

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. letter	Paula Broglio to FLOTUS re child care (partial) (1 page)	10/20/1998	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15412

FOLDER TITLE:

Child Care, Affordability

2012-1035-S

kc1014

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]

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. letter	Paula Broglie to FLOTUS re child care (partial) (1 page)	10/20/1998	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)
OA/Box Number: 15412

FOLDER TITLE:

Child Care, Affordability

2012-1035-S
kc1014

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]

October 20, 1998

Dear Governor,

My name is Paula Broglio, and I work at the University of Maryland. I am a single, working mother who needs child care at the University of Maryland for my five-year-old son.

However, there is one hitch: I cannot afford the high fees for child care at my place of employment.

Governor, this is not just my problem. There are thousands of single parents all over the state who pay taxes, work long hours, and still can't afford a decent education for their children. Why? Because we are "blue collar" - and we don't make enough money.

Sir, if you want the support of working families, take the time to read the enclosed articles. They will show how hard I have worked to make education *THE* issue November 3rd.

I would like to propose a Blue Collar Panel for Child Care be immediately sponsored with the next Maryland General Assembly. I would like to serve on the panel. We can explore, recommend, and move toward passage, a bill that will enable working families to realize direct tuition incentives for child care needs in the early years - infants through age six - for families with incomes under \$30,000.00

As you can see, I am very passionate about educational issues. I will continue to speak out until there are changes. I care about Maryland and will work to re-elect you. Please hear my plea. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paula Broglio

Paula Broglio

P6/(b)(6)

Adephi, Maryland 20783

P6/(b)(6)

cc: ✓ Mrs. Hillary Rodman Clinton
Honorable Barbara Milkulski
Honorable Steny Hoyer
County Executive Wayne Curry
Delegate Pauline Menes
Delegate Barbara Frush
Delegate Brian Moe
Candidate-elect John Giannetti (cousin)

*file child care [001]
I need - affording
my*

Clintons to tackle child-care issues

Aides won't give specifics about Thursday conference

By Mimi Hall
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — As if on cue to illustrate the problem Hillary Rodham Clinton was describing, secretary and single mom Paula Broglio stood up and presented herself to the first lady as a living example of a working woman who can't make it on her own.

On a \$25,000 salary and with no child support from her ex-husband, Broglio lives with her 4-year-old son in the guest bedroom of her parents' house so she can afford \$200-a-month subsidized child care at a Catholic school while she's at work.

"If I did not have that, and I didn't have my parents, I would probably have to quit my job and go on welfare, because who would watch my child during the day and how could I afford to live in an apartment?" Broglio asked earlier this month at the University of Maryland, where the first lady was speaking about her latest effort to influence public policy.

"That is the problem," Clinton answered. "I could not more vividly describe it."

But Clinton couldn't say how the White House Conference on Child Care, which she and President Clinton will host Thursday, might help the 38-year-old Adelphi, Md., secretary and her little boy, Vincent.

"Your child will be in school before we probably get much of the changes that I would like to see happen," she said.

White House aides are being deliberately vague about what the Clintons have in mind to address the problems of affordability, availability and safety in the nation's child-care industry.

During the 1993-94 health-care debates, they learned that large-scale proposals can bring protest from those who see big government taking over a responsibility that should be left to families and private businesses.

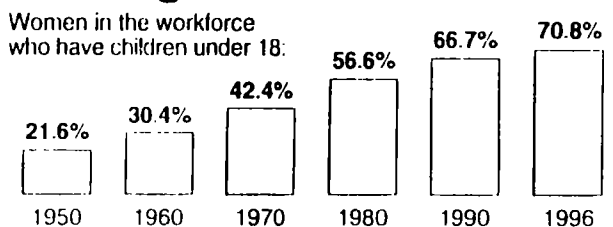
"If you're having a White House conference, I suspect you think there's a government solution," says Gary Bauer of the conservative Family Research Council.

In an interview with USA



Clinton: Passionate on children's issues

Growing need for child care



Source of child care

Child-care arrangements of working mothers who have children under 5 or children 5 to 14:

	Under 5	5-14
Another home	32%	4%
Organized child-care facility	31%	79%
Parental care	22%	9%
Child's home ¹	15%	5%
Child cares for self	0%	3%

Weekly cost of child care

(in constant 1993 dollars)

1986	\$64
1990	\$72
1993	\$79

1 - Care provided by baby sitter or someone other than parent.
Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau; The 1996 Green Book. Statistics are the most recent available.

By Genevieve E. Lynn, USA TODAY

about who should care for children when parents are working or otherwise unable to."

Children's issues have been a passion for Clinton since the early 1970s, when she worked as a lawyer at the Children's Defense Fund, a liberal advocacy group. Now she is wading back in to help tackle what the president calls "the next great frontier" in his effort to help working families.

In a recent speech at a Newark church, he ticked off a list of large and small initiatives he already has promoted: a new TV rating system to alert parents about violent or sexual content, a tobacco settlement that aims to stop smoking among children, a \$500-per-child tax credit for working families and a balanced federal budget that increases funding for health care for low-income children.

"But we still have to make sure that our parents have access to quality, affordable child care," he said. "That's the great, big hurdle left."

Richard Stolley, president of the Child Care Action Campaign, hopes Thursday's conference can help convince businesses that helping employees find child care helps productivity. "Business needs to be convinced there is a bottom line benefit," he says.

But the nation's child-care system is in such bad shape, he says, that "we're deluding ourselves if we think this is going to make an enormous difference."

TODAY on Tuesday, Hillary Clinton wouldn't say what the administration will propose.

"What I'm interested in is putting the spotlight on this issue and using the White House to...ignite a national conversation," she said.

The goal, she said, is to "call national attention to an issue that political leaders and policymakers should focus on but which has often been ignored."

She wouldn't talk specifics,

and her aides said she is not necessarily backing ideas she has mentioned recently: creating a national registry of child-care workers who have been convicted of crimes, for example, or offering protection for caretakers who fear being sued over minor accidents.

In her book *It Takes a Village*, Clinton said child care "is an issue that brings out all of our conflicted feelings about what parenthood should be and

First Lady Presses Child-Care Reform

In U-Md. Speech, Clinton Praises Center There and One at Quantico

By Jackie Spinner
Washington Post Staff Writer

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton visited a child care center at the University of Maryland at College Park yesterday and later in a speech used the occasion to repeat her call for reform in the nation's day-care industry.

Addressing a crowd of 1,300 university students and faculty and staff members in a packed Tawes Theatre auditorium on campus, Clinton said the university's Center for Young Children, and a similar facility she visited at Quantico Marine Corps Base this week, are rare examples of quality child care.

She said the U.S. military's approach in particular should be a model for the workplace.

"There are certainly differences between the military and civilian sector, but I believe the military experience can serve as a beacon for the American workplace in general," Clinton said. "When parents don't have to come to work feeling concerned about how their children are doing, they can make a more positive contribution that benefits all of us."

The first lady's visit was intended to set the stage for a White House confer-

ence on child care planned for Oct. 23. Upon her arrival in the auditorium, she was greeted with thunderous applause and a standing ovation. She gave her address in front of a huge red, white

"We have to do more to support those parents . . . who are trying to do the best they can."

— Hillary Rodham Clinton

and blue banner that proclaimed, "Better Child Care for a Better America."

Clinton had warm praise for the university's child-care center, where she met with a group of 5-year-olds.

"This is a place where children are treasured and valued and stimulated, a place that any of us would happily stay for juice and nap-time any day," she said. "But that center is far too rare."

Later, when audience members were invited to ask the first lady questions, Paula J. Broglio, a university secretary,

told Clinton that she had tried to enroll her own 4-year-old in the Center for Young Children but could not afford the fees.

The center enrolls 120 children, ages 3 to kindergarten. The day-care center has a sliding fee scale, but Broglio said she would still have to pay \$500 a month, which is 25 percent of her salary.

Broglio said that if she didn't have the help of her parents, she would have to quit her job and go on welfare.

"The biggest problem out there is affordable, good-quality day care," Broglio said. "I can't find it."

In response, Clinton said Broglio is "a perfect example of the kind of problem I'm trying to illustrate."

She said the October conference at the White House will address the issue of affordable child care and other issues, including the need for day care for school-age children.

"We need more subsidies for working parents, particularly single parents," Clinton said. "If we are going to have a policy in our country of ending welfare and expecting everyone to work, we have to do more to support those parents with children who are trying to do the best they can."

DEFENSE

Czech President Havel Says Dangers Justify Larger NATO

Czech President Vaclav Havel said yesterday danger of war still exists and expanding NATO worth the cost if it contributes to greater security in Europe.

Opponents of the expansion that would bring country, Poland and Hungary into the 16-n alliance are "extremely naive, shortsighted and dangerous," Havel said.

With Czech-born Secretary of State Madeleine Albright listening and hearings on NATO enlargement to start in the Senate next week, Havel said country is ready to pay for pushing the alliance borders eastward toward Russia.

"Any judicious person must admit that expenditure is worth it," he said. "Has it not established beyond doubt that even the most preventive security is cheaper than the cost of war?"

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Havel declared the world is "covered with innumerable dangers: are diverse, decentralized and yet intertwined."

Albright introduced the former Czech dissident who helped topple the Communist regime in country in 1989 as a "serial truth-teller."

He received the 1997 J. William Fulbright Award named for the late internationalist Democratic senator from Arkansas who sponsored a program in which thousands of Americans have studied abroad.

Past recipients include South African President

Kids' Habitat at Fair Lakes Center
Grand Opening

\$799

**Bamel's Big Patio
Clearance Sale**

50-70% OFF ALL

Maryland Spotlight

Paula Broglio Speaks out on Child Care, Gets White House Invite

Paula Broglio knows too well the frustration of finding good, affordable day care for her child. The divorced mother of a 4-year-old, who receives no child support from her ex-husband, must provide for herself and her son on \$25,000 a year.

So when Hillary Rodham Clinton came to campus last month to talk about Better Child Care for a Better America, Broglio made sure she was there. Three weeks later, the secretary in the Maryland English Institute was a personal guest of the first lady at the White House conference on child care.

Following her remarks at Tawes Theatre, Mrs. Clinton invited members of the audience to ask questions. First in line at the microphone was Broglio.

"She had been talking about having toured the university's Center for Young Children and how it was in the top 10 percent of quality day care centers in the country," says Broglio. "The CYC is a very good school," she says, "but I wanted to let her know that it's not available to everyone. If you don't have money, you don't have a choice in quality day care."

Broglio had tried to enroll her son in the CYC program, but she found that even with a sliding scale, she would have to pay \$500 per month for him to attend. That's nearly half her take-home pay.

Broglio says she has no battle with the CYC, just

with its fee policy. "I felt that I was speaking for the lower income employees on campus." Many of those employees approached her afterward to thank her for speaking out. Calls and e-mails followed.

Broglio says she encountered similar high costs at other centers she visited. Eventually she was able to find subsidized child care at a nearby Catholic school, paying only \$200 per month. "If I didn't have that, and I didn't have my parents [with whom she lives], I would probably have to quit my job and go on welfare, because who would watch my child during the day and how could I afford to live in an apartment?" Broglio asked Clinton at the Tawes Theatre event.

Broglio's forthrightness impressed the first lady, who asked her chief of staff, Melanne Verveer, to call Broglio and send her an invitation.

"Melanne told me I was like a household name around the White House," says Broglio.

"Both she and Mrs. Clinton told me, 'I don't think you realize what an impact you had on this conference.'"

On Oct. 23, Broglio attended the White House conference. She was joined by such notables as Sen. Ted Kennedy, producer/director Rob Reiner, famed pediatrician and author T. Berry Brazelton, National Women's Law Center president Nancy Duff Campbell, Bishop Joseph Sullivan of New York and others.

During her opening remarks, the first lady introduced Broglio, who the USA Today described as "a living example of a working woman who can't make it on her own." Mrs. Clinton also personally greeted Broglio later, calling her by her first name, planting a



Paula Broglio had a guest snap this photo of her with Hillary Rodham Clinton at the recent White House conference on child care. Clinton invited Broglio after hearing about her frustrations as a divorced mother trying to find affordable, quality day care for her 4-year-old son.

kiss on her cheek and requesting that they have their photo taken together. Clinton also insisted that Broglio attend the post-conference reception on the White House lawn.

"I have a lot of respect for Mrs. Clinton," says Broglio. "She's driven to make a difference and she really cares. She is a very classy, nice person who makes people like me feel good."

Since returning from the White House event, Broglio has sent letters to some of the people she met at the conference. "I'm interested in doing whatever I can to help this [better child care] campaign," she says.

"This child care issue is about everyone," says Broglio. "I was just lucky enough to be able to speak to [Mrs. Clinton]."

**UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND FAMILY POLICY

Hearing on Child Care

**Wednesday, April 22, 1998; 10:00 a.m.
SD-215 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

WITNESS LIST

- I. The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd, United States Senator from the State of Connecticut

- II. A panel consisting of:

Ms. Paula Broglio; Adelphi, MD

Ms. Susan Elizabeth Dutcher; Edmond, OK

Ms. Jolene Ivey, President, MOCHA Moms; Cheverly, MD

Ms. Susan Muenchow, Executive Director, Florida Children's Forum; Tallahassee, FL

Ms. Beverly Smith; Hyattsville, MD

- III. A panel consisting of:

Mr. Bob Hallenbeck, Vice President, ECS, Inc.; Exton, PA

Ms. Donna Kline, Director, Work Life Services, Marriot International; Washington, DC

Ms. Donna Munday, Senior Vice President for External Affairs, UNUM; Portland, ME

WITNESS LIST

IV. A panel consisting of:

The Honorable Rochelle Chronister, Secretary, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services; Topeka, KS

The Honorable Bernard A. Jackvony, Lieutenant Governor, State of Rhode Island; Providence, RI

Ms. Christine C. Ferguson, Director, Rhode Island Department of Human Services; Cranston, RI

Mr. Mark Nadel, Associate Director for Income Security, Department of Health, Education and Human Services, General Accounting Office; Washington, DC

JUDY MANN

Child Care: A Casualty of Ugly Politics

In January, after a White House seance on the importance of childhood development, President Clinton offered a \$21.7 billion, five-year proposal that raised hopes that the nation might increase its child-care resources before the dawn of the next century.

This happened just before Clinton's intern-care problems nuked into oblivion everything else on the political landscape. As the 105th Congress mercifully slunk off into the hinterland, dozens of child-care bills introduced by both Republicans and Democrats lay in the dust of ground zero.

Politicians covered their flanks to some extent by reauthorizing Head Start and, at the last minute, adding more money for school-based care, and by providing funding for snacks for older children in these programs. They expanded the child-care block grant program and gave more money to campus-based child care. But these gains were "nothing like the \$21.7 billion Clinton had proposed," says Helen Blank, of the Children's Defense Fund, and came nowhere close to filling the need.

One thing everyone seems to agree on is that the acute shortage of safe, affordable and reliable day care is not going to resolve itself with a single, bold touch of a magic wand. Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.) offered one approach with a bill that would have guaranteed loans to day-care providers to bring their facilities up to code. It also would have made liability insurance more accessible. Maloney describes her bill, which she calls "Kiddie Mac," as "only one building block in completing the foundation for quality care in this country."

Rep. Constance A. Morella (R-Md.) had a bill that would have given federal employees greater access to child-care services. Rep. Barbara B. Kennelly (D-Conn.) offered a bill that would have increased the tax credit for dependent care for working parents, while also providing an equivalent benefit for families where one parent stays at home to care for a child younger than 4. The range of bills reflects the need for a variety of measures that ultimately will create a sustainable child-care infrastructure that meets the needs of the American work force.

This should be one of our top political priorities. The current state of child care is a nightmare for far too many parents, and it is a disgrace for the nation. While other industrialized countries take care of their children—many have done so since the end of World War II—the richest nation on Earth continues to beggar its families on child care.

The results are a devastating indictment of how America minds its children. According to the Children's Defense Fund, 13 million preschoolers, three out of every five young children, are in child care. Nearly 5 million children ages 5 to 12 are left home alone after school, the hours when juvenile crime spikes. A 1990 study by the fund found that eighth-graders left alone after school had

greater use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana than those under adult supervision.

Full day care costs \$4,000 to \$10,000, quite a pill to swallow for the half of families with young children who have incomes under \$35,000 a year. While there are subsidies for low-income families for child care, there is not enough money, and only one in 10 eligible children get help.

Welfare reform, which is forcing low-income women into the work force, is putting even more pressure on the child-care system. The New York state comptroller has estimated that by 2001, welfare-to-work programs will put 61,000 children in day care. There is now space for only 28,000.

This is not lost on voters. Members of Congress who are looking for something other than smut to talk about during the remaining weeks of the campaign should latch onto a poll that came out this month by Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N.J. The poll, commissioned by the Children's Defense Fund and the Child Care Action Campaign, sampled 1,013 households in August.

More than half of those surveyed said they would be extremely likely or very likely to vote for a candidate who helped low-income working families afford good child care, and 29 percent said they were somewhat likely to vote for such a candidate. Nearly 70 percent said they would back candidates who supported after-school programs or other programs that kept teenagers off the streets. And 73 percent said the federal government should provide assistance to help pay for child care since it already helps working families pay college tuition.

In households with children younger than 6, 70 percent of the respondents said finding good, affordable care was very difficult. The White House's efforts to educate the public about the link between early childhood development and future educational accomplishment are paying off: 68 percent of those polled said they were very likely to vote for a candidate who supports child care and preschool activities "so all children can enter school ready to learn."

One of the most striking findings in the poll was a gender gap on each question that averaged about 15 points, with 66 percent of women saying it was extremely or very difficult to find good, affordable child care and 52 percent of men answering the same way, for example.

That child care resonates more deeply with women than men is not surprising. What may surprise many members of Congress, though, is how important the crisis in child care has become to so many voters. Child care hits families where they live.

This year started out bright with the promise of relief, but both the White House and Congress squandered a wonderful opportunity to help families. This is one of the saddest of this grim political season.

JUDY MANN

Child Care: A Casualty of Ugly Politics

In January, after a White House seance on the importance of childhood development, President Clinton offered a \$21.7 billion, five-year proposal that raised hopes that the nation might increase its child-care resources before the dawn of the next century.

This happened just before Clinton's intern-care problems nuked into oblivion everything else on the political landscape. As the 105th Congress mercifully slunk off into the hinterland, dozens of child-care bills introduced by both Republicans and Democrats lay in the dust of ground zero.

Politicians covered their flanks to some extent by reauthorizing Head Start and, at the last minute, adding more money for school-based care, and by providing funding for snacks for older children in these programs. They expanded the child-care block grant program and gave more money to campus-based child care. But these gains were "nothing like the \$21.7 billion Clinton had proposed," says Helen Blank, of the Children's Defense Fund, and came nowhere close to filling the need.

One thing everyone seems to agree on is that the acute shortage of safe, affordable and reliable day care is not going to resolve itself with a single, bold touch of a magic wand. Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.) offered one approach with a bill that would have guaranteed loans to day-care providers to bring their facilities up to code. It also would have made liability insurance more accessible. Maloney describes her bill, which she calls "Kiddie Mac," as "only one building block in completing the foundation for quality care in this country."

Rep. Constance A. Morella (R-Md.) had a bill that would have given federal employees greater access to child-care services. Rep. Barbara B. Kennelly (D-Conn.) offered a bill that would have increased the tax credit for dependent care for working parents, while also providing an equivalent benefit for families where one parent stays at home to care for a child younger than 4. The range of bills reflects the need for a variety of measures that ultimately will create a sustainable child-care infrastructure that meets the needs of the American work force.

This should be one of our top political priorities. The current state of child care is a nightmare for far too many parents, and it is a disgrace for the nation. While other industrialized countries take care of their children—many have done so since the end of World War II—the richest nation on Earth continues to beggar its families on child care.

The results are a devastating indictment of how America minds its children. According to the Children's Defense Fund, 13 million preschoolers, three out of every five young children, are in child care. Nearly 5 million children ages 5 to 12 are left home alone after school, the hours when juvenile crime spikes. A 1990 study by the fund found that eighth-graders left alone after school had

greater use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana than those under adult supervision.

Full day care costs \$4,000 to \$10,000, quite a pill to swallow for the half of families with young children who have incomes under \$35,000 a year. While there are subsidies for low-income families for child care, there is not enough money, and only one in 10 eligible children get help.

Welfare reform, which is forcing low-income women into the work force, is putting even more pressure on the child-care system. The New York state comptroller has estimated that by 2001, welfare-to-work programs will put 61,000 children in day care. There is now space for only 28,000.

This is not lost on voters. Members of Congress who are looking for something other than smut to talk about during the remaining weeks of the campaign should latch onto a poll that came out this month by Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N.J. The poll, commissioned by the Children's Defense Fund and the Child Care Action Campaign, sampled 1,013 households in August.

More than half of those surveyed said they would be extremely likely or very likely to vote for a candidate who helped low-income working families afford good child care, and 29 percent said they were somewhat likely to vote for such a candidate. Nearly 70 percent said they would back candidates who supported after-school programs or other programs that kept teenagers off the streets. And 73 percent said the federal government should provide assistance to help pay for child care since it already helps working families pay college tuition.

In households with children younger than 6, 70 percent of the respondents said finding good, affordable care was very difficult. The White House's efforts to educate the public about the link between early childhood development and future educational accomplishment are paying off: 68 percent of those polled said they were very likely to vote for a candidate who supports child care and preschool activities "so all children can enter school ready to learn."

One of the most striking findings in the poll was a gender gap on each question that averaged about 15 points, with 66 percent of women saying it was extremely or very difficult to find good, affordable child care and 52 percent of men answering the same way, for example.

That child care resonates more deeply with women than men is not surprising. What may surprise many members of Congress, though, is how important the crisis in child care has become to so many voters. Child care hits families where they live.

This year started out bright with the promise of relief, but both the White House and Congress squandered a wonderful opportunity to help families. This is one of the saddest of this grim political season.