

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Westport, Connecticut)

For Immediate Release

March 10, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE BRIDGEPORT COMMUNITY

Housatonic Community Technical College
Bridgeport, Connecticut

11:30 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. First of all, I think Pamela did a terrific job with her speech. And secondly, when Anthony stood up, I thought to myself, in a few years Congressman Shays will be retiring and I -- (laughter) -- may be looking at his successor right there. He was great. (Applause.) I love it. Senator Dodd, you might want to hire him as a consultant this year. (Laughter.)

Mr. Mayor, I'm delighted to be back in Bridgeport with you and Jennifer and the officials of the city government. I thank Senator Dodd and Congressman Shays and Representatives Barbara Kennelly and Rose DeLauro for joining us today. Attorney General Blumenthal, Treasurer Paul Sylvester, Speaker Ritter and members of the legislature.

Like Senator Dodd, I want to extend my condolences on behalf of Hillary and myself to the families of the victims of the shooting incident in Newington and our prayers are with them.

And like Senator Dodd, on a happier note, I want to congratulate Connecticut for getting both its teams into the NCAA. (Laughter.) So did Arkansas. (Laughter.) Thank goodness

we don't have a contest anytime soon, And what Senator Dodd didn't say is that UCON's men's team is actually playing in Washington this week. And so I think you all should keep score and see which members of your congressional delegation show up to root the home team on. (Laughter.)

I'm glad to be back in Bridgeport. I really like this community and I have admired the courage with which the people here have struggled in the tough years and moved to move the community forward. I should tell you -- whenever I come to a place you all notice that there are a few members of the press who come with me. (Laughter.) And sometimes it seems that we're on opposite sides of the line, but you should know that one member of the press, Larry McQuillan, who works for Reuters New Service, and is actually the President of the White House Press Corps this year, is from Bridgeport. He will write a totally biased, favorable story -- (laughter) -- about this wonderful college and child care program today, I can assure you. (Applause.)

I want to thank President Wurtz for showing me around the school and the unbelievable art collection here, which you should be very proud of. And I want to thank Marie Nulty for taking me through the wonderful pre-school program.

In the Early Childhood Lab Schools Parent Handbook there is the following quote: "A child is like a butterfly in the wind. Some can fly higher than others, but each one flies the best it can. Each one is special. Each one is different. Each one is beautiful." After going through this child care center, it seems to me that that is a motto that every teacher I saw lived and worked by, and that every child I met was made to feel special every day.

The reason I came here today is twofold: First of all, because of the extraordinary leadership for children and especially on the child care center issue -- child care issue, Senator Dodd, along with the members of your House delegation who are here, who have been terrific on this issue. And second, because what I see here today is what I believe every child in America needs, and it's important that we graphically demonstrate to the country that with so many parents in the work force are going back to school, there is a crying unmet need which the

Mayor graphically and numerically demonstrated in his remarks just here in Bridgeport, all over the country for the kind of high-quality child that you offer here.

Today we have to make a commitment to extend that option to every family in America that needs it. I want to talk about what we in the federal government can do on our own to improve child care at federal centers, but most importantly, I want to talk about what Congress should do in the next 70 days to help every working family give their children the kind of child care we see here.

As has been said already, these are good times for America. We have 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest home ownership rate in history, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years. And I'm proud of it. (Applause.) These numbers only matter insofar as they reflect differences in the lives of ordinary Americans -- a different life story that can be told. The reason I was proud to be introduced by Pamela Price is that she embodies the changing story of America over the last five years, and that's what we want for every American who's willing to work for it.

In last year's historic balanced budget agreement we provided a child care tax credit of \$500 per child for families; expanded health care coverage to 5 million more children in lower income working families who don't have access to it now; and perhaps most important, have virtually opened the doors of college to all Americans. For example -- and you can compare it, what it means here at Housatonic -- in the last years we have added 300,000 work-study slots, hundreds of thousands of more scholarships; we've made the interest on student loans tax deductible; 100,000 young people have worked their way through college or earned money for college by serving in AmeriCorps in community service projects. You can now save for a college education in an IRA and withdraw from the IRA tax free if the money is used for a college education.

But most important, now there is a \$1,500 tax credit -- that's not a deduction, a credit -- a reduction of your tax bill for the first two years of college; and a lifetime learning credit that is substantial, but not quite that large for junior

and senior years, for job training programs, for graduate schools. I think we can really say that insofar as community-based institutions like this are concerned, we have opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it. And that is a profoundly important achievement for our country.

Senator Dodd talked about what the Family and Medical Leave Act means. The American Dream is now in reach for more and more families. And that is a very, very good thing. But as you heard Pamela say, what made all this work for her as she was struggling to put her life on track was knowing that her child would be in a safe, healthy, positive child care environment. And if we really want to open the doors of opportunity to all Americans, we not only have to finish our agenda of bringing job opportunities and business opportunities into every neighborhood and every city like Bridgeport in America, we have to make sure that if the jobs and the educational opportunities are open the parents can actually go without having to worry that they're neglecting their children.

We can never have a country that is fully successful if millions of people every day get up and look forward to a day in which they are terrified that they will have to make a choice between being a responsible parent and a good worker or a good student. If we have to choose, we lose. Society has no more important work than raising children. If everyone did that successfully, I think we would all agree we'd have less than half the problems we have today.

On the other hand, this economic boom we celebrate was fueled by having nearly two-thirds of the American adults in the work force; the highest percentage of people in the work force in history. That's how you get a low unemployment rate. Well, by definition, a lot of those folks are parents with children who have to be supervised, and nourished, and supported and helped.

So when you think about this child care issue, if you look at the way I do, not just as President, but as a parent and as someone who's worked all his life, I say to myself, we cannot have a country that asks people to make a choice between succeeding at home and succeeding at work, and insofar as we have

to choose, we lose. When we know we can succeed at home and at work because of an effective child care center, every American wins. The country wins. We're stronger in the 21st century. Our families are stronger, our economies are stronger, they reinforce each other. That's really what this child care issue is all about.

Now, we've worked hard on this for the last five years. We've helped a million more parents to pay -- or the parents of a million more children to pay for child care. But obviously -- remember the Mayor's numbers for Bridgeport -- there is a huge amount of work to be done here. And today, we're releasing a report that confirms the overwhelming need still existing all across America. The report shows that states have come up with a lot of innovative ideas, and the Congress allocated \$4 billion more to states for child care as a part of welfare reform. But even with all that, it is clear that the resources are simply not there yet to meet the needs of all the families in America. States have been forced to turn away literally thousands upon thousands of low income families.

In Connecticut, the State Child Care Bureau has to restrict its aid to families on welfare or teen parents in high school. They've actually stopped taking applications from families that are so-called "working poor" altogether.

So here we are at a time of unprecedented prosperity, when people at the lower end of the income scale are finally beginning to get pay rises and have some security in their jobs, but we know they can't afford quality child care without help. So here we are at a time, the best of times for our country, and yet we still have millions of people getting up every day, going to work worrying about their children. We are forcing them to make choices that no family should have to make, that no country should tolerate, and that we will pay for down the road sooner or later. So what we want to do is pay for it now, the right way and have a good, positive environment. (Applause.)

Now, let me say some of the things that I intend to do with the federal child care centers. We care, the federal government cares in its child care centers for some 215,000 children. That's quite a few. We want them to be a model for

the nation.

Today, I'm going to direct my Cabinet to do four things. First, to make all the centers fully accredited by the year 2000. (Applause.) Now, what does that mean, in terms of quality of facilities, training for workers and child-to-staff ratios? Today, believe it or not, 76 percent of our military child care centers are already accredited, but only 35 percent of our non-military centers are. We'll make both categories 100 percent in the next 700 days.

Second, we have to make sure that all the centers conduct thorough background checks on workers. In too many states there is no checking to see if the people we trust with our children are even trustworthy in the eyes of the law. Connecticut is one of the few states that actually does require a criminal background check of child care workers. Every state should do it and the federal government should certainly do it.

Third, we have to make sure that all federal workers know about all their child care benefits and options in the first place. And, finally, we're going to do more work with the private sector to make federal child care better and more affordable.

If we do all that, there will still be millions of kids out there and their parents who need help. In the balanced budget I have presented to Congress for this year, I've proposed a comprehensive and responsible plan to strengthen child care. There will be other proposals to do the same thing.

Now, Congress is only going to meet about 70 more days this year. I know you say, well, it's only March, but anyway that's -- in Washington, Congress plans to only sit about 70 more days. Now, there is enormous support, I believe, among people in both parties in our country and I believe among people in both parties in the Congress for taking action on child care. I have a plan and there are others which would double the number of children receiving child care subsidies, at a million or more new kids, give tax cuts to businesses which provide child care, expand child care tax credits to 3 million working families, and improve the standards of child care centers and provide more funds to train -- adequately train -- workers in child care

centers. (Applause.)

We're not talking about peanuts here. Let me tell you what we're talking about. The tax credits that we will offer, if Congress would pass them, would mean that a family of four living on up to \$35,000 a year that has high child care bills would not pay any federal income tax. That would be a terrific incentive to help working families afford quality child care. And for lower income working families who don't owe any federal income tax anyway, if we increase the block grant going to the states, it goes to subsidized care for lower income working families; plus the money that we have given the states for people moving from welfare to work -- we will be able to make a huge dent in this problem.

If Congress acts, we can make child care safer as well as more affordable. We can even give scholarships under our plan to talented care-givers to train more people. We also can expand after school programs to keep 500,000 more kids, when they get a little older, off our streets and out of trouble after school. I think that's very important. (Applause.)

As I said, there are only 70 days left. There are always with something this big some controversy around the edges of the issue. But all these things can be resolved if the Congress will make up its mind to act. Because these 70 days of meetings where they can vote will be spread over most of the year. There's still time for committee meetings, for staff to do their work, for all that kind of stuff to happen. We can do this. We do not need to wait another year just because this is an election year to pass this. We need to do this now. (Applause.)

The other thing I want to say that's related to this is that Congress must pass comprehensive tobacco legislation to reduce teen smoking and raise the price of cigarettes by up to \$1.50 a pack -- (applause) -- impose strong penalties on companies that continue to advertise to children, and give the FDA full authority to regulate tobacco products and children's access to them. The revenues we raise from the tobacco company would help to make a partial contribution to the child care plan that I have proposed as well. (Applause.)

Again I say, there's some controversy, there's some issues that have to be resolved in this tobacco settlement, to get the legislation. But I want to, again, graphically illustrate -- I just watched all those little kids in that room, those two rooms, these beautiful children -- every single day, even though it is illegal in every state in America, 3,000 more children begin to smoke; 1,000 of those 3,000 children will die sooner because of that decision. Hardly anybody becomes a chronic, lifetime smoker who does not start in their teenage years.

So I know there are only 70 days left and I know this is a big bill. But I know that there are Democrats and Republicans in substantial numbers who want to do this. We should not let the calendar get in the way of the urgent need for action. We can pass the child care reforms and we can fund them. And we can pass the tobacco legislation and we must. Just think about it: 1,000 kids every day that wants -- just like all these children did in here. Just think about it, every single day. There is no need to wait. There is no excuse for waiting. The time to act is now. (Applause.)

I leave you with this thought. I'm glad you clapped when I said these are good times for America. And you ought to be proud of yourselves, because the whole country helped to create these good times. And the efforts that we make in different areas -- from the economy to crime to welfare reform to early childhood to health and education -- they all reinforce each other. But sometimes when times are good and people clap and they feel good, they relax. I tell you, when times are good, but challenges are large and the future is coming at you like a fast train down a track -- and that's how the 21st century is coming at you, with things changing more rapidly than ever before -- then an obligation is imposed to use the good times to act, not to relax.

So I say to all of you, the members of Congress who are here are ready to act, so give them all a pat on the back, but do everything you can to send a clear and unambiguous signal that you do not want the election year to be a relaxation year, you want it to be a legislating year for the children of this country to make them stronger in the new century. After all, it's only 700 days away. Let's spend 70 days to make sure that

in 700 days we'll have the healthiest, strongest children in the history of our nation.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

11:55 A.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Bridgeport, Connecticut)

For Immediate Release

March 10, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Steps to Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care

Now more than ever, America's working parents are struggling to balance their obligations to be good workers -- and their more important obligations to be good parents. By choice or by financial necessity, millions of Americans rely on child care to care for their children for part of each day. Parents deserve to know that their children are safe and nurtured in child care.

One of my highest priorities is to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. That is why my balanced budget includes the most significant investment in child care in our Nation's history and proposes specific measures to improve child care quality.

As a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce, the Federal Government should lead the way in improving child care. I am proud that our military has developed one of the finest child care delivery systems in the world, and that the Department of Defense, at my request, is sharing its expertise with the public and private sectors. Still, we need to do more. The executive branch of the Federal Government has responsibility for over 1,000 child care centers -- 788 through the military, 109 through the General Services Administration, and 127 through other Federal departments. In addition, the military oversees nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in our care.

Today I am directing my Administration to take significant new steps to improve the quality of Federally sponsored child care in the executive branch by (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers; (2) achieving 100 percent independent accreditation of all eligible centers; (3) exploring partner-ships among Federal agencies and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all Federal workers become better informed of child care benefits and the options available to them.

First, all child care workers in Federally sponsored centers should undergo thorough background checks to make sure that our children are safe. The vast majority of child care workers are caring people who have dedicated their lives to teaching and nurturing children. But one tragedy in

child care is too many, and criminal and civil background checks are necessary to determine whether the people caring for our children are fit for this responsibility. The military already has a model system to conduct background checks of child care workers. I now want to guarantee that workers at all nonmilitary, Federal child care facilities undergo such background checks in a thorough and timely fashion.

I therefore direct the Administrator of General Services ("Administrator") to report to me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure complete and timely background checks, to the fullest extent possible, for all child care workers in nonmilitary, Federally sponsored child care settings. Agencies with oversight of nonmilitary child care settings will report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Second, all Federally sponsored child care centers should receive nationally recognized, independent accreditation as soon as they are eligible to do so. Currently, only 76 percent of military centers, and 35 percent of other Federally sponsored centers, are accredited. By the year 2000, 100 percent should be accredited. I therefore direct the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator to provide me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, independent, nationally recognized accreditation of all eligible, Federally sponsored child care by the year 2000. Agencies with oversight of non-military child care settings shall report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Third, partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector are an increasingly important way to maximize existing resources and improve child care. I therefore direct the Administrator to work with the heads of all Federal departments and agencies to explore opportunities for collaboration both within Government and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability in Federally sponsored settings.

Finally, employers have a responsibility to make sure that their workers are better informed on child care and the options available to them at the national, State, and local levels. I therefore direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management ("Director") to ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, all Federal workers receive full information about child care benefits available to them on the Federal, State, and local levels, including information on resource and referral networks, available tax credits such as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, as well as public subsidies. The Director shall also host a nationwide summit designed to showcase model public and private sector solutions to child care needs.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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PRESIDENT CLINTON CALLS FOR CHILD CARE THAT STRENGTHENS AMERICA'S FAMILIES

March 10, 1998

Today, President Clinton renewed his call to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for America's working families. In a speech in Connecticut, the President issued an executive directive to improve federally-sponsored child care, and announced the release of a new report by HHS which reveals a pressing need for greater child care investment.

ENSURING THE QUALITY OF THE FEDERAL CHILD CARE SYSTEM. The President believes that the federal government should lead the way in improving the child care it sponsors for its employees. The executive directive President Clinton issued today instructs all executive agencies to: (1) reach 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care by the year 2000 (accreditation is done by nonprofit, non-governmental professional organizations to validate safety and quality; criteria include developmental programming, staff training, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, as well as health, safety and facility standards); (2) ensure proper background checks on child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; (3) explore public-private partnerships to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensure that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them. The executive branch of the federal government operates 1,024 child care centers -- 788 by the military, 109 by the General Services Administration, and 127 by other federal departments -- and the military sponsors nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, about 215,000 children are in federally-sponsored child care.

NEW REPORT POINTS TO INNOVATION BUT LIMITED RESOURCES IN THE STATES. *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: Report of State Plans* outlines strategies that the states have developed to administer the Child Care and Development Block Grant and meet the pressing child care needs of working families. The report reveals:

- **States need more resources to help working families afford child care.** The welfare law allows states to use the Child Care and Development Block Grant to provide child care subsidies to lower-income working families -- defined as families with less than 85 percent of state median income. This new report shows that because of resource constraints, some states set eligibility levels far below what is allowed by federal law. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income is not eligible for any help with child care costs. In as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for a child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements.
- **States have innovative strategies to improve child care quality,** such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

THE PRESIDENT'S CHILD CARE INITIATIVE ADDRESSES THE NEED FOR MORE RESOURCES AND BUILDS ON INNOVATION IN THE STATES. The President's balanced budget calls for an historic investment -- more than \$20 billion over five years -- to help working families pay for child care, build the supply of after-school programs, improve child care safety and quality, and promote early learning.

CONNECTICUT IS IMPROVING CHILD CARE QUALITY. Connecticut recently passed bipartisan School Readiness Legislation to improve child care quality and promote early learning.

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**PRESIDENT CLINTON'S PROPOSAL:
CHILD CARE THAT STRENGTHENS AMERICAN FAMILIES**

"Not a single American family should ever have to choose between the job they need and the child they love."

President Bill Clinton
State of the Union Address, January 27, 1998

President Clinton's balanced budget includes an historic initiative to improve child care for America's working families. The initiative proposes over \$20 billion over five years for child care -- **to help working families pay for child care, build a good supply of after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning.**

ENSURING AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, SAFE CHILD CARE. The President's child care initiative responds to the struggles our nation's working parents face in finding child care they can afford, trust and rely on. The new initiative:

- **Makes child care more affordable for working families.** To help working families struggling to meet the costs of child care, the initiative invests \$7.5 billion over five years to double the number of children receiving child care subsidies to more than two million by the year 2003. The initiative also invests \$4.8 billion over five years to increase tax credits for child care for three million families and provides a new tax credit for businesses that offer child care services to their employees at a cost of \$500 million over five years.
- **Increases access to and promotes early learning and healthy child development.** To improve early learning, the initiative includes \$3 billion over five years to establish an Early Learning Fund that helps local communities improve the quality and safety of child care for children ages zero to five. The initiative also increases investment in Head Start and doubles the number of children served by Early Head Start to 80,000.
- **Improves the safety and quality of child care.** To help ensure safe, quality child care, the initiative: steps up enforcement of state health and safety standards in child care settings, facilitates background checks on child care providers, increases scholarships and training for child care providers, and invests in child care research and evaluation.
- **Expands access to safe after-school care.** To help create safe, positive learning environments for American school-age children who lack adult supervision during a typical week, the initiative increases the 21st Century Learning Center Program by \$800 million over five years to provide after-school care for up to half a million children a year.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 9, 1998

CHILD CARE EVENT: TOUR OF CENTER AND SPEECH

DATE: Tuesday, March 10, 1998
LOCATION: Housatonic Community-Technical
College
Bridgeport, Connecticut
TIME: 10:50 to 11:40 am
FROM: Bruce Reed

I. PURPOSE

To underscore your commitment to making child care better, safer, and more affordable for America's working families by: (1) issuing an executive memorandum to improve federally-sponsored child care, and (2) releasing a new HHS report that reveals a pressing need for greater child care investment.

II. BACKGROUND

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, you will tour a model child care center at Housatonic Community-Technical College and then give a speech to a group of child care advocates, community leaders, elected officials, and students. Connecticut is the home of many congressional sponsors of child care legislation, including Senator Chris Dodd, and Reps. Barbara Kennelly, Nancy Johnson, and Rosa DeLauro. In addition, Connecticut recently passed bipartisan state legislation to promote early learning and improve child care quality.

Executive Memorandum to Improve Federally-Sponsored Child Care

You will direct executive agencies to take the following new steps to improve the quality of federally-sponsored child care:

- (1) Ensure proper thorough and timely background checks on child care workers in federally-sponsored child care.
- (2) Achieve 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care by the year 2000. Accreditation is done by nonprofit, non-governmental professional organizations to validate safety and quality. Currently, 76 percent of military child care centers are accredited and 35 percent of non-military federal child care are accredited, as compared to an estimated 7 percent nationally.

(3) Explore opportunities for collaboration both within government and with the private sector to improve the quality and affordability of federally sponsored child care.

(4) Ensure that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

Release of New HHS Report on Child Care

HHS' new report, *The Child Care and Development Block Grant - A Report of State Plans*, outlines the strategies that states have developed to administer the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The report contains two key findings:

- States need more resources to help working families afford child care. The welfare law allows states to use the Child Care and Development Block Grant to provide child care subsidies to lower-income working families -- defined as families with less than 85 percent of state median income. This new report shows that because of resource constraints, some states set eligibility levels far below what is allowed by federal law. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income is not eligible for any help with child care costs. In as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for any help with child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements.
- States have innovative strategies to improve child care quality, such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

New Report by the Children's Defense Fund

On Tuesday morning, the Children's Defense Fund will issue a report of state expenditures of the child care block grant. The report, titled *Locked Doors: States Struggling to meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Working Families*, makes the following findings, which are generally consistent with those of the HHS report:

- State child care subsidy programs are so underfunded that they cut off eligibility at family income levels far below what is allowed by federal law and what is needed by families.
- Even those low-income working families that do meet state income guidelines frequently cannot get the help they need. As of January 1998, about half the states had to turn away eligible low-income working families or put them on lengthy waiting lists for help.

Congressional Legislation on the Hill

Several Congressional leaders on child care are from Connecticut, including Senator Dodd, and Reps. Kennelly, Johnson, and DeLauro. All of their bills contain several elements included in your initiative, but most also include an initiative targeted to stay-at-home parents as well. In particular, Senator Dodd's bill, which is co-sponsored by 25 Senate Democrats, includes many of the elements of your initiative, such as a significant expansion of the Child Care and Development Block Grant, an expansion of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, a tax credit for businesses that provide child care, an increase in the investment in after-school programs, and a fund targeted to early learning and quality improvements; it also includes a provision to assist stay-at-home parents.

Recent Action on Child Care in Connecticut

Connecticut passed landmark child care/school readiness legislation in the 1997 session, on a bipartisan basis. The legislation provides full access to child care for three and four years olds, with emphasis on quality, parent involvement, family literacy, transition to school, and health linkages. Programs must be accredited to receive state dollars. Health care is linked to the legislation by requiring child care providers to ensure that children have had necessary and timely health screens. The legislation invested \$60 million in this area.

Housatonic Community-Technical College's Early Childhood Laboratory School

Housatonic Community-Technical College enrolls 3,300 students and offers generalized two-year degree programs. The student body is 66% female and the average age is 29. The college's Early Childhood Laboratory School is a nationally-accredited center serving 40 children, in two classes of twenty. The ratio of teachers to children is roughly one to six. The staff ranges from those with Masters in Early Childhood Education to two former welfare recipients. Also, community college students serve as externs in the center to gain experience towards their degrees in early childhood education.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Speech Participants:

Mayor Joseph Ganim

Representative Chris Shays.

Senator Chris Dodd

Pamela Price, who is a parent of a five-year old daughter enrolled at the School. She is a former welfare recipient who is now attending the Technical College assisted by Pell Grants, and she is studying Early Childhood Education. She recently started working in an after-school program at a nearby elementary school.

You

Members of Congress Confirmed to Attend

Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT)
Rep. Chris Shays (R-CT)
Rep. Barbara Kennelly (D-CT)
Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-CT)
Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

* The audience is made up of 150 leaders in child care policy in the state, including child care providers, business leaders, and parents.

VI. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- Upon arrival, **you** will be greeted by elected officials and Dr. Janis Wurtz, President, Housatonic Community - Technical College and Marie Nulty, Director, Early Childhood Laboratory School.
- **You**, accompanied by Marie Nulty, Mayor Ganim, Representative Chris Shays and Representative Chris Dodd, will tour the classroom of the Early Childhood Laboratory School at Housatonic Community-Technical College.
- **You**, accompanied by Mayor Joseph Ganim, Representative Chris Shays, Senator Chris Dodd and Pamela Price, are announced onto stage to "Hail to the Chief" and "Ruffles and Flourishes."
- Mayor Joseph Ganim gives welcoming remarks and introduces Representative Chris Shays.
- Representative Chris Shays gives remarks and introduces Senator Chris Dodd.
- Senator Chris Dodd will make remarks and introduces Pamela Price.
- Pamela Price will make remarks and introduce **You**.
- **You** give remarks, work a ropeline, and depart.

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by June Shih.

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March 10, 1998

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Now more than ever, America's working parents are struggling to balance their obligations to be good workers -- and their more important obligations to be good parents. By choice or by financial necessity, millions of Americans rely on child care to care for their children for part of each day. Parents deserve to know that their children are safe and nurtured in child care.

One of my highest priorities is to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. That is why my balanced budget includes the most significant investment in child care in our Nation's history, and proposes specific measures to improve child care quality.

As a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce, the Federal Government should lead the way in improving child care. I am proud that our military has developed one of the finest child care delivery systems in the world, and that the Department of Defense, at my request, is sharing its expertise with the public and private sectors. Still, we need to do more. The executive branch of the Federal Government has responsibility for over a thousand child care centers -- 788 through the military, 109 through the General Services Administration, and 127 through other Federal departments. In addition, the military oversees nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in our care.

Today I am directing my Cabinet to take significant new steps to improve the quality of Federally sponsored child care in the executive branch by (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers; (2) achieving 100-percent independent accreditation of all eligible centers; (3) exploring partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all Federal workers become better informed of child care benefits and the options available to them.

First, all child care workers in Federally sponsored centers should undergo thorough background checks to make sure that our children are safe. The vast majority of child care workers are caring people who have dedicated their lives to teaching and nurturing children. But one tragedy in child care is too many, and criminal and civil background checks are necessary to determine whether the people caring for our children are fit for this responsibility. The military already has a model system to conduct background checks of child care workers. I now want to guarantee that workers at all nonmilitary, Federal child care facilities undergo such background checks in a thorough and timely fashion.

I therefore direct the Administrator of General Services ("Administrator") to report to me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure complete and timely background checks, to the fullest extent possible, for all child care workers in nonmilitary, Federally sponsored child care settings. Agencies with oversight of nonmilitary child care settings will report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Second, all Federally sponsored child care centers should receive nationally recognized, independent accreditation as soon as they are eligible to do so. Currently, only 76 percent of military centers, and 35 percent of other Federally sponsored centers, are accredited. By the year 2000, 100 percent should be accredited. I therefore direct the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator to provide me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, independent, nationally recognized accreditation of all eligible, Federally sponsored child care by the year 2000. Agencies with oversight of nonmilitary child care settings shall report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Third, partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector are an increasingly important way to maximize existing resources and improve child care. I therefore direct the Administrator to work with the heads of all Federal departments and agencies to explore opportunities for collaboration both within Government and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability in Federally sponsored settings.

Finally, employers have a responsibility to make sure that their workers are better informed on child care and the options available to them at the national, State, and local levels. I therefore direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management ("Director") to ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, all Federal workers receive full information about

child care benefits available to them on the Federal, State, and local levels, including information on resource and referral networks, available tax credits such as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, as well as public subsidies. The Director shall also host a nationwide summit designed to showcase model public and private sector solutions to child care needs.

CHILD CARE EVENT IN CONNECTICUT
March 10, 1998

INTERNAL Q&A

Directive to Improve Federally-Sponsored Child Care

Q: Why is the President issuing a directive to improve federally-sponsored child care? Is it in bad shape?

A: Federally-sponsored child care is not in bad shape, but it is not uniformly excellent in quality. The directive that the President issued today will help ensure that the federal Government is a model child care provider. The President believes that the federal government -- both as a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce -- should lead the way in improving the child care it sponsors for its employees. The directive calls for several steps to be taken: (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; (2) achieving 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care; (3) exploring partnerships among federal agencies and with the private sectors to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

Q: Isn't the biggest problem with federally-sponsored child care that it's not affordable? Won't improving its quality just make it even more expensive?

A: It is true that today, many lower-income government workers cannot afford the care sponsored by the federal government. The President is committed to making child care more affordable for all Americans. His child care initiative has several components aimed at improving child care costs: (1) \$7.5 billion over five years to double, by the year 2003, the number of children currently served with child care subsidies; (2) \$4.8 billion over five years to provide greater tax relief to working parents paying for child care; and (3) a new tax credit to businesses that offer child care services to their workers. Government workers will benefit from these measures, as will all Americans. In addition, the President's directive instructs the Office of Personnel Management to ensure that federal workers know about the child care options and benefits, including subsidies available to them, and asks that his Cabinet explore public-private partnerships to improve child care affordability.

Q: How are background checks currently administered in federally-sponsored child care? Is there a big problem there?

A: The President believes that background checks are necessary to ensure that children in child care are safe. The Administration wants to be assured that this is happening in a

careful and systematic way in federally-sponsored child care -- and that monitoring of this process is vigilant. The military has developed a model system to do background checks of child care workers in the centers and family day-care homes it sponsors. The President's directive is aimed at bring a similar level of excellence to the non-military federally-sponsored child care. The President's directive requires that the Administrator of the General Services Administration review this issue and submit a plan to the President to ensure complete and timely criminal and civil background checks in all federally-sponsored child care.

NOTE: The Department of Defense conducts background checks -- using both the FBI and an internal clearance system -- on all child care workers in the child care centers and family child care homes it sponsors. Non-military federal agencies that sponsor child care are required by law to conduct criminal background checks -- through the FBI and through the state criminal history repositories -- on child care providers, as well as to comply with state and local requirements.

Q: Aren't non-military federally-sponsored child care centers already required by law to do background checks? What is the point of the directive?

A: Non-military federal agencies that sponsor child care are required by law to do background checks on child care providers, but there is no oversight mechanism to ensure that these checks are being done thoroughly and in a timely fashion. Although some centers do thorough and timely checks, others appear to comply with their statutory obligations in only a perfunctory manner. The President's directive instructs the Administrator of the General Services Administration to report to him on the thoroughness and timeliness of background checks of child care providers in all non-military federally-sponsored child care. The result should be a uniformly high level of care and accuracy in conducting background checks.

Q: What about background checks for child care workers nationwide?

The President has taken action to help improve background checks on child care workers nationwide. Last year, the President transmitted the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact to Congress, which will facilitate effective background checks on child care providers by eliminating state law barriers to the sharing of criminal history information for purposes other than ongoing criminal investigations. The President has urged enactment of this Compact so that child care agencies or parents wanting to do background checks can gain access to ratifying states' complete criminal records.

Q: What is accreditation? Why is President calling for all federally-sponsored child care center in the Executive Branch to be accredited?

A: Accreditation for child care is done by nonprofit, non-governmental professional

organizations to validate safety and quality. Criteria include developmental programming, staff training, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, as well as health, safety and facility standards. Currently, 76 percent of military child care centers are accredited and 35 percent of other federally-sponsored child care centers in the executive branch are accredited -- as compared to an estimated 7 percent nationally. The President believes all eligible, federally-sponsored child care should achieve nationally-recognized, independent accreditation to ensure and maintain quality.

Q: How is the President's Directive different from the legislation sponsored by Senator Jeffords and Congressman Gilman to improve federally-sponsored child care?

A: Both the President's directive and legislation proposed by Senators Dodd and Jeffords and Rep. Gilman aim to improve federally-sponsored child care. Both require federally-sponsored child care centers to be accredited by independent, nationally-recognized organizations. The congressional legislation would require that these child care centers achieve accreditation, to the fullest extent possible, within five years of enactment of the legislation. The President's executive memorandum sets a quicker time frame for accreditation and directs his Cabinet to ensure accreditation, to the fullest extent possible, by the year 2000.

The President's directive also addresses other issues not in the Jeffords/Gilman legislation, including: (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; and (2) ensuring that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

The pending legislation does one thing that cannot be done by executive action: it would require that all non-military federally-sponsored child care adopt health and safety standards developed by the General Services Administration.

Q: Does the Administration support the Jeffords/Gilman legislation?

A: While the Administration has not taken a formal position on the legislation, we have provided significant technical assistance to congressional staff as it has developed and support its essential elements. We look forward to continuing to work with Senators Dodd and Jeffords, Rep. Gilman and other Members of Congress to meet our mutual goals of improving child care in federally-sponsored facilities, and to making child care better, safer, and more affordable for all American parents who rely on it. Of course, some of this legislation will be rendered unnecessary by the President's executive directive.

Q: What does federally-sponsored child care look like?

A: The executive branch of the federal government operates 1,024 child care centers -- 788 by the military, 109 by the General Services Administration, and 127 by other federal

departments. In addition, the military sponsors nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in the care of federally-sponsored child care in the executive branch. In addition, the judicial and legislative branches sponsor 5 child care centers, caring for 338 children.

Q: How does the military operate its child care system? Isn't it a good program because it spends so much money?

A: The Department of Defense's Child Care System serves approximately 200,000 children (aged zero to 12) daily, making it the largest employer-sponsored child care program in the nation. Through this system, the military offers full-day, part-day, and hourly child care, part-day preschools, before- and after-school programs for school age children, and extended hour care. Because of the Department of Defense's commitment to excellence in child care, since 1992, the number of military child care facilities that are accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children has risen from 55 to 353. Currently, over 75% of military child care programs are accredited, as compared to only 7% of other child care facilities nationwide.

While the military does invest significant resources into their child care system, it also finds ways to increase quality without large investments -- by setting and enforcing high quality standards (including unannounced inspections), supporting family day care networks, offering a strong resource and referral system, and providing a wide variety of care options, all of which increase quality without large investments.

Q: How does non-military, federally-sponsored child care operate?

A: Non-military federal agencies sponsor over 240 child care centers across the country in federally-owned and leased buildings. The centers are operated by profit and non-profit child care providers. Once a need is established, the General Services Administration or the agencies that occupy the building can supply space to establish a child care center. The sponsoring agency or agencies may continue to support the center by providing free rent, utilities, telephone services, and general maintenance, but may not provide subsidies for salaries, training for child care staff or tuition assistance.

All children of federal employees families are eligible to send their children to federally-sponsored child care centers. Under present law, fifty percent of the children attending the child care centers must be children of federal employees. Families in the community may use any slots not filled by children of federal workers, who are given priority for admission.

The centers are overseen by boards that contract with vendors for services or operate the centers themselves. Because federal child care is not uniform in operation, quality, or the amount of support the center gets from its sponsoring agency, there are many variations

among the centers operated by the non-military federal agencies.

Q: Are there federally-sponsored child care facilities in Connecticut? Are they accredited?

A: There are four child care centers sponsored by the federal government in Connecticut -- one by the General Services Administration, one by the Department of Transportation and the Coast Guard, one by the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and one by the Navy. All four require background checks; two are accredited (the GSA and Navy centers).

Q: What are the child care options for parents who work at the White House?

Employees of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) can enroll their children in the nearby U.S. Kids Child Development Center, a center accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children. Additionally, White House parents may enroll their children in any of the 26 other federal child care centers in the greater Washington, D.C. area.

New HHS Report

Q: What does the new HHS report tell us?

A: This report -- called *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: A Report of State Plans* -- outlines the strategies that the states have developed to administer the block grant and meet the pressing child care needs of working families. There are two important findings to the report. First, the report indicates that states could use more resources to help working families afford child care. With the current block grant funding level, states are not able to serve everyone that could be eligible under federal law with a child care subsidy. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income does not have a chance for help with child care costs. And in as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for a child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements. Second, the report tells us that states have designed innovative strategies to improve child care quality, such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

The President's child care initiative addresses the need for greater resources to the states for child care subsidies and builds on the innovative activities that states are employing to improve child care quality and build the supply of good care for the families who rely on it.

Q: How will the President's child care initiative respond to the issues raised in the

report?

- A: President Clinton's child care initiative responds to the need to help more hardworking Americans with the costs of child care by investing \$7.5 billion over five years in the Child Care and Development Block Grant -- an investment that would enable us to double the number of children currently served by the block grant.

In addition, the President's initiative builds on the promising efforts to improve child care quality underway in the states, such as those designed to improve consumer education, provide scholarships to child care providers, offer tax credits to employers that provide child care services to their workers, and to enforce state health and safety standards. The President's child care initiative builds on these state-level efforts by: (1) creating a Standards Enforcement Fund; (2) establishing a Child Care Provider Scholarship Fund; (3) offering a national tax credit to employers that offer child care services; (4) establishing an Early Learning Fund for activities to improve child care quality and promote early childhood development; and (5) providing after-school opportunities for 500,000 more children each year.

- Q: The Children's Defense Fund today released a state-by-state report on child care? Why is some of CDF's information different from that in the HHS report?**

- A: The two reports collected data for different periods of time using different approaches. For example, the HHS data reflect information submitted in the CCDBG plans prepared last summer as dictated by law, while the CDF data were collected through interviews with administrators in January 1998. But in general CDF's report and HHS's report are consistent in that they point to the insufficient funds available to states through the block grant to provide child care subsidies for working parents.

- Q: Do you agree with CDF's finding that we need to invest an additional \$20 billion over five years in the block grant? Why has the President proposed so much less than that?**

- A: The Administration believes that states need significant additional resources to enable them to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for the hardworking Americans who rely on it. We know that today states are able to serve far less than those eligible for child care subsidies under federal law, and that, more than ever, parents struggle to meet the high costs of child care. That is why the President has proposed an additional \$7.5 billion over five years for the Child and Development Block Grant -- an investment that would allow us to double by the year 2003 the number of children currently served with child care subsidies by the block grant. The President has also proposed other child care investments -- including greater tax relief for working families and for employers that offer child care services for their workers, scholarships for child care providers, and funds for standards enforcement and early learning activities. The President's child care initiative --

totaling over \$20 billion over five years -- represents the largest single child care investment in our nation's history.

General

Q: What is the President's child care initiative?

A: President Clinton's historic initiative to improve child care for America's working families represents the largest single investment in child care in the nation's history -- over \$20 billion over five years. President Clinton's initiative responds to the struggles our nation's working parents face in finding child care that they can afford, trust, and rely on. The President's proposal will help working families pay for child care, build the supply of good after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning.

- **Doubles the number of children receiving child care subsidies** to more than two million by the year 2003 by increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant by \$7.5 billion over 5 years.
- **Increases tax credits for three million working families to help them pay for child care** by investing \$4.8 billion over 5 years in the Child and Dependent Tax Credit. The President's proposal also provides a new tax credit for businesses that offer child care services for their employees.
- **Provides after-school care for 500,000 children per year** by expanding the 21st Century Community Learning Center program by \$800 million over 5 years to provide funds to school-community partnerships to establish or expand programs for school-age children.
- **Improves child care safety and quality and enhances early childhood development** by establishing a new Early Learning Fund as well as supporting enforcement of state child care health and safety standards, providing scholarships to up to 50,000 child care providers per year, and investing in research and consumer education.

Q: Are states spending the child care money in the new welfare reform law?

A: We are very encouraged by the state reports which show they have obligated over 99 percent of the child care funds available under the new welfare law for FY 1997. This demonstrates the tremendous need states have for child care, and President Clinton has continued to urge states to invest their dollars into helping working families. Several states, such as Illinois and Delaware, are committing substantial state dollars to ensure that low income families -- both working families and those transitioning from welfare to work -- have available child care. But let's be clear -- the President's initiative is not aimed at mothers on welfare. It is aimed at working parents. We know that working parents with annual incomes under \$14,400 that paid for child care for

children under five spent 25 percent of their income on child care -- and even then it is difficult to find accessible, quality care.

Q: Child Care has not been made a clear priority by the Congressional leadership. Do you really think you have a chance of getting anything done?

A: Since the President announced his child care initiative in January, legislation has been introduced by Republicans and Democrats that include proposals similar to the President's proposed initiative. Senators Chafee and Dodd each have introduced promising legislation in the Senate, and Representatives Johnson and Kennelly have introduced legislation in the House. The Administration believes that making child care better, safer and more affordable for the hardworking American families that rely on it has strong Congressional and public support. We will be working hard with Congress on a bipartisan basis to enact child care legislation this year that is right for America's children and families.

Q: Since much of the funding of this proposal is based on the tobacco settlement, aren't you counting your chickens before they've hatched? What will you do if the tobacco settlement does not go through?

A: First, the initiative is paid for in a number of ways -- only one part comes from tobacco revenues. Second, and more important, we believe that a national tobacco settlement will pass. The President supports strong tobacco legislation, and many Republicans and Democrats alike are working vigorously to craft comprehensive legislation. Of course, no offset proposed in a budget is guaranteed; the Congress can reject any proposed way of financing a program. If Congress does not pass comprehensive tobacco legislation, we will work with Congress to find other offsets. This is a high Administration priority, and we will find an effective funding mechanism.

Q: What's the Administration's position on proposals to support stay-at-home parents?

A: There are a number of proposals on the Hill to help stay-at-home parents, and we are working hard to evaluate their costs and effects. The President believes that we should respect and support parents in whatever choices they make, whether they work or stay at home. He has supported that choice in the past through a variety of actions to increase family income, such as expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing the minimum wage, and passing the \$500 per-child tax credit. These actions targeted to help families will cost approximately \$250 billion over the next five years. The President believes that by continuing to work together on a bipartisan basis and by taking the best proposals from both sides of the aisle, we will achieve legislation that benefits all America's families and children.

Q: Some conservatives claim that this is a big government proposal, which promotes institutionalized day care. Is this true?

A: No. The Administration is committed to helping parents make the choices that are right for their families, whatever child care arrangements they choose for their children. Most of the funding in the President's proposal goes directly to parents -- whether through tax cuts or through vouchers issued by states with child care block grant funding. The President's child care initiative is designed to provide maximum flexibility to parents so that all their child care choices are supported.

PRESIDENT CLINTON CALLS FOR CHILD CARE THAT STRENGTHENS AMERICA'S FAMILIES

March 10, 1998

Today, President Clinton renewed his call to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for America's working families. In a speech in Connecticut, the President issued an executive directive to improve federally-sponsored child care, and announced the release of a new report by HHS which reveals a pressing need for greater child care investment.

ENSURING THE QUALITY OF THE FEDERAL CHILD CARE SYSTEM. The President believes that the federal government should lead the way in improving the child care it sponsors for its employees. The executive directive President Clinton issued today instructs all executive agencies to: (1) reach 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care by the year 2000 (accreditation is done by nonprofit, non-governmental professional organizations to validate safety and quality; criteria include developmental programming, staff training, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, as well as health, safety and facility standards); (2) ensure proper background checks on child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; (3) explore public-private partnerships to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensure that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them. The executive branch of the federal government operates 1,024 child care centers -- 788 by the military, 109 by the General Services Administration, and 127 by other federal departments -- and the military sponsors nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, about 215,000 children are in federally-sponsored child care.

NEW REPORT POINTS TO INNOVATION BUT LIMITED RESOURCES IN THE STATES. *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: Report of State Plans* outlines strategies that the states have developed to administer the Child Care and Development Block Grant and meet the pressing child care needs of working families. The report reveals:

- **States need more resources to help working families afford child care.** The welfare law allows states to use the Child Care and Development Block Grant to provide child care subsidies to lower-income working families -- defined as families with less than 85 percent of state median income. This new report shows that because of resource constraints, some states set eligibility levels far below what is allowed by federal law. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income is not eligible for any help with child care costs. In as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for a child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements.
- **States have innovative strategies to improve child care quality,** such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

THE PRESIDENT'S CHILD CARE INITIATIVE ADDRESSES THE NEED FOR MORE RESOURCES AND BUILDS ON INNOVATION IN THE STATES. The President's balanced budget calls for an historic investment -- more than \$20 billion over five years -- to help working families pay for child care, build the supply of after-school programs, improve child care safety and quality, and promote early learning.

CONNECTICUT IS IMPROVING CHILD CARE QUALITY. Connecticut recently passed bipartisan School Readiness Legislation to improve child care quality and promote early learning.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S PROPOSAL: CHILD CARE THAT STRENGTHENS AMERICAN FAMILIES

"Not a single American family should ever have to choose between the job they need and the child they love."

President Bill Clinton
State of the Union Address, January 27, 1998

President Clinton's balanced budget includes an historic initiative to improve child care for America's working families. The initiative proposes over \$20 billion over five years for child care -- **to help working families pay for child care, build a good supply of after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning.**

ENSURING AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, SAFE CHILD CARE. The President's child care initiative responds to the struggles our nation's working parents face in finding child care they can afford, trust and rely on. The new initiative:

- **Makes child care more affordable for working families.** To help working families struggling to meet the costs of child care, the initiative invests \$7.5 billion over five years to double the number of children receiving child care subsidies to more than two million by the year 2003. The initiative also invests \$4.8 billion over five years to increase tax credits for child care for three million families and provides a new tax credit for businesses that offer child care services to their employees at a cost of \$500 million over five years.
- **Increases access to and promotes early learning and healthy child development.** To improve early learning, the initiative includes \$3 billion over five years to establish an Early Learning Fund that helps local communities improve the quality and safety of child care for children ages zero to five. The initiative also increases investment in Head Start and doubles the number of children served by Early Head Start to 80,000.
- **Improves the safety and quality of child care.** To help ensure safe, quality child care, the initiative: steps up enforcement of state health and safety standards in child care settings, facilitates background checks on child care providers, increases scholarships and training for child care providers, and invests in child care research and evaluation.
- **Expands access to safe after-school care.** To help create safe, positive learning environments for American school-age children who lack adult supervision during a typical week, the initiative increases the 21st Century Learning Center Program by \$800 million over five years to provide after-school care for up to half a million children a year.

CHILD CARE EVENT IN CONNECTICUT
March 10, 1998

INTERNAL Q&A

Directive to Improve Federally-Sponsored Child Care

Q: Why is the President issuing a directive to improve federally-sponsored child care? Is it in bad shape?

A: Federally-sponsored child care is not in bad shape, but it is not uniformly excellent in quality. The directive that the President issued today will help ensure that the federal Government is a model child care provider. The President believes that the federal government -- both as a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce -- should lead the way in improving the child care it sponsors for its employees. The directive calls for several steps to be taken: (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; (2) achieving 100 percent national accreditation of federally-sponsored child care; (3) exploring partnerships among federal agencies and with the private sectors to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

Q: Isn't the biggest problem with federally-sponsored child care that it's not affordable? Won't improving its quality just make it even more expensive?

A: It is true that today, many lower-income government workers cannot afford the care sponsored by the federal government. The President is committed to making child care more affordable for all Americans. His child care initiative has several components aimed at improving child care costs: (1) \$7.5 billion over five years to double, by the year 2003, the number of children currently served with child care subsidies; (2) \$4.8 billion over five years to provide greater tax relief to working parents paying for child care; and (3) a new tax credit to businesses that offer child care services to their workers. Government workers will benefit from these measures, as will all Americans. In addition, the President's directive instructs the Office of Personnel Management to ensure that federal workers know about the child care options and benefits, including subsidies available to them, and asks that his Cabinet explore public-private partnerships to improve child care affordability.

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careful and systematic way in federally-sponsored child care -- and that monitoring of this process is vigilant. The military has developed a model system to do background checks of child care workers in the centers and family day-care homes it sponsors. The President's directive is aimed at bring a similar level of excellence to the non-military federally-sponsored child care. The President's directive requires that the Administrator of the General Services Administration review this issue and submit a plan to the President to ensure complete and timely criminal and civil background checks in all federally-sponsored child care.

NOTE: The Department of Defense conducts background checks -- using both the FBI and an internal clearance system -- on all child care workers in the child care centers and family child care homes it sponsors. Non-military federal agencies that sponsor child care are required by law to conduct criminal background checks -- through the FBI and through the state criminal history repositories -- on child care providers, as well as to comply with state and local requirements.

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A: Both the President's directive and legislation proposed by Senators Dodd and Jeffords and Rep. Gilman aim to improve federally-sponsored child care. Both require federally-sponsored child care centers to be accredited by independent, nationally-recognized organizations. The congressional legislation would require that these child care centers achieve accreditation, to the fullest extent possible, within five years of enactment of the legislation. The President's executive memorandum sets a quicker time frame for accreditation and directs his Cabinet to ensure accreditation, to the fullest extent possible, by the year 2000.

The President's directive also addresses other issues not in the Jeffords/Gilman legislation, including: (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers in federally-sponsored child care; and (2) ensuring that all federal workers have full information on child care benefits and options available to them.

The pending legislation does one thing that cannot be done by executive action: it would require that all non-military federally-sponsored child care adopt health and safety standards developed by the General Services Administration.

Q: Does the Administration support the Jeffords/Gilman legislation?

A: While the Administration has not taken a formal position on the legislation, we have provided significant technical assistance to congressional staff as it has developed and support its essential elements. We look forward to continuing to work with Senators Dodd and Jeffords, Rep. Gilman and other Members of Congress to meet our mutual goals of improving child care in federally-sponsored facilities, and to making child care better, safer, and more affordable for all American parents who rely on it. Of course, some of this legislation will be rendered unnecessary by the President's executive directive.

Q: What does federally-sponsored child care look like?

A: The executive branch of the federal government operates 1,024 child care centers -- 788 by the military, 109 by the General Services Administration, and 127 by other federal

departments. In addition, the military sponsors nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in the care of federally-sponsored child care in the executive branch. In addition, the judicial and legislative branches sponsor 5 child care centers, caring for 338 children.

Q: How does the military operate its child care system? Isn't it a good program because it spends so much money?

A: The Department of Defense's Child Care System serves approximately 200,000 children (aged zero to 12) daily, making it the largest employer-sponsored child care program in the nation. Through this system, the military offers full-day, part-day, and hourly child care, part-day preschools, before- and after-school programs for school age children, and extended hour care. Because of the Department of Defense's commitment to excellence in child care, since 1992, the number of military child care facilities that are accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children has risen from 55 to 353. Currently, over 75% of military child care programs are accredited, as compared to only 7% of other child care facilities nationwide.

While the military does invest significant resources into their child care system, it also finds ways to increase quality without large investments -- by setting and enforcing high quality standards (including unannounced inspections), supporting family day care networks, offering a strong resource and referral system, and providing a wide variety of care options, all of which increase quality without large investments.

Q: How does non-military, federally-sponsored child care operate?

A: Non-military federal agencies sponsor over 240 child care centers across the country in federally-owned and leased buildings. The centers are operated by profit and non-profit child care providers. Once a need is established, the General Services Administration or the agencies that occupy the building can supply space to establish a child care center. The sponsoring agency or agencies may continue to support the center by providing free rent, utilities, telephone services, and general maintenance, but may not provide subsidies for salaries, training for child care staff or tuition assistance.

All children of federal employees families are eligible to send their children to federally-sponsored child care centers. Under present law, fifty percent of the children attending the child care centers must be children of federal employees. Families in the community may use any slots not filled by children of federal workers, who are given priority for admission.

The centers are overseen by boards that contract with vendors for services or operate the centers themselves. Because federal child care is not uniform in operation, quality, or the amount of support the center gets from its sponsoring agency, there are many variations

among the centers operated by the non-military federal agencies.

Q: Are there federally-sponsored child care facilities in Connecticut? Are they accredited?

A: There are four child care centers sponsored by the federal government in Connecticut -- one by the General Services Administration, one by the Department of Transportation and the Coast Guard, one by the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and one by the Navy. All four require background checks; two are accredited (the GSA and Navy centers).

Q: What are the child care options for parents who work at the White House?

Employees of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) can enroll their children in the nearby U.S. Kids Child Development Center, a center accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children. Additionally, White House parents may enroll their children in any of the 26 other federal child care centers in the greater Washington, D.C. area.

New HHS Report

Q: What does the new HHS report tell us?

A: This report -- called *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: A Report of State Plans* -- outlines the strategies that the states have developed to administer the block grant and meet the pressing child care needs of working families. There are two important findings to the report. First, the report indicates that states could use more resources to help working families afford child care. With the current block grant funding level, states are not able to serve everyone that could be eligible under federal law with a child care subsidy. For example, in 10 states, a family of three with as little as \$20,000 of income does not have a chance for help with child care costs. And in as many as 37 states, a family of three with \$28,000 of income is not eligible for a child care subsidy. Further, most states have insufficient funds even to subsidize all families meeting their eligibility requirements. Second, the report tells us that states have designed innovative strategies to improve child care quality, such as scholarships and basic training for child care providers, tax credits for businesses that offer child care services, initiatives to link the child care and health care communities, support for resource and referral services, and initiatives to expand school-age care.

The President's child care initiative addresses the need for greater resources to the states for child care subsidies and builds on the innovative activities that states are employing to improve child care quality and build the supply of good care for the families who rely on it.

Q: How will the President's child care initiative respond to the issues raised in the

report?

- A: President Clinton's child care initiative responds to the need to help more hardworking Americans with the costs of child care by investing \$7.5 billion over five years in the Child Care and Development Block Grant -- an investment that would enable us to double the number of children currently served by the block grant.

In addition, the President's initiative builds on the promising efforts to improve child care quality underway in the states, such as those designed to improve consumer education, provide scholarships to child care providers, offer tax credits to employers that provide child care services to their workers, and to enforce state health and safety standards. The President's child care initiative builds on these state-level efforts by: (1) creating a Standards Enforcement Fund; (2) establishing a Child Care Provider Scholarship Fund; (3) offering a national tax credit to employers that offer child care services; (4) establishing an Early Learning Fund for activities to improve child care quality and promote early childhood development; and (5) providing after-school opportunities for 500,000 more children each year.

- Q: The Children's Defense Fund today released a state-by-state report on child care? Why is some of CDF's information different from that in the HHS report?**

- A: The two reports collected data for different periods of time using different approaches. For example, the HHS data reflect information submitted in the CCDBG plans prepared last summer as dictated by law, while the CDF data were collected through interviews with administrators in January 1998. But in general CDF's report and HHS's report are consistent in that they point to the insufficient funds available to states through the block grant to provide child care subsidies for working parents.

- Q: Do you agree with CDF's finding that we need to invest an additional \$20 billion over five years in the block grant? Why has the President proposed so much less than that?**

- A: The Administration believes that states need significant additional resources to enable them to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for the hardworking Americans who rely on it. We know that today states are able to serve far less than those eligible for child care subsidies under federal law, and that, more than ever, parents struggle to meet the high costs of child care. That is why the President has proposed an additional \$7.5 billion over five years for the Child and Development Block Grant -- an investment that would allow us to double by the year 2003 the number of children currently served with child care subsidies by the block grant. The President has also proposed other child care investments -- including greater tax relief for working families and for employers that offer child care services for their workers, scholarships for child care providers, and funds for standards enforcement and early learning activities. The President's child care initiative --

totaling over \$20 billion over five years -- represents the largest single child care investment in our nation's history.

General

Q: What is the President's child care initiative?

A: President Clinton's historic initiative to improve child care for America's working families represents the largest single investment in child care in the nation's history -- over \$20 billion over five years. President Clinton's initiative responds to the struggles our nation's working parents face in finding child care that they can afford, trust, and rely on. The President's proposal will help working families pay for child care, build the supply of good after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning.

- **Doubles the number of children receiving child care subsidies** to more than two million by the year 2003 by increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant by \$7.5 billion over 5 years.
- **Increases tax credits for three million working families to help them pay for child care** by investing \$4.8 billion over 5 years in the Child and Dependent Tax Credit. The President's proposal also provides a new tax credit for businesses that offer child care services for their employees.
- **Provides after-school care for 500,000 children per year** by expanding the 21st Century Community Learning Center program by \$800 million over 5 years to provide funds to school-community partnerships to establish or expand programs for school-age children.
- **Improves child care safety and quality and enhances early childhood development** by establishing a new Early Learning Fund as well as supporting enforcement of state child care health and safety standards, providing scholarships to up to 50,000 child care providers per year, and investing in research and consumer education.

Q: Are states spending the child care money in the new welfare reform law?

A: We are very encouraged by the state reports which show they have obligated over 99 percent of the child care funds available under the new welfare law for FY 1997. This demonstrates the tremendous need states have for child care, and President Clinton has continued to urge states to invest their dollars into helping working families. Several states, such as Illinois and Delaware, are committing substantial state dollars to ensure that low income families -- both working families and those transitioning from welfare to work -- have available child care. But let's be clear -- the President's initiative is not aimed at mothers on welfare. It is aimed at working parents. We know that working parents with annual incomes under \$14,400 that paid for child care for

children under five spent 25 percent of their income on child care -- and even then it is difficult to find accessible, quality care.

Q: Child Care has not been made a clear priority by the Congressional leadership. Do you really think you have a chance of getting anything done?

A: Since the President announced his child care initiative in January, legislation has been introduced by Republicans and Democrats that include proposals similar to the President's proposed initiative. Senators Chafee and Dodd each have introduced promising legislation in the Senate, and Representatives Johnson and Kennelly have introduced legislation in the House. The Administration believes that making child care better, safer and more affordable for the hardworking American families that rely on it has strong Congressional and public support. We will be working hard with Congress on a bipartisan basis to enact child care legislation this year that is right for America's children and families.

Q: Since much of the funding of this proposal is based on the tobacco settlement, aren't you counting your chickens before they've hatched? What will you do if the tobacco settlement does not go through?

A: First, the initiative is paid for in a number of ways -- only one part comes from tobacco revenues. Second, and more important, we believe that a national tobacco settlement will pass. The President supports strong tobacco legislation, and many Republicans and Democrats alike are working vigorously to craft comprehensive legislation. Of course, no offset proposed in a budget is guaranteed; the Congress can reject any proposed way of financing a program. If Congress does not pass comprehensive tobacco legislation, we will work with Congress to find other offsets. This is a high Administration priority, and we will find an effective funding mechanism.

Q: What's the Administration's position on proposals to support stay-at-home parents?

A: There are a number of proposals on the Hill to help stay-at-home parents, and we are working hard to evaluate their costs and effects. The President believes that we should respect and support parents in whatever choices they make, whether they work or stay at home. He has supported that choice in the past through a variety of actions to increase family income, such as expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing the minimum wage, and passing the \$500 per-child tax credit. These actions targeted to help families will cost approximately \$250 billion over the next five years. The President believes that by continuing to work together on a bipartisan basis and by taking the best proposals from both sides of the aisle, we will achieve legislation that benefits all America's families and children.

Q: Some conservatives claim that this is a big government proposal, which promotes institutionalized day care. Is this true?

A: No. The Administration is committed to helping parents make the choices that are right for their families, whatever child care arrangements they choose for their children. Most of the funding in the President's proposal goes directly to parents -- whether through tax cuts or through vouchers issued by states with child care block grant funding. The President's child care initiative is designed to provide maximum flexibility to parents so that all their child care choices are supported.