permanent, adoptive families. The money most likely will come from reducing the federal assistance available for foster care after a certain period of time. HHS officials expect any new financial incentive would pay for itself, because increasing adoptions would reduce foster care costs, which are about \$15,000 a year per child.

The current adoption law, passed in 1980, requires states to pursue "reasonable efforts" to keep families together to qualify for federal money for foster care.

"Reasonable efforts" have been broadly interpreted by the courts, and some members of Congress feel that too often little emphasis is put on "reasonable."

Despite the bipartisan support for change, adoption legislation is may be controversial because of concerns by the "parental rights" movement that the states will too quickly put a child up for adoption without consideration of the biological parents' rights. States may also object to proposed penalties for failing to move children out of foster care fast enough, according to social policy specialists who have followed the issue.

In his Oval Office address yesterday, attended by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Shalala, several adoptive parents and their children as well as and four children waiting to be adopted, Clinton said that he was "proud" to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt and to ban racial preferences in adoption. That measure passed Congress earlier this year.

There had been some speculation, fueled by a comment by Hillary Clinton in a Time magazine interview last May, that the Clintons were considering adopting a child.

The White House yesterday said the Clintons had decided against adopting a child while they are in the White House because they would not be able to give the child enough attention.

A spokesman said Clinton, in several pre-Christmas interviews not yet made public, "didn't rule it out for later in life but he basically said it wouldn't work here in the White House," Reuter reported.

Hillary Clinton ignored a question yesterday about their adopting a child.

Staff writer Judith Havemann contributed to this report.

The Washington Post

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1996

President Tells Government To Promote More Adoptions

By ALISON MITCHELL

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 — President Clinton today directed the Federal Government to take steps to double the number of children moved from foster care to adoption over the next six years.

He announced the initiative in his weekly radio address, and was joined on the air by his wife, Hillary, by adoptive families and by children hoping for a permanent home.

"I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family, and a family to a child," Mr. Clinton said.

This drive to increase adoption continues the family-centered themes that he promoted throughout his election campaign, and it is not likely to be contentious. House Republicans made an adoption tax-credit a plank in their Contract With America campaign agenda in 1994. Earlier this year, Mr. Clinton signed Republican-initiated legislation that gave a tax credit of \$5,000 to families adopting children and made it easier for parents to adopt children of a different race.

There are now 450,000 children in the nation's foster-care system, which is run by the states with Federal aid and supervision. Of those children, 100,000 are considered to have no parent to return to and are ready to be placed in a permanent new home. But only 27,000 of those children a year are moved from foster care to adoption, officials say.

Mr. Clinton today told the Department of Health and Human Services to report to him in 60 days on steps that can be taken to insure that 54,000 foster children a year are adopted by the year 2002. He said the department should consider possible changes in Federal laws and regulations.

Officials said that among steps the department is examining, the Federal Government would work with states to set specific targets for adoptions. In return, the Government would provide a new financial incentive per child for states to increase the number of adoptions from the public welfare system.

The officials said that as part of his budget proposal in February, Mr. Clinton would propose financial assistance to states for developing strategies to promote the adoption of difficult-to-place children who have been languishing in the foster care system and for studying what barriers block states from finding permanent homes for children.

Melissa T. Skolfield, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services, said the amount of financial assistance that would be proposed for the states had not yet been determined. And although she said the financial incentive to states for each child adopted had not yet been settled on, the action was not expected to require new Federal funds because increased adoptions would reduce foster care spending.

Mr. Clinton today also called for a Government-wide public relations campaign to make Americans aware of adoption opportunities. As if beginning that campaign themselves, the Clintons asked the parents and children accompanying them to tell their

*A goal is set for
doubling the number
of children moved
from foster care.*

stories on the air.

"My name is Daniel," said one 13-year old boy from a local foster care program, who was not further identified because he is a minor. "And I've been waiting for a family for a long time. And hopefully in a short amount of time I will probably get what I'm looking for in a family. My brother has already been adopted, and hopefully I'll get adopted by his family at one point of time."

Mrs. Clinton has been a strong proponent of adoption, even telling Time magazine earlier this year that she and her husband might consider an adoption because they would love to have another child. White House officials said the Clintons had decided to postpone any decision on an adoption until after the President is out of office because he would not have the time to devote to a new child.

DO NOT FORGET THE NEEDIEST!

The New York Times

Sunday, December 15, 1996 /

Clinton vows to speed children into adoption

By Joyce Price
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton yesterday pledged to double the number of children moved from foster care to permanent adoptive homes in the next five years, but ruled out adopting a child of his own until after he leaves the White House.

"No child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care, particularly when there are families with open arms waiting," the president said in his weekly radio address.

Mr. Clinton said there are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. About 100,000 of them will wait years to be placed.

"Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them," Mr. Clinton said.

In hopes of reducing the waiting period, the president said he had "just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal" of "doubling the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes — from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002.

"This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one."

The directive orders Health and Human Services Secretary Donna

E. Shalala to report back in 60 days on how best to promote and increase adoptions, including "what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates," Mr. Clinton said.

As for his plans, Mr. Clinton said through his staff that his duties as president would not permit him to adopt, at least not now.

During the presidential campaign, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton told Time magazine she and her husband had discussed the possibility of adopting. They now have one daughter, Chelsea, 16.

But Assistant White House Press Secretary Barry Toiv told reporters the Clintons won't be adopting any time soon, because they believe "they would not be able to devote the time and attention a baby would need."

In an interview with Reuters news agency, Mr. Toiv cited a number of pre-Christmas presidential interviews, not yet published or aired, in which Mr. Clinton said he "didn't rule out" adoption "later in life" but that he felt "it wouldn't work here in the White House."

Mrs. Clinton ignored a question about the possibility of adoption at the radio address event yesterday, according to published reports. But she chatted with many of the guests on the air, asking them how they came to find their new families and homes.

The Washington Times

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1996

Clinton Backs Tax Credit For Adoption

GOP Bill Is Endorsed; Interracial Placements Could Be Expedited

By Barbara Vobejda
Washington Post Staff Writer

A1

In a letter he will send to House Republican leaders today, President Clinton will endorse Republican legislation that would allow most adoptive families to claim a \$5,000 tax credit and penalize states whose adoption agencies delay placement of a child to find a family of the same race, White House sources said yesterday.

The president will embrace provisions that have traditionally been in the Republican domain. The adoption tax credit was part of the House GOP's "Contract With America," and Republicans have been most vocal in opposing racial matching in adoption placements.

"Promoting adoption is one of the most important things we can do to strengthen American families and give more children what every child in America deserves—loving parents and a healthy home," the president says in his letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post.

It will be the second time in three days that the president has gotten involved in measures affecting families, a topic likely to play a major role in this year's presidential election. And both times, the president staked out positions likely to alienate some liberals.

On Saturday, he announced he would require states to end welfare payments to teenage parents who refuse to stay in school or to live with a parent or guardian.

In endorsing the adoption bill, Clinton said he "strongly supported" the tax credit—which would be \$5,000 for families earning up to \$75,000 a year. The size of the credit would gradually decline for families earning between \$75,000 and \$115,000; families earning more than \$115,000 would not be eligible for a credit.

Also, he goes further than he has in the past to interject himself directly into the emotional and divisive issue of interracial adoption.

The bill, slated to go to the House floor this week, would prohibit states or adoption agencies from discriminating on the basis of race

See ADOPT, A5, Col. 1

ADOPT, From A1

against families who want to adopt. Agencies could consider race in placing a child if there are two or more qualified families, but may not delay placement while waiting for a parent of the same race.

That language, Clinton says in his letter, is consistent with "my long-standing goal to end the historical bias against interracial adoptions, which too often has meant interminable waits for children to be matched with parents of the same race."

Republicans said they welcome the endorsement, but pointed out that the president had vetoed a welfare bill last year that contained similar language on interracial adoptions.

"We're happy to have it," Rep. Susan Molinari (R-N.Y.) said of the endorsement. "I know he had tentative problems with trans-racial adoptions in the past. . . . I hope this signals to Democrats to join with us."

More than 400,000 children are in the foster care system, about half of whom are minorities. Minority children wait longer to be adopted than do white children, according to studies.

Among children in foster care, only about 21,000 are legally available for adoption, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. And of those, two out of three have "special needs," including emotional or physical disabilities or the need to be placed as part of a sibling group.

Many Republicans and some Democrats, including former senator Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), have contended that the policy of race matching has kept thousands of African American children languishing in foster care for years. But social workers say that the high number in foster care stems from the difficulty in placing children with special needs.

Legislation was adopted in 1994 with the intention of banning race matching, but Metzenbaum and others were dissatisfied with Clinton administration regulations interpreting the law because they allowed agencies to consider race. Administration

*"The only reason
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not opposed to
interracial
adoption."*

— Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.)

officials say the law has been aggressively enforced, reducing the number of states that give an automatic preference to black families in the adoption of black children.

Still, Republicans have pushed for a new law that would ban racial placement outright, essentially establishing a colorblind system that would match children and families without regard to race.

While that was the original language in the bill when it went before

the Ways and Means Committee, it was amended to allow race to be considered when there is more than one qualified family seeking to adopt a child. The bill, which was approved by the committee on a voice vote, would also go further than current law to penalize states that do not comply.

Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.), who has argued vociferously against a "first-come, first-served" approach, said the new language does not change the current law. "The only reason the president's doing all of this is . . . because he wants to make it clear he's not opposed to interracial adoption. . . . But if he feels good saying it, okay."

David Liederman, executive director of the Child Welfare League of America, called the tax credit a "misdirection" of resources in a tight fiscal climate, essentially helping middle-class families while other proposals would cut funding for programs meant to help those willing to adopt special-needs children.

"I would have hoped the president would have spoken to that," Liederman said.

It is estimated the credit would cost the government \$1.7 billion over seven years, and the GOP bill would offset the revenue loss with income gained in enforcing new anti-fraud provisions on foreign trusts and from repeal of a tax exclusion for businesses purchasing energy conservation measures.

THE WASHINGTON POST
MONDAY, MAY 6, 1996

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

"We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be." -- President Clinton, Radio Address, December 12, 1996

President Clinton is following an ambitious legislative and administrative agenda to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes. This agenda is laid out in a report submitted to the President on February 14, 1997 by the Department of Health and Human Services, in response to an Executive Memorandum signed by President Clinton on December 14, 1996. The report, entitled "Adoption 2002," takes its name from one of the President's central goals -- to at least double by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. "Adoption 2002" is a blueprint for bipartisan Federal leadership in adoption and other permanency planning for children in the public child welfare system.

In receiving the "Adoption 2002" report, the President committed to following its ambitious action plan for federal leadership, including new assistance to states to set and meet urgent new adoption targets. Additionally, the President pledged to clarify, through legislation and guidelines to states, the laws, such as the "reasonable efforts" standard, that govern whether and when to remove a child from his or her family and when to reunify them. The President also committed to creating sensible financial incentives to states to increase adoption rates, and to providing technical assistance to states, courts and communities to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes.

The Clinton Administration has previously taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. Since taking office in 1993, the President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations. These steps include:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

In August, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which provides a \$5000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This policy will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs. Since President Clinton took office, the number of children with special needs who were adopted with Federal adoption assistance has risen by 60 percent.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

ADOPTION ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Increase the adoption placement rate for hard-to-place children. Set numerical targets to double the number of children who are adopted over the next three years. This would eliminate the backlog of waiting children.

ACTIONS:

1. Goal-oriented Planning and Technical Assistance. Work with states that commit to meet numerical targets by providing technical assistance on the development of outcome measures and automated data systems to help reach these goals. Estimated cost: \$10 million/year.
2. Non-financial Incentives for Improved Performance. Recognize successful states through special commendations or White House events and foster competition by issuing an annual state-by-state report card.
3. Financial Incentives. Increase reimbursement for adoption subsidies for special needs adoptions by \$1,000 in states that reach or come within 5% of reaching of the annual target. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$75 million over 3 years.

Raise federal match to states for recruiting adoptive families from 50% to 75%.
Estimated cost: \$150 million over 3 years, assuming states continue to spend at current levels for recruitment.

GOAL 2: Find permanent homes for waiting children within one year of entering the child welfare system.

ACTIONS:

1. Statutory Changes. Under current law, states are required to hold a dispositional hearing 18 months after a child has been placed in foster care. Develop legislation to shorten that period to 12 months and require administrative hearings every six months.
2. Regulatory Changes. Currently, the federal government requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent placement and reunify families before a parent's rights can be legally terminated. Clarify and expand definition of reasonable efforts so that it allows arrangement for a permanent home for a child in a timely manner.

Change "dispositional hearings" to "permanency planning" hearings by clarifying that planning can include referrals for termination of parental rights or to legal guardianship or other permanent placement.

3. Financial Assistance. Make funds available through the Adoption Opportunities Act to states for a "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project" to identify barriers, propose and implement solutions, and target funds to place children who have been waiting particularly long times and to implement the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act. Estimated cost: \$30 million.

GOAL 3: Increase public awareness of the benefits of adoption. Undertake a high visibility education and awareness campaign and promote "adoption-friendly" policies in the public and private sectors.

ACTIONS:

1. Direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to lead a public awareness effort, including public service announcements, use of the internet, and the appointment of a high-profile advisory council with members chosen for their ability to represent and work with various "sectors" of the community (e.g., faith community, business, entertainment industry, etc.).
2. Direct the Secretary of the Treasury to disseminate information about tax benefits and other adoption benefits.
3. Direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to promote adoption among Federal employees and make the Federal government a model of adoption-friendly policies.

This would include: (1) developing legislation to reimburse Federal employees if they adopt a child (proposed during the Bush Administration but not passed); and (2) directing all agencies to provide information and support (e.g., a bank of federal employees who have adopted to act as mentors for prospective adoptive parents).

4. Direct the Secretaries of Labor and Commerce to identify and recognize model adoption-friendly policies in the private sector.

POSSIBLE ADOPTION ACTIONS

September 12, 1996

GOAL 1: Increase the adoption placement rate for hard-to-~~find~~^{place} children. Set numerical targets so that the number of children with (special needs) who are adopted over the next three years would be doubled. This would eliminate the backlog of waiting children.

ACTIONS:

1. Goal-oriented Planning and Technical Assistance. Work with states that commit to meet numerical targets by providing technical assistance on the development of outcome measures and automated data systems to help reach these goals. Estimated cost: \$10 million/year.
 2. Non-financial Incentives for Improved Performance. Recognize successful states through special commendations or White House events and foster competition by issuing an annual state-by-state report card.
 3. Financial Incentives. Increase reimbursement for adoption subsidies for special needs adoptions by \$1,000 in states that reach or come within 5% of reaching of the annual target. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$75 million over 3 years.
- above
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- Raise federal match to states for recruiting adoptive families from 50% to 75%. Estimated cost: \$150 million over 3 years, assuming states continue to spend at current levels for recruitment.

GOAL 2: Find permanent homes for waiting children within one year of entering the child welfare system.

ACTIONS: *Direct HHS*

1. Statutory Changes. Under current law, states are required to hold a dispositional hearing 18 months after a child has been placed in foster care. Develop legislation to shorten that period to 12 months.
2. Regulatory Changes. Currently, the federal government requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent placement and reunify families before a parent's rights can be legally terminated. Clarify and expand definition of reasonable efforts so that it allows arrangement for a permanent home for a child in a timely manner.

Now
*Develop reg. on 4 mths.
reg / admin.
authority*

Change "dispositional hearings" to "permanency planning" hearings by clarifying that planning can include referrals for termination of parental rights or to legal guardianship or other permanent placement.

3. Financial Assistance. Make funds available through the Adoption Opportunities Act to states for a "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project" to identify barriers, propose and implement solutions, and target funds to place children who have been waiting particularly long times and to implement the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act. Estimated cost: \$30 million. *inc 3 yr.*

GOAL 3: Increase public awareness of the benefits of adoption. Undertake a high visibility education and awareness campaign and promote "adoption-friendly" policies in the public and private sectors. *Exec order*

ACTIONS:

1. Direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to lead a public awareness effort, including public service announcements, use of the internet, and the appointment of a high-profile advisory council with members chosen for their ability to represent and work with various "sectors" of the community (e.g., faith community, business, entertainment industry, etc.).
2. Direct the Secretary of the Treasury to disseminate information about tax benefits and other adoption benefits.
3. Direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to promote adoption among Federal employees and make the Federal government a model of adoption-friendly policies.

leg - in place
This would include: (1) developing legislation to create a new category of leave benefits for Federal employees to provide 5 days of paid leave for adoptive parents and an additional 5 days for parents who adopt children with special needs (in addition to current leave benefits); (2) developing legislation to reimburse Federal employees if they adopt a child (proposed during the Bush Administration but not passed); and (3) directing all agencies to provide information and support (e.g., a bank of federal employees who have adopted to act as mentors for prospective adoptive parents).

4. Direct the Secretaries of Labor and Commerce to identify and recognize model adoption-friendly policies in the private sector.

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
370 L'ENFANT PROMENADE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20447**

TO:*Melanne Verveer / Nicole Rabner***Telephone:****Fax:***452-6244***Number of Pages (excluding cover):***4***FROM:**

**Wendy Jacobson
Special Assistant to the
Deputy Assistant Secretary**

Telephone:**(202) 260-1853****Fax:****(202) 205-3848****MESSAGE:**

*Memo for Melanne
as requested by Jennifer
Klein.*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

TO: Melanne Verveer
FROM: Ann Rosewater *Ann Rosewater*
SUBJECT: Adoption Information

As requested, the attached document details more fully two priority action steps to advance adoption of children. The first action addresses increasing the number of children who are adopted; the second addresses expediting permanency for waiting children.

Let me know the next steps, and of course call me if you have questions.

Adoption Actions

GOAL #1: Increase the number of children who are adopted. In 1999, 40,000 special needs children will be adopted -- about twice as many children as were adopted in 1994 (most recent year for which data are available). By the end of 1997, 25,000 children will be adopted, an increase of 25%; by the end of 1998, 30,000 children will be adopted, an increase of 50% and by the end of 1999, 40,000 children will be adopted, an increase of 100% over the three years.

ACTIONS. Direct HHS to: 1) work with states through intensive planning and technical assistance to help them meet specified targets; 2) create non-financial incentives for improved performance by states; and 3) develop legislation to provide financial incentives to states to meet established targets.

1) Planning and technical assistance

- Move to an outcome orientation. Engage in planning with states that commit to meeting specific numerical targets, and provide technical assistance on the development and utilization of outcome measures, and on the use of automated data systems to track progress toward these goals.

Propose legislation which would make 0.25% of the Title IV-E foster care and adoption budget available to provide significantly enhanced technical assistance to the states in the areas of foster care and adoption assistance. ESTIMATED COST: \$10 million/year.

2) Non-financial incentives for improved performance

- Provide for recognition. Recognize successful states through special certificates or White House events.
- Foster positive competition. Issue an annual state-by-state report card, which may encourage states to improve their status.

3) Financial incentives (would require legislative action)

- Increase reimbursement for adoption subsidies. Currently, the Federal government reimburses states for a portion of the cost of providing adoption subsidies to families that adopt special needs children. As states achieve, or come within 5% of the annual target for special needs adoptions, they would receive an extra \$1000 per child, for every special needs child adopted that year. These funds should be used for increased subsidies for adoptive families or other adoption-related activities.

ESTIMATED COST: Between \$50 million and \$100 million over

three years, depending on how many states reach the annual targets.

- Provide an enhanced match for recruiting of adoptive families. To more substantially reimburse states for their efforts to recruit adoptive families, the federal match rate could be raised from 50 percent to 75 percent. ESTIMATED COST: \$375 million over 5 years, assuming states continue to spend what they currently spend on recruitment.

GOAL #2: Expedite permanency for waiting children. Make "establishing permanency for children within a year" a reality.

ACTIONS. Through a series of statutory and regulatory changes, as well as financial assistance, help states focus effectively on establishing permanency for children.

1) Statutory change

- Expedite hearings. Under current law, states are required to ensure a dispositional hearing 18 months after a child has been placed in foster care, and every 12 months thereafter. Develop legislation to shorten the time frame for the initial dispositional hearing to 12 months.

2) Regulatory changes

- Expand "Reasonable Efforts". The federal government currently requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent placement and to reunify families before a parent's rights can be legally terminated. Amend current "reasonable efforts" policy so that it also applies to arranging for a permanent home for a child in a timely manner.

Clarify the fact that current law does not require "infinite" efforts to reunify families, or presume that reunification must be the initial goal in every case. Provide states with guidance and information on state statutes that specify time limits or contain "not at all" provisions for reunification for certain children/family situations.

- Reorient "Dispositional Hearings" Make permanency planning the central focus of these hearings by changing "dispositional hearings" to "permanency planning" hearings. Currently these hearings seek to determine the future status of the child through three options: a) return to parent; b) place for adoption; or c) due to special circumstances, continue in foster care on a permanent basis. Clarify these options such that b) includes referring for termination of parental rights, and c) includes referral to legal guardianship or other permanent placement.

3) Financial assistance

- Make funds available to states to undertake a "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project" through which they would assess the average delays, identify barriers and propose and implement solutions. This would be the agency-related counterpart to the court-improvement project, through which the Administration is working with state courts in 49 states to improve the timeliness and quality of decision-making that leads to adoption. ESTIMATED COST: \$10 million.
- Based on assessments completed through the "Removing Barriers to Permanency Project," make funds available to states to focus on placing those children who have been waiting a particularly long time -- provide funds to do additional recruitment, homestudies or whatever is needed. ESTIMATED COST: \$20 million.
- Make funds available to help states carry out the recruitment provisions specified in the Multiethnic Placement Act. ESTIMATED COST: This activity could be undertaken as part of the recruiting incentives identified in the second bullet under Goal #1 (3) above.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

LIVE WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

DATE: December 14, 1996
LOCATION: Oval Office
TIME: 10:06AM EDT
FROM: Nicole Rabner, Laura Schwartz

I. PURPOSE

To deliver your weekly radio address on the importance of adoption and announce a Presidential memorandum directing members of your Cabinet to take specific steps to increase adoptions and move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes.

II. BACKGROUND

Surrounded by adoptive families and children in local foster care, you and the First Lady will deliver the weekly radio address, in which you will announce a memorandum to members of your Cabinet.

Presidential Memorandum

The Presidential memorandum instructs the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor, Commerce and the Director of Personnel Management to undergo wide consultation and report to you in sixty days with a specific proposal to move children more quickly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or permanently placed each year. Specifically, the memorandum:

- calls for the creation of state-specific numerical targets and financial incentives to states to increase the number of adoptions. The bonus payments will be offset by decreases in foster care costs and will nearly pay for themselves.
- asks for proposed changes to federal regulations and legislation to emphasize permanency and decrease delays.
- calls for the Departments to take appropriate action to disseminate materials, challenge businesses to support adoptive parents, and raise public awareness on the importance of adoption.

Your FY98 budget proposal will include the necessary funding allocation for the memorandum.

You will sign the memorandum just prior to the radio address during the event briefing.

Discussion

Following the radio address, you and the First Lady will lead a brief discussion with the assembled families and waiting children (see attached bios).

Invited Guests

Approximately 70 leaders on adoption issues in the foundation and advocacy communities have been invited to the event. They will gather in the Roosevelt Room where, prior to the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, HHS, will conduct a briefing on the initiative you will announce. They will then watch your radio address on closed-circuit television, and, following your address and discussion, have an opportunity to meet you and the First Lady in the Oval Office.

Press Notes

The press pool will be in the Oval Office for your radio address. **You do NOT need to look at the camera while reading the radio address; please note that the cameras will start to roll as soon as you and the First Lady walk through the door.** There will be a cough button on the water table next to you should you need it.

PLEASE NOTE: the press pool will remain in the Oval Office for this discussion.

III. PARTICIPANTS

**The President
The First Lady**

Adoptive Families and Waiting Children (see attached bios)
Foundation and Advocacy Leaders (see attached list)

White House Communications Agency (WHCA) staff
White House Television(WHTV)
White House photographer
Special guests (See attached)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Your radio address and discussion following will be covered by the White House press pool. The networks will have the opportunity to take it LIVE.

The ABC, CNN, AP, C-SPAN, CBS, NBC, Mutual, UPI, USA, American Urban Radio Network, and Standard News radio networks will carry the address live in its entirety to their thousands of stations across the country Saturday at 10:06 AM EDT.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

9:45am Briefing (Oval study)
10:06am **Live Radio Address with the First Lady (on camera in Oval)**
Discussion with families and children (on camera in Oval)
App.10:30am Greet Guests (off camera in Oval)

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by David Shipley.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004. bios	Adoptive Families and Children Attending the President's Radio Address (2 pages)	12/14/1996	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15410

FOLDER TITLE:

Executive Memorandum-Adoption

2012-1035-S

kc1000

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

DISCUSSION WITH FAMILIES AFTER THE RADIO ADDRESS

FLOTUS OPENS DISCUSSION: We have here in this room adoptive families and some children in foster care who are looking for permanent homes. I want to thank you each for coming here today. To the families, I want to say a special thank you for opening your hearts and your homes to children who needed and deserved one. I know first hand that raising a child is a huge responsibility.

Question #1 TELEVISION SHOWS (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Two of the families here today met their adoptive children through television programs highlighting children in foster care who were looking for permanent homes. Can the **Borié** [Ba-ree] and **Bryant Families** tell us a little bit about that?

POTUS FOLLOW-UP COMMENT: I hope that every local TV station will consider doing what the Bryant's local station and others across the nation are already doing -- regularly featuring children waiting for loving and safe, permanent homes.

Question #2 MOTIVATION TO ADOPT (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

Can you tell us what motivated you personally to want to adopt a child in foster care?
[**Bryant and Gray families**; NOT the Ingleses if possible]

Question #3 CHANGES SINCE ADOPTED (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We have had the opportunity to know children both before and after they were adopted and have often been astonished by the difference it has made in their lives and how they have changed. Has that been true for any of you?

[**Mr. Inglese's** [In-glee-zee's] son Jason has gone from doing poorly in school and often getting in trouble to being chosen at Student of the Month]

Question #4 FOR THE WAITING CHILDREN (EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

With us today are some of the children who this event is really all about -- children in foster care who are waiting for permanent homes -- would any of you like to say something?

[Note: If no one immediately answers, you could ask **Daniel**, a 13 year old Hispanic boy who has been in foster care since 1992 because of his mother's terminal illness.]

Question #5 PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE (FOR EITHER POTUS OR FLOTUS)

We all have an opportunity and responsibility -- families, communities, government, religious organizations, and the private sector -- to do our part to help every child have the loving, permanent family they deserve. Businesses nationwide have established policies to support their employees who adopt children. **Fredrica Gray** works for such a company, the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hartford, CT, one of the company's on the Honor Roll of the Women's Bureau at the Labor Department. Fredrica is here with her adoptive son, Michael. Can you tell us about your employer's policies and the motivation behind those policies?

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

Radio Address By The President
The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents, and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption; and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home life that is neither safe, nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically three years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be

uncertain about what the word ``family`` or ``parents`` or ``home`` mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents, and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption; and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

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MORE

can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care; no child should be uncertain about what the word "family" or "parents" or "home" mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, state and federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide states to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine, and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

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The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl in America who is up for adoption has a family waiting up* to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

MRS. CLINTON: We are so happy to have all of you here in the Oval Office with us today. And I know that the families that are here and the children and teenagers who are here all have a story to tell about how your families were created. And I would like to ask if I could -- I know that several of you actually were united with the children who are here because of television shows that you saw the children on. And perhaps you could tell us what happened and how that came to be.

Would you like to start? And maybe you should tell everyone who you are and introduce yourself.

Yes.

MR. BORIE: My name is Glenn Borie. My wife is Carolyn, and these are our four children -- John, Crystal, Charity and Dawn.

MRS. BORIE: We had been foster parents and were looking to adopt and knew that there were a lot of options. But seeing how children often get lost in the system, our hearts went towards them, knowing that -- very desirable and young and end up in the system for a long time and are less desirable to people at that point when they are available.

So we have been, by chance, by God's will, had the television on on a particular day when there was a talk show about adoption. And for a brief 20 seconds we saw Crystal on TV and just caught in our heart at that time. And as we saw the number for the National Adoption Center we found out she had three siblings.

Within a month the two older ones, John and Crystal, had moved in. We started visits with Charity and Dawn and two months later they moved in as well. Before they were separated in two foster homes for five years, so when the two younger ones moved in the week before

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Thanksgiving it was the first time in five years that they'd spent that together. And we just had a very thankful time to just thank God for an incredible family.

MRS. CLINTON: We're glad you're here today.

Did you also have a television?

MS. GRAY: Actually, no. I had adopted Michael when he was only eight years old -- I was 44 at the time, a divorced woman, wanted a child, and I was totally lost. This is the most amazing thing that I've ever experienced in my life, is having the gift of this beautiful child here.

And work for a company, Phoenix Insurance Company, which is an incredibly supportive company. And we have a subsidy for people up to \$2,000 for adoption of children. And the company has been supportive in a lot of ways. Me, as a single parent -- so it's just -- I'm delighted that you're doing this. Because as I go around and I tell people I adopted a child and I was 44 and he came from the state, I get all of these surprised looks -- how could you get him as a single parent, you know, are there children in the system. I think we have a huge job ahead of us in terms of educating people about getting children out of the public system. Kids are there and they need us.

MRS. CLINTON: I absolutely agree.

MS. GRAY: And they need companies like mine to support us.

MRS. CLINTON: And what about your family story.

MR. INGLESE: Hi, my name is Larry Inglese, and we were a foster family to start off with. I always loved children and wanted to have a lot of children. I saw this commercial on TV to open up your heart and your home to a special needs child. So I responded to that commercial and, of course, being a foster parent who liked having children in Pennsylvania, St. Joseph's called about adopting. And I went through with adoption of -- they set us up in a match party. And I met Jason there, who was 13 at the time.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you now, Jason?

JASON INGLESE: I'm 15.

MR. INGLESE: He's going to be 16 next month.

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And him and I, we just, like, made eye contact. We sat down, we had lunch, we looked at each other in the eye and we both knew at that minute I was his father and he was my son. There was no doubt, no doubt whatsoever. But they had another family that had wanted Jason with two parent -- I'm a single parent, and they had a two-parent home. But that lady there kept changing her mind back and forth, so I said -- the two of us came to -- you know, this isn't for sure with her, I think I should get first choice over Jason because I'm willing to make a commitment now. And she agreed.

He was sure and I was sure, and through adoption got him. And then sometime later I was ready for the next one, and the caseworker was calling around, trying to find a home for Michael. Michael has got cerebral palsy and he's got mild mental retardation. He has a lot of problems with -- he came out, it was hard to find him a home. Anyway, finally, I accepted, I said I would take him.

But there were some race issues at the time, but they wouldn't let me have him right away. It took about -- it was about five or six months. They contacted me back and they couldn't get another family to take him so they accepted us. But I was kind of upset at the time because we were ready to give him a loving home and it didn't happen -- because of one caseworker, it didn't happen as fast as it should have. But we finally got him.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MR. INGLESE: And we finalized with him in November, November 15th of this year.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that's wonderful -- in time for Thanksgiving. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: You have -- how many kids do you have now?

MR. INGLESE: I have three biological children, two adopted, and I've had 23 foster children.

MRS. CLINTON: That's great.

And what about your story?

MRS. BRYANT: My name is Frances Bryant. This is my husband, Michael Bryant. And we also saw Trey on the television program. We were watching the news one night, and normally I don't actually watch this particular channel, and for some reason I was just glued to this news. And I had never seen a commercial with children on

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it asking for a home. And then I saw Trey and he was on there and just touched my heart so much. And I wrote down the number and it was 1-800-KIDS hotline -- and I got up right after it went off and I told my husband about it. I said, you wouldn't believe what I just saw on TV. You know, I had never seen a child asking for a home.

There was no way that I could refuse this. I mean, it just touched my heart so. And we called the very next day and found out the information, and we went through the process and it only took about two months and we got Trey in our home. And what the amazing thing is that I realized how many children are out there waiting to be adopted. And I encourage anyone who can open up their heart and their home to a child -- it's a wonderful, rewarding experience. And I'm also going to do it again.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we have some children here who are waiting for homes, and maybe you could introduce yourself. Which ones -- who wants to go first? Anybody want to say anything?

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

DANIEL: My name is Daniel, and I've been waiting for a family for quite a long time. And hopefully, in a short amount of time I will probably get what I'm looking for in a family. My brother has already been adopted, and hopefully I'll get adopted by his family at one point of time. And if not, I'll still be able to get in contact with him.

THE PRESIDENT: How old are you?

DANIEL: Thirteen.

THE PRESIDENT: How old is your brother?

DANIEL: Seventeen.

MRS. CLINTON: How long have you been in foster care?

DANIEL: About two, three years.

MRS. CLINTON: Two or three years?

DANIEL: I'm not sure, but --

THE PRESIDENT: Where's your home? Where do you live?

DANIEL: Where do I live now? Alexandria.

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THE PRESIDENT: Anybody else want to talk?

MRS. CLINTON: What's your name? I'm glad you're here this morning.

One of the goals that we have with trying to do this and, as you say, talk more about education of people about adoption, and something the Secretary and the President and all of us are committed to, is so that more people know what your experience has been like. And anytime you raise a child, it is not all easy. We know that. I mean, there are going to be ups and downs no matter what. But I think that your stories about the emotional feeling that you had when you met your children is something that if we can get more people to see, we'll have more response. Do you agree with that, too?

MS. GRAY: Absolutely. I saw Michael the first time, he was four weeks old, and, as you say, I knew that this is my little boy. I was all pumped up thinking, oh, I'm going to adopt a little girl because I know about girls -- then I saw this little boy and it was all over.

But it has been an enormous blessing for me and for my family. He's just an incredible, an incredible gift. And I just wish that more and more people could have that experience. There is such a mythology about adoption, and if we could just get the word out and just get people to go and see and talk to these beautiful children, we could find them all homes, and have stable, loving parents who care about them and will raise them as strong citizens. And it's the greatest thing I've ever done in my whole entire life.

MRS. CLINTON: That's what we're going to try to do. And you all are experts because you've been through the system. What are some of the changes that we need to make in the system that each of you has dealt with so that we can perhaps encourage more people to be involved? Any thoughts about that?

MS. BORIE: Just the length of time that it takes. In my situation, I'm thankful that it took longer only because I would not have had them otherwise. But it breaks my heart to know that -- these are my children and to know that they were separated from each other for that long. It's heart-wrenching. And I may not have been their parent at that time, but having them now, in my heart I was their parent all that time. And to think that they had to go without each other, as a parent, it's just very sad. And it shouldn't have taken that long.

MRS. CLINTON: How long did it take?

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MRS. BORIE: They were in care for about five years. Our experience -- happened more quickly than usual. It was very speedy, thankfully. But to know that they were apart for that long was unnecessary.

MS. GRAY: I'd like to see us do a lot more with companies. I'm sure that -- I'm speaking on behalf my company because it's very supportive getting started, Phoenix Insurance. And anybody who wants to talk to me about it, please call because I want to help other companies do the same thing. If we could just get companies to tell their employees about these kinds of opportunities -- to do more through their newsletters and to say we're offering a benefit -- that would be great.

MRS. CLINTON: And the new legislation that the President signed to give people the \$5,000 tax credit -- that's something we need to make sure people know about, too, because you obviously don't do these things because of that, but there are expenses associated with taking a child into your home, especially a child with medical problems. Have you found that?

MR. INGLESE: Well, I'm lucky as far as my problems because Michael's medication alone comes to about \$800 a month and I could never afford that on my own. But I have a Pennsylvania Medical Access Card which covers his medical, and he needs many operations that he's been in even before I got him and he still -- he just got an operation, I think it was last month. They cover everything, totally. All his needs are met and paid for by the state. And I think it would be, like, impossible for me to adopt him if the state didn't pay for his needs and medical care because it's a tremendous amount and it's a tremendous expense.

Also what I want to say to others who are thinking about adopting, I think it's -- from what I find with some of the children, that they gave the parents too many years, they keep the children in foster care too many years. Jason was first in foster care from an infant. And he didn't get put up for adoption until he was 13 years old. It went so many years back and forth that he went back to the birth family and then taken away and back and forth. And Michael was also five years. His mother abandoned him at birth. He was put in foster care right from the hospital when he was born. And he's been in through foster homes in the five years before I adopted him.

I think it should be a lesser amount of time a child -- don't give the parents that long to try to get their children back. I think a year should be good

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enough. If a parent don't clean up their act within the year, then that child should be put in a loving home where he will get all the love that his natural parents can't give him.

MRS. CLINTON: How do you feel about that, Jason? Do you have an opinion about that?

JASON: Yes. Basically, I agree on the same. It shouldn't take that much time because with a child, of course, he's going to think that it should because he's going to want to go back with his biological parents, but to sit here and think about it, I would have liked it that way than to keep going back, keep taken away, keep going back -- for it to keep happening like that.

MR. INGLESE: Each time a new foster home. The other foster homes, they fill up. So he was like in, I think, about 12 or 13 foster homes and it was new one each time. He couldn't even go back to the same foster home where he knew the people. So he had to go through that struggle of trying to fit in with new family all over again and over and over and over again.

THE PRESIDENT: How many foster homes have you lived with?

DANIEL: About three.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you feel it's hard when you change?

DANIEL: It's a bit. After a while, you get sort of used to it, but it's still hard.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for what you're doing and thank you for the example.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END

10:26 A.M. EST

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION: SAFE AND PERMANENT HOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

Today, President Clinton issued a challenge to the nation and signed a directive to members of his Cabinet to take new actions to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes. The goal of the President's ambitious new initiative is to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in foster care who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. After consulting with Congressional, state and civic leaders, agencies will report back to the President within 60 days on steps to reach the directive's goals, which include:

I. Doubling the Number of Children Adopted or Permanently Placed by 2002:

Create Incentives for States: To shift the focus from paperwork to successful outcomes, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will work with states to set specific targets for increases in the number of children adopted or found permanent placement. In return, the federal government will provide a new per child financial incentive to states to increase the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. This action should nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system. Progress in meeting the numerical targets will be compiled and published in a state-by-state annual report. Successful states will be recognized for their accomplishments.

Breakdown Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption: HHS will continue to aggressively implement the laws signed by President Clinton in 1994 and 1996, which prohibit adoption agencies from denying or delaying placement of a waiting child based on race, color, or national origin, and encourage recruitment of adoptive parents.

II. Moving Children More Rapidly From Foster Care to Permanent Homes:

Decrease Procedural Delays: President Clinton is directing HHS to consult with Congress, states and civic leaders to propose changes to federal laws, policies and regulations and clarification of the "reasonable effort" requirement, to help states focus on finding permanent homes for children from the moment they enter the foster care system.

Help States Identify and Address Barriers to Permanency: As part of his budget proposal in February, the President will propose financial assistance for states to identify barriers to permanency and to develop strategies for children who have been waiting for a particularly long time. The President's initiative also directs HHS to encourage alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship and kinship care, for children for whom adoption is not a viable option.

III. Increasing Public Awareness:

Call to American Families, Communities and Business: The Clinton Administration will launch a new campaign in partnership with state, civic and business leaders, to increase public awareness about children waiting for adoption and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption -- in new public service announcements, print materials, and on the Internet.

Provide Information on the Benefits of Adoption: Federal agencies will form partnerships to inform people of the new adoption tax credits, the Family and Medical Leave Act benefits, and other supports for adoptive parents, as well as recognize private sector companies with model policies to encourage adoption. The Office of Personnel Management will provide support and information to federal employees who are interested in becoming adoptive parents.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

Our Nation has no greater responsibility than to ensure that every child has the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. We can help meet that challenge by identifying a permanent, loving family for every child waiting in the foster care system.

-- President Clinton, National Adoption Month Proclamation, November 1996

President Clinton is committed to giving the over 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families that choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. The President has championed programs that find and assist adopting families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations.

Today the President announced a new directive to the Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Labor and Commerce and the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan to: increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, and create a new public awareness campaign on the importance of adoption. These actions build on previous initiatives, including:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

In August, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which provides a \$5000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This policy will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

GIVING STATES FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT

The Clinton Administration has granted child protection waivers to Delaware, Illinois, North Carolina, and Oregon, giving the states more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. Up to six more states will receive approval for waivers. In addition, this administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations so they can focus on successful outcomes. To prevent children from entering foster care in the first place, in 1993 the Clinton Administration secured federal funding to work with states, local governments and service providers to develop effective programs to serve children and families at risk.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

Text of Presidential Directive on Adoption

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Following is a memorandum from President Clinton to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce and the director of the Office of Personnel Management:

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;

(b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby offsetting much if not all of the incentive payments;

(c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;

(d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and

(e) Plans to recognize successful States.

II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;

(b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;

(c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of "dispositional hearings" is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;

(d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;

(e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and

(f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month -- a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

(a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort, including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;

(b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;

(c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and

(d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Questions and Answers on Adoption
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Q. What is the purpose of the President's directive?

A. The purpose of the President's directive is to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed each year. The directive focuses on securing homes for the tens of thousands of children in the foster care system who cannot return safely to their homes and for whom adoption is a goal. It also will increase public awareness on the importance and benefits of adoption.

Since 1993, the Clinton Administration has taken several important steps to promote and encourage adoption. President Clinton is committed to giving the 450,000 children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. This directive builds on these commitments and accomplishments.

Q. Now that the President signed the directive, what will happen?

A. The Department of Health and Human Services, working with the Departments of Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management, will conduct an intensive consultation process on a bipartisan basis with Congress, states, civic and business leaders to develop a plan to meet the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and increasing the number of children adopted or permanently placed. The Secretary of Health and Human Services will report back to the President in sixty days on specific steps to reach the directive's goals. And many of their recommendations will be incorporated into the President's budget to be presented to Congress in February.

Q. Is this directive ambitious enough?

A. Today there are 450,000 children in the nation's foster care system. These children are placed there because of abuse, neglect or a home-life that is neither safe nor secure. While most of these children eventually return home, nearly 100,000 of them will not. These children that cannot be reunited with their parents wait typically 3 years or more to find permanent homes. More than half of waiting children have special needs, such as minorities, children with disabilities, sibling groups and older children.

Given these circumstances, the President's goal in this directive to at least double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the foster care system is extremely ambitious and exciting. Of course, our ultimate goal is that all children in foster care find what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. Why didn't the President take this step earlier?

A. Since taking office, President Clinton has made increasing adoption and improving the foster care system a priority. He has signed critical legislation that have removed significant financial and racial barriers to adoption. The Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 provides a \$5,000 tax credit for families who adopt children and a \$6,000 tax credit for families who adopt children with special needs. Building on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994, the Small Business Job Protection Act also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity. He has championed programs like the Family and Medical Leave Act which supports adopting families and signed a welfare reform law that preserves the guarantee of and resources for child protection and adoption. The President and the First Lady have promoted and encouraged the importance and benefits of adoption through speeches, events and public service announcements. This directive builds on the President's strong commitment to and accomplishments on this issue.

Q. Are you trying to preempt Congress on adoption?

A. No. We are committed to working with Congress in a bipartisan manner to develop a plan to increase the number of children adopted or permanently placed from foster care and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. Finding safe and permanent homes for all children is a goal to which we know everyone is committed and should be addressed in a bipartisan way. There is increasing consensus on this on a bipartisan level.

The President's directive presents an extraordinary opportunity for the Federal government, Congress, states, communities, and advocacy organizations to work together toward giving children in foster care what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home.

Q. How much will this initiative cost?

A. The directive does not carry any cost right now, as it simply directs members of the President's Cabinet to consult with Congress, states, and civic leaders to develop a plan to increase adoptions and move children from foster care to permanent homes more quickly. The President's FY 1998 budget will contain the necessary funding for this initiative.

The provision of offering financial incentives to states will nearly pay for itself, as increasing the number of adoptions will reduce expenditures in the foster care system.

Q. Which Cabinet agencies are involved in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, Commerce and Labor and the Office of Personnel Management were directed by the President to develop a new plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes, and to at least double, from 27,000 to 54,000, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system.

Q. What role do you see for States in implementing the President's directive on Adoption?

A. States are the operators of the public welfare system and therefore are critical to ensuring the President's goals of moving children more rapidly from foster care to safe, permanent homes and doubling the number of children adopted and or permanently placed by the year 2002. We plan to work extremely closely with states, consulting with them on every aspect of the President's directive. We know that the states share the President's commitment to increasing adoption and improving the foster care system and we are counting on them to directly assist HHS in the formulation and implementation of the new action plan on adoption.

Q. What role do you see for advocacy groups and foundations in implementing the President's directive on adoption?

A. Today, before the radio address, Carol Rasco and Olivia Golden, Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families (HHS) will brief key advocacy groups and foundations on the directive. We have worked closely with advocacy groups and foundations on past adoption initiatives and we plan to consult with them on the President's new directive. We welcome advocacy groups and foundations' participation in developing and helping states implement new strategies on adoption, as they have immense knowledge and experience in this area.

Q. What were the adoption-related provisions in the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. The Small Business Job Protection Act does three things:

- Strengthens the language of the 1994 Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) to make it even clearer that neither foster placements nor adoptions may be delayed or denied solely on the basis of the cultural, ethnic or racial background of the child or the prospective foster or adoptive parents;
- Imposes financial penalties for States (and other agencies receiving federal funds) which fail to comply with MEPA; and
- Provides a \$5,000 adoption tax credit for all adoptions, and a \$6,000 tax credit for special needs adoptions.

MEPA also included the State Plan requirement for States to provide for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Q. What has HHS done to implement these new inter-ethnic provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act?

A. On November 14, the Department issued an Information Memorandum to give the States and the public the details of the inter-ethnic adoption legislation. That issuance (which also announced the new kinship preference which Congress added to the child welfare laws) informed the public that the procedures for applying the penalty would be published at a later date.

The Department has taken or begun a number of other actions to implement the provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act. These include meeting with the Internal Revenue Service to develop a public information strategy on the adoption tax credit, and establishing a working group of Children's Bureau and Office of Civil Rights staff to begin work on a procedure and protocol to ensure consistent application of the new penalty provisions.

Q: What is the Draft National Adoption Strategic Plan and how does it relate to the President's Directive?

A: Last year, HHS's Children's Bureau organized a national meeting, which included State adoption managers, representatives from national advocacy organizations and private non-profit organizations, adoptive parents and Federal staff to draft a strategic plan to increase the number of children adopted from the public child welfare system. This Plan was written as a draft or working document to provide an outcome-focused framework for all those involved with the adoption of special needs children from the public child welfare system. The President's directive will build on many ideas put forth in Draft Plan