



94 APR 11 P 6: 58

Date: April 1, 1994
To: President Bill Clinton
Hillary Rodham Clinton
From: Stan Greenberg

RE: BARNSTORMING FOR HEALTH CARE

The press conference and week's vacation have changed the tone of reporting on Whitewater and, to some extent, the mood of the country. Consistent with the public polls, we show a slight improvement on job performance and a marked improvement on handling the Whitewater issue. The public seems much clearer now that this involves minor mistakes, not a major scandal.

But we have a long way to go. Overall trust and confidence have not risen; voters still see mainly gridlock in Washington, and, thus, we have not regained our earlier standing on effectiveness and getting things done; support for health care remains weak; and the First Lady's position has not improved at all.

It is important in this recess week for the President and First Lady to barnstorm the country for your agenda -- particularly health care. Voters need to feel your determination and optimism. In the press conference, they focused on your Whitewater responses and did not make the key turn: it's time to address the people's business. This next week we must show you taking up the issues that you were elected to solve -- undeterred by Washington. Indeed, there is real value here in going to the people and showing that you (and they) have their priorities right.

We are suggesting a series of town meetings under a common theme -- to take this week above just a series of health care events. The multiple town meetings in different regions across the country allow us to underscore your determination, in the face of unbelievable odds, to make your case on the issues you care about. These meetings will be characterized, we hope, by determination, optimism, and the charts. The plan was described (5 points) in the press conference but little noticed. This is, in effect, the President's first opportunity to use the charts and show his determination to educate the public, give them vital information, and create pressure on the Congress to act.



The town meetings could degenerate into minutia which is why we have been cautious in the past. But the charts, we hope, change that. They provide the main points of conversation and enable us to bring small points back to the main general points. It is important that the town meeting schedule allow for some preparation, both on the presentation and on turning questions to the general issues. To that end, I would expect Boorstin and Mandy to accompany you on some portion of the trip.

I hope that the First Lady joins you for the last town meeting. She too needs to be part of the barnstorming story.

When Congress returns, we will turn to crime. This will provide you with an opportunity to show determination and results in a fairly short period. Rahm has organized an extraordinary schedule of events. Our hope is that this concentrated demonstration of breaking gridlock will begin to clear some of the fog that has blocked people's view of your work and progress.

We may want to consider a daytime press conference during the crime week -- with an introductory statement on crime and some foreign policy issues. The President would obviously answer any Whitewater questions. Our goal should be to continually diffuse the issue with openness and not confine our response to any single event, like the prime time press conference of last week. (As you may know, James is doing a Sperling Breakfast on Wednesday of next week to expose the network of rightwing sleaze artists who are driving this story out of Arkansas and trying to derail the Clinton Presidency.)

Obviously, we have a long way to go to regain the initiative, but the last couple of weeks have put us in a stronger position. I am hoping that the strong schedule next week will keep us on track.

I hope the two of you have enjoyed your vacation. Nobody deserves it more.