cc Jen; file

THE LAST WORD

A GI BILL FOR MOTHERS

At last, an idea to pour programmatic content into the often hollow phrase 'family values'

BY GEORGE F. WILL

ALTHOUGH HIS CULTURED DESPISERS ARE LOATH TO admit it, and he was probably ambivalent about it, Richard Nixon skimmed more cream off the American professoriate than most presidents have done, packing his administration with, among others, Henry Kissinger and Pat Moynihan (Harvard), James Schlesinger (University of Virginia), George Shultz (University of Chicago) and Arthur Burns (Columbia). Yet Moynihan, Nixon's urban affairs adviser, insistently, and for a long time unsuccessfully, urged Nixon to consult with another professor, then at Harvard. Finally Moynihan prevailed by exclaiming, "Mr. President, James Q. Wilson is the smartest man in the United States. The president of the United States should pay attention to what he has to say."

Since then, many officials, from mayors through presidents, have done so, and recently the large Washington audience at the American Enterprise Institute's annual Francis Boyer Lecture did so. Wilson, who has recently retired from UCLA, gave Washington, a proudly practical city, a demonstration of the unity of theory and practice. He offered a theory about why America is materially better off but spiritually worse off than it was not long ago. And he suggested programmatic responses, one of which has the potential to make "family values" a matter for practical rather than merely rhetorical treatment by the political class.

Wilson's worry, and much of the nation's, is that America is being poisoned by a subculture that is both cause and consequence of many children's being born to unwed girls, raised in neighborhoods where there are more male sexual predators than committed fathers, and who matriculate, as it were, into gang life for protection and self-advancement. It is a subculture "armed to the teeth, excited by drugs, preoccupied with respect, and indifferent to the future. Its children crowd our schools and fill our streets, armed and dangerous." It is dominated by "young, marginally employed, sexually adventuresome, socially aggressive young men who reject the idea of hard work and social conformity that made their elders successful." As "bastardy has become more common, children more criminal, and marriages less secure," policymakers have tried this and that. "Much has happened but little has changed."

However, Wilson does note one change: more than half the public, and 70 percent of Americans under 35, think no shame should attach to having children out of wedlock. That fact is surely related to this one: social pathologies have multiplied during a burst of wealth-creation without precedent in world history. America's poverty problem is not one of material scarcities but of abundant bad behavior. Wilson, seconding William Galston, says there are three simple behavioral rules for avoiding poverty: finish high school, produce no child before marrying, and no child before age 20. Only 8 percent of families who conform to all three rules are poor; 79 percent of those who do not conform are poor.

In recent decades there has been some pertinent social learning. We have learned that the trajectory of a child's life is largely determined in the earliest years. "The human personality emerges early; if it is to be shaped," Wilson says, "it must be shaped early." The best predictor of a child's flourishing is the fervent devotion of two parents. Wilson warns that if the work requirements of the 1996 welfare reform are implemented, young mothers will be told to spend much of each week away from their children who, "already fatherless, will now not even be raised by their mothers."

Wilson's ameliorative ideas for American families include making adoption easier in order to minimize foster care. ("The average foster child lives with three different families, and ten or more placements are not rare.") Another idea is to require unmarried teenage mothers to live with their babies in a home supervised by experienced mothers. A third idea is this: given that religiosity and decency are correlated, and given that it is a reasonable surmise that the former causes the latter, and given the remarkable success of a religious-based program like Alcoholics Anonymous, and given the evidence that religious programs in prisons reduce recidivism—given all this, large cities should have "the religious equivalent of the United Fund" to deliver services for the underclass through churches.

However, the most intriguing idea suggested by Wilson, which he credits to Richard and Grandon Gill, pertains to parents outside as well as inside the underclass. It would offer the equivalent of the GI Bill for a parent—usually a mother—who will postpone a career until children reach school age.

No parent, Wilson says, can "have it all," and in the clash between family and work, the former must be favored. "If we care about how children are raised in their early years, and if, as is now the case, how they are raised is left to overwhelmed women or institutional arrangements, the only way we can restore the balance is by committing money to the task of inducing actions that were once the products of spontaneous arrangements." Hence a GI Bill-style educational entitlement that would enable a parent who stays home with a young child to finish school, attend college or graduate school, or take technical training courses after the child's most formative years.

The original GI Bill's benefits were entitlements of a sterner sort than we have become used to. They were linked to services rendered—services of the most serious sort, involving war. A new version of that entitlement would compensate a parent who forgoes earnings in order to render the vital social function of putting children on the path to social competence.

Politics has come to seem demoralizingly disconnected from practicality because leaders have been unable to connect their rhetoric with programs. They have failed to find ways for government to get a grip on the nation's principal problem—the coarsening of the culture that is produced by the brew of toxic behaviors associated with family decomposition. With reference to "family values," Wilson and the social scientists he cites are pointing to a way for the political class to reacquire relevance.

✓Jen
- Melanne
- HRC

National Institute
of Child Health and
Human Development

DATE: October 21, 1997

Duane Alexander, M.D.
Director, NICHD, NIH
Building 31, Room 2A03
31 Center Drive, MSC 2425
Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

TELEPHONE: 301/496-3454

FAX: 301/402-1104

TO: Ms. Nicole Rabner

FAX NUMBER: 202/456-9412

MESSAGE:

Nicole - Here is a response to the Greenspan article for the First Lady to use. A slightly modified version will be sent to the Post today signed by the Chair of the Steering Committee for the Child Care Study, on behalf of all the investigators, with a request that it be published Wednesday or Thursday. Hope this helps-please call with suggestions or comments.

Duane

Duane

A total of 4 pages, including this cover sheet were transmitted.
If you did not receive all pages, please call Connie Hamilton @ 301-496-3454.

Dr. Stanley Greenspan's article in the Outlook section of the Washington Post (October 19) refers to the Study of Early Child Care supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Unfortunately, in buttressing his arguments, data from the study are cited or interpreted incorrectly or incompletely, providing a misleading picture. In the national discussions and debates taking place over child care, it is important that the information provided by this major study be reported correctly and understood clearly.

The study was designed to assess the effects of child care experiences on the development of children born in the early 1990s. Child care experiences under investigation include age of entry into child care, weekly hours of care, stability of care and quality of care. About 1200 urban and rural families from across the United States and from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds were enrolled following the birth of their babies. Information has been collected about family characteristics, child care characteristics, and patterns of child development evidenced by social, emotional, cognitive, language and health outcomes.

Contrary to the statement by Dr. Greenspan, the NICHD study did not find that 80% of center care is inadequate or that for infants, out-of-home care is inferior to parental care. The NICHD study developed measures of quality to assess the programs its children attended, but made no attempt to assess what proportion of child care nationally might be "inadequate." The study also concluded that for most outcomes studied, infants in out-of-home care functioned as well as, and in some cases better than, those in maternal care at home.

Dr. Greenspan's description of the NICHD study results with regard to infant-mother attachment is also incorrect. He writes that "babies in relatively full time day care have compromised attachments unless their parents were especially sensitive to their needs and adept at reading their emotional signals in the evening." In fact, the study showed that characteristics of the child care experience, including age of entry into care, amount of care, stability of care, or quality of care did not, in and of themselves, affect the infants' security of attachment to their mothers. The strongest predictors of infant attachment security were their mothers' sensitivity/responsiveness toward their children and the mothers' psychological adjustment. Infants were less likely to be secure when low maternal sensitivity/responsiveness was combined with either poor quality child care, or more than minimal amounts of child care, or relatively unstable care. However, low sensitivity/responsiveness was defined in relative terms, not the absolute terms implied by Dr. Greenspan, and only the infants of mothers in the lowest 25% of the continuum of observed sensitivity/responsiveness were at higher risk for insecure attachment.

Dr. Greenspan claims that even good child care centers are failing to provide children with adequate linguistic stimulation. Based on assessments at 15, 24, and 36 months of age, the NICHD study reported in April that the cognitive and language development of children who are in child care is **not** compromised relative to children in exclusive maternal care, and that the higher the quality of care, the better the developmental outcomes of children who are in child care. When quality of care provided was equivalent, center care predicted better outcomes than other forms of care.

We believe that the public debate about non-parental child care as compared to exclusive maternal care and about the effects of variations in child care experiences on the well being of children is timely and important. We wish the debate to be well informed by the results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care that is characterized not only by its breadth and depth but also by the fact that it was designed and is still carried out by some thirty investigators who specialize in the study of variations in child care experiences and their effects on the development of children. Given that the debate focuses on a major public health concern -- the well being of the children of this country -- we are especially gratified by the fact that the White House Conference will raise the consciousness of the public to the knowledge that has accumulated about the features of child care quality and how these can be utilized in the service of children, parents and the society as a whole.

The Washington Post
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1997

In D.C., Targeted Tax Breaks Miss the Mark

By Martin A. Sullivan

Surprise, D.C.! The U.S. Congress has a gift for you. It's not what you asked for. It's not easy to use. But it did cost the government a lot of money and no other city has it: a billion-dollar package of tax breaks exclusively for the residents and businesses of the nation's capital, worth about $400 per resident.

The intention was admirable: to stimulate business, investment and new-home ownership in the District. But before you start hiring and investing and buying condos in the District, check with your accountant. Restrictions apply. The catch is that new federal income tax cuts for D.C. are "targeted"—which means most folks don't get anything and a few lucky District businesses and individuals get a lot. Consult your map of the city, because what you get depends not only on *what* you do and *how much* you make but also on *where* you are.

For tax purposes, Congress has chopped the District up into dozens of small zones, and then put each of these zones into one of three categories. First, there are the zones with poverty rates of 20 percent or more—collectively dubbed the "D.C. enterprise zone." In these areas, all the new tax breaks apply. Second, there are the zones with poverty rates between 10 percent and 20 percent. In these areas, only the home-buyer credit and the zero-percent capital gains rate are available. Third, there are all the other areas of the District with poverty rates below 10 percent. The only tax break available in these areas is the home-buyer credit. Because Congress has resorted to mechanical use of poverty rates to define these areas, the result is a patchwork quilt of tax breaks distributed in a pattern that sometimes seems random and arbitrary.

Poverty rates tell us which areas of the District have *residents* most in need—which is not necessarily the same as telling us which *areas* are in need of private-sector economic development. Many parts of downtown have high rates of poverty, but are among the most economically developed areas of the District. These areas are already home to some of the city's most highbrow business establishments and have much new construction underway. Nevertheless, the businesses in these areas will become eligible for the same economic development incentives as those in Southeast's Anacostia and Marshall Heights in Northeast.

> *What was Congress thinking? Ignorance of the law should be no excuse—especially if you wrote it.*

Another problem is that many college students living on and around university campuses are considered "poor" residents when the Census Bureau calculates poverty rates, even though they may come from well-to-do families. The result: Big portions of the high-rent districts around George Washington and Georgetown Universities are included in the D.C. enterprise zone. The ultimate irony under the new law is that many well-to-do college students living in Georgetown will be classified as "high-risk youth." If they get hired to sell records or tend bar, their employers will walk away with a tax credit of up to 33 percent of wages.

District residents will ask: Why should a restaurant on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue with 50 employees get $100,000 of tax credits each year while its competitor directly across the street gets nothing?

And, if the goal is to revitalize the district, why should any store in well-to-do Georgetown get tax breaks when the small retail stores of Brookland, a deserving middle-class neighborhood in Northeast, get nothing?

Why should a large luxury hotel two blocks *east* of the White House get roughly $2,000 each year for every District resident it employs while a large luxury hotel two blocks *north* of the White House gets nothing?

And why is the federal government helping luxury hotels to tax relief while turning away struggling businesses in Kingman Park, a worthy working class neighborhood near RFK Stadium?

Besides the arbitrary geography of these incentives, there are other problems with the new tax laws for the District. Because the wage credit is only available on the first $15,000 paid to each employee, it gives employers an incentive to favor less-skilled over more-skilled employees, and it encourages then to hire part-time rather full-time employees. It also encourages temporary over permanent employment. For example, an employer can get $6,000 of tax credits for hiring two workers in successive six-month periods for $15,000 each. The employer would only get $3,000 for hiring one worker for $30,000 to fill the same slot for the entire year.

The zero-percent capital gains rate has a flaw, too. It is an incentive for entrepreneurship, but if a new business expands any significant portion of its operations outside impoverished areas, it no longer qualifies.

What was Congress thinking? Perhaps the senators who drew up this tax package behind closed doors last July did not realize its consequences and effects. Ignorance of the law should be no excuse—especially if you wrote it.

Will these tax breaks actually increase employment and reduce poverty in the District? Nobody knows. Despite all the statistical studies, economists simply cannot say with any accuracy whether tax incentives for local economic development actually work.

We do know that these new laws are complicated. We do know that the short, five-year lifespan of most of these incentives greatly diminishes their potential to lure businesses into the District. We know that a lot of D.C. businesses and individuals will get a windfall for doing what they were going to do, anyway. And we know that a lot of others will reshuffle their business in a manner that qualifies them for the tax break but does not do much for the overall District economy.

As the carelessly drawn legislation indicates, Congress has engaged in a lot of wishful thinking in spending this billion dollars. If Congress is going to throw tax breaks at the District's problems, it should come up with ones that will do more good.

Martin Sullivan, an economist at Tax Analysts, is reviewing changes in federal tax law for the District of Columbia Tax Revision Commission.

The Reasons Why We Need To Rely Less On Day Care

By Stanley I. Greenspan

On Thursday, the White House will direct its attention—and probably much of the nation's—to a subject that desperately needs attention: the state of day care for the young children of millions of working parents in this country.

The White House Conference on Child Care will focus on the quality, the affordability and the supply of child care, among other topics. It plans to figure out how best to help parents identify high-quality child care and discuss how best to bring good child care to under-served populations, such as welfare mothers headed to work.

These are important questions, of course. But in the rush to improve and increase child care, we are ignoring a more fundamental reality: Much of the child care available for infants and toddlers in this country simply *isn't good for them.*

This isn't the parents' fault and, in many respects, it's not the child-care providers' fault, either. A growing body of recent research indicates that most of our children are cared for in child-care centers and in other out-of-home day-care arrangements that have significant limitations. Recent studies by the University of Colorado, the Families and Work Institute of New York, and the National Institute of Child Health and Development, for example, have concluded that more than 80 percent of day care in child-care centers is inadequate and that, for infants, out-of-home care, especially day-care centers, tend to be inferior to parental care.

This negative conclusion about day care is not motivated by the misguided nostalgia of the Christian Right for the days when fewer women worked outside the home nor by a conservative hostility to government social programs aimed at helping children. Nor am I unmindful of the economic realities that force many parents to rely on day care. But rather than increase our reliance on day care, we should begin fundamentally rethinking the way we organize work and child care.

The best way to begin is to review and

See DAY CARE, C2, Col. 4

Stanley Greenspan is author of "The Growth of the Mind: The Endangered Origins of Intelligence," and clinical professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at George Washington University Medical School.

The Washington Post

Sunday, October 19, 1997

DAY CARE, From C1

understand the best research into the effects that different types of care have on the development of very young children.

President Clinton identified this basic issue at last April's White House Conference on the Brain and Early Development. The conference, which helped kick off a national discussion on how best to help children's early development, attracted hundreds of participants, including pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton, Carla Shatz, professor of neurobiology at the University of California at Berkeley and David A. Hamburg, then president of the Carnegie Corp. There was a healthy consensus that early interactions between infants and caregivers are essential not only for a healthy mind, but also for the physical growth and wiring of the brain.

When Clinton asked those of use at the conference what kinds of experiences are most important for babies' development and how much is needed, he opened up a subject that is far more politically sensitive than he probably anticipated. That's because I—and many other researchers—have identified the quantity and quality of experiences that babies and young children need to develop optimally. There are six stages that families with children who are emotionally and intellectually healthy provide to their children. A review of these six stages makes clear why most out-of-home child care cannot provide a number of essential building blocks for a child's healthy mind and brain. Briefly, children need:

- An ongoing, loving and intimate relationship (lasting years, not months) with one or a few caregivers in order to develop caring, empathy, trust and relating.
- Sights, sounds, touches and other sensations tailored to the baby's unique nervous system in order to foster learning, language, awareness, attention and self-control.
- Interactions made up of long sequences of back-and-forth smiles, smirks, sounds, reaching and the like. This "emotional dialogue" between adults and babies fosters the beginnings of a sense of self, logical communications and the beginnings of purposefulness.
- Discussions without words—long negotiations with gestures to solve problems (such as when a toddler takes a caregiver to the fridge to get the juice) to foster early types of thinking and social skills.
- Shared use of creative ideas through pretend play between a caregiver and a child and creative negotiations of basic needs ("Juice!") in order to foster language and creativity.
- Logical use of ideas through a caregiver eliciting a child's opinion ("I like this because . . . .") and debates in order to promote logical thinking, planning and readiness for reading and math.

These aren't interactions that can occur on the fly. Child-care experts suggest that during the first two years of life, these types of experiences need to be available one-half or more of a baby's waking hours. Many parents provide these interactions during feeding, bathing and diaper changes. Yes, children get fed and get their diapers changed in day care, but even at excellent centers with outstanding, well-trained staff, there are significant limitations. Because day-care workers are often caring for several infants, their interactions with each baby tend to be brief, which means the infants aren't getting the long interactive "dialogues" through words and gestures that many parents provide at home.

Even in good day-care centers, we've seen many an eager, expectant 8-month-old baby give up and stare at the wall as his caregiver stops by his crib briefly but then hurries away to attend to a crying rival.

Even more important, day-care workers don't get a chance to build long relationships with the children in their care because, at most centers, babies change caregivers each year as they move on to the toddler room. And in centers where there is less training, lower wages and high turnover, caregivers may change even more frequently.

In short, three of the six essential building blocks are compromised due to the very structure of center-based day care: ongoing, intimate relationships; interactions made up of lengthy, back-and-forth emotional dialogues; and long problem-solving discussions with gestures.

The other three components of good care—providing stimulation appropriate to the baby's nervous system; shared use of creative ideas; and logical use of ideas through eliciting opinions and debates—vary significantly, depending on the staff and the chemistry between caregivers and the children.

There is some resistance to this idea. For example, the initial results of an ongoing day-care study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Development have been interpreted by many media outlets, including The Washington Post, CNN and popular parents' magazines as "good news for parents." In fact, the news isn't quite as upbeat as all that. The study is finding that babies in relatively full-time day care have compromised attachments unless their parents were especially sensitive to their needs and adept at reading their emotional signals in the evenings—that is, providing the types of experiences missing in the day-care centers.

The child-care challenges we face cannot be dismissed. Current patterns of out-of-home child care have significant limitations that endanger the growing minds of future generations. An entirely new set of guiding assumptions is necessary. We need to re-evaluate the professed value we place on children. Children and the care of them must be elevated to a higher priority, both within families and society. This will be unrealistic for parents who, no matter how much they want to stay home, have no choice but to work. So we need to gradually bring about social arrangements which maximize at home care of young infants by their parents.

I believe many two-parent working families would do well to consider the "4/3 Solution," or some variation of it. Under this plan each parent works two-thirds time to pursue career goals and together they provide 4/3 of a single income. Thus, one-third of each parent's time is left for direct baby and child-care. Obviously, some families will elect other part-time arrangements. This will mean a significant pay cut, which clearly not all families can afford. But if those who do will make child care the significant part of their lives that it deserves to be.

In the short run, parents and future parents need to more carefully plan their careers and lifestyles so they can fit in the time and the attention that children need. In the long run this solution will involve considerable government and industry support, to put it mildly. Options that will need to be considered will include government incentives, including tax incentives for employers to provide part-time work options for men and women and more flextime to employees, so parents can arrange more flexible work schedules.

Unpaid parental leave should be extended from three months to six months and, whenever possible, parents should be permitted to return to full- or part-time work schedules gradually.

To facilitate the 4/3 solution over the next generation, our education system needs to get involved. Subjects like child development and family life need to become a core part of school curriculums in order to prepare students for their futures. We now have a detailed body of knowledge about how children develop the best. Kids should learn about it in school to better prepare them for parenthood.

For two-parent families and single-parent families where full-time work is essential to provide food, shelter and medical care, we must improve the quality of child care, including having caregivers stay with the same group of babies for three years or longer.

Impersonal child care is but the most obvious symptom of a society that is moving toward more impersonal modes of communication, education, and health and mental health care. Intimate ongoing interactions between children and their parents, we're learning, are essential for the proper growth of the brain and mind. These types of interactions also makes for reflective citizens as well as a sense of cohesion that makes societies work.

[redacted]

Record Type: Record

To: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP, Nicole R. Rabner/WHO/EOP

cc:
Subject: HOUSE SAYS STAY-AT-HOME MOMS NEEDS CHILD CARE HELP, TOO

fyi --

---------------------- Forwarded by Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP on 02/11/98 07:53 PM ---------------------------

Russell W. Horwitz
02/11/98 07:49:25 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP

cc:
Subject: HOUSE SAYS STAY-AT-HOME MOMS NEEDS CHILD CARE HELP, TOO

---------------------- Forwarded by Russell W. Horwitz/OPD/EOP on 02/11/98 07:49 PM ---------------------------

SIEWERT_J @ A1
02/11/98 07:38:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed, Russell W. Horwitz, Charles R. Marr

cc:
Subject: HOUSE SAYS STAY-AT-HOME MOMS NEEDS CHILD CARE HELP, TOO

Date: 02/11/98 Time: 19:23
CHouse says stay-at-home moms needs child care help, too

WASHINGTON (AP) The House declared Wednesday that any child care initiative must not ignore stay-at-home parents, writing the GOP strategy on this election-year issue onto the record.

Democrats went along with the nonbinding resolution, which passed without dissent, though they complained that it said nothing about working parents who cannot afford to forgo a second income.

President Clinton's $21.7 billion, five-year child care initiative proposes tax credits and subsidies to help parents pay child care bills, but it does nothing for stay-at-home parents.

``Federal child care policy should no longer discriminate against stay-at-home parents,'' said Rep. William Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee. ``They make big sacrifices if they stay at home in order to rear their children. It's time we recognize those sacrifices.''

Democrats complained that the resolution was sped to the House floor, skipping a vote in committee where they might have amended it to include other child care priorities. They accused Republicans of setting up a false choice between parents who stay at home and those who work.

``I regret that this resolution has chosen to focus on one group of parents,'' said Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn.

The resolution did not advocate any particular policy. Some Republicans have suggested that stay-at-home parents might qualify for the dependent-care tax credit, which now is available only to parents who pay for child care. Other Republicans have suggested an across-the-board tax cut that would give all families more money to spend as they see fit.

Generally, plans to help stay-at-home moms rely on tax breaks. That won't help the lower-income families, who generally owe no taxes, says Donna Shalala, the secretary of health and human services.

APNP-02-11-98 1934EST

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Gene

Federal News Service
JANUARY 10, 1998, SATURDAY

SECTION: MAJOR LEADER SPECIAL TRANSCRIPT
LENGTH: 1327 words
HEADLINE: GOP RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CLINTON'S WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS BY: SENATOR LARRY CRAIG (R-ID)

BODY:

SEN. CRAIG: Good morning, I'm Senator Larry Craig of Idaho. As chairman of the Senate's Republican Policy Committee, I am working with other senators to develop new ideas to help American families overcome the pressures and challenges of raising their children. The concern of the needs of parents became more clear to me recently when my daughter and son-in-law presented me and my wife with a beautiful baby granddaughter. I talked with them about their concerns over day care. They both have careers, and they struggled with making the decision on what was best for their child and what were the costs involved. One of the things I realized as they wrestled with these questions was the need for choice. They needed options to meet the particular needs of their new family. Every family is unique; their needs are different than the neighbors next door or the family next to them. But everyone shares the common link: they need choice so they can find the best, healthiest and safest environment for their children. I want nothing less for my granddaughter. What every family does not need is the government telling them what is best or giving them a one-size-fits-all solution. Congressional Republicans believe the best way to help American families care for their children is to provide as many options as possible and leave more money in their pockets, not launder it through countless federal programs that shrink every dollar they earn.

Earlier this week President Clinton unveiled his child care proposal. Like most members of Congress, I was hoping that it would be an innovative, new approach to a very complicated problem. Well, I was very disappointed that President Clinton's plan would cost you, the taxpayer, more than $20 billion over the next five years. Now, that's new money on top of the $14 billion the federal government is already spending in the area of child care. We need a fresh start and new ideas to deal with the problems facing American families today.

These are the principles we work from after listening to you, the American people. The first principle: Parents want choices. They don't want the federal government telling them what they need; they already know what's best for them and their children.

Second principle. The government should not discriminate against parents who decide to stay home and take care of their kids. Any benefit given to parents who work outside the home should be given to those who work in the home. The president had a lot to say about mothers who work outside the home. Well, let's get it straight, Mr. President, all moms work; no one should be left out.

We should work to ensure your family has safe and reliable options to raise children. For instance, we think older Americans can play an important role in providing care for children. As our population ages and the so-called baby boomers retire, we should provide an incentive for them to become child care workers, by allowing them to keep more of their money and keep it tax-free. Another idea to help families keep more of what they earn so they can make a choice of returning to work or staying at home is called "income splitting." Income splitting would allow a spouse to claim half of his or her spouse's income as their own. Each income would then be taxed separately. This would give a value to the spouse's work at home, and lower the tax burden of that family, of that couple.

Another idea is to continue along the path of granting, as we did last year, increased personal exemptions for families with children. Again, it is a solution which will give families more of their money to spend as they wish without Washington making those choices for them. Still another idea is to give working families greater flexibility in their own work schedules. This could be accomplished by a proposal that is currently before the Congress. It would allow parents to choose to take either compensatory time or work more flexible hours so they can spend more time with their children.

All of these ideas, new ideas, new approaches, we in the Congress will put forward in the weeks ahead. We need to give parents like my daughter and son-in-law more options and more choices so they can choose what is best for their family, without another government program run by Washington bureaucrats. America's families want no part of old, tried programs from Washington. We have already shown that by working together and keeping those costs down we can accomplish big things in Washington. Just last year we completed a sweeping revision of the adoption and foster care policy of this country. This measure, which was signed into law, will benefit hundreds of thousands of children, including disabled kids. Let's continue to build on the success of that effort, and that effort takes care of children.

Can we make it easier for small businesses to provide day care for their employees? Can we take a closer look at the needs of the working poor, those who may need special attention from government? Can we help state governments end their enforcement of child support? These are all good ideas that deserve the attention of Congress on behalf of the American people. Rest assured this Congress is committed to helping families care for their children. I am hopeful that President Clinton will join us in our effort. After all, parents don't want the federal government telling them what they need or how to spend their money. They already know what's best for them and their children. I am Senator Larry Craig. Thanks for listening.
END

The New York Times
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1997

Shouldn't We Help Parents Be Parents?

By David Blankenhorn

Guided by an admirable desire to address the nation's child care problem, President Clinton is preparing to announce two proposals that are socially irresponsible and morally wrong. He wants to create new tax breaks for corporations that provide day care for children of employees, and he wants to expand the tax credit for employed parents who use paid child care.

Both of these proposals are flawed for the same reason: this Democratic President is making the classic Republican mistake of believing that we can solve a social problem by subsidizing private business. As a result, instead of focusing on all children, these policies focus on a minority of children whose parents are relatively affluent. And, because the heart of the President's plan consists of special subsidies for commercial child care, it would, in effect, punish parents who want to spend more time with their children.

David Blankenhorn is president of the Institute for American Values.

About 77 percent of preschoolers are cared for by mothers, fathers or other family members, according to Census Bureau data. Day care centers serve only about 15 percent of preschoolers; the rest are cared for by baby sitters or other nonrelatives, most of whom are unlicensed.

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Instead of increasing a tax credit that benefits only parents who use paid child care, why not extend the credit to all parents of preschool children? Similarly, instead of giving tax breaks to corporations that sponsor day care, why not give the money directly to parents — for instance, by giving them a one-time tax benefit by increasing the existing child credit for the year in which a child is born or adopted? Some parents could use this "baby bonus" for day care, and others could use it to allow them to stay home with the new baby longer.

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PHOTOCOPY PRESERVATION

Fabulous Fibbers

To the Editor:

Russell Baker, in his pantheon of fibbers (column, Dec. 16), somehow overlooks the most fabulous fibber of all, Ronald Reagan. Though he spent most of World War II in Culver City, Calif., Reagan claimed that as a soldier he had seen the concentration camps of Europe. He never did.

By the way, Lou Gehrig may have endorsed Camel cigarettes, but it was his policy not to smoke when he was around children, which may make amends for his 1937 ad, mentioned by Mr. Baker. He also happened to be primarily a pipe smoker, which, I guess, means he was more of a fibber than Mr. Baker suggests. RAY ROBINSON

New York, Dec. 16, 1997

The writer is the author of a biography of Lou Gehrig.

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Figure-Enhancing Stuff

To the Editor:

I have read and enjoyed Russell Baker for 30 years. So it is with the greatest reluctance that I quote from his Dec. 16 column, "Not So Bad a Lie": "Silicon enhancement of the female figure is a lie in which many take lewd delight." The enhancement arises from the implanting of silicone fluids, not from silicon. Silicon is the element used to manufacture memory and processors in computers.

Given Mr. Baker's skepticism about computers, he may prefer that silicon be used to enhance the female figure. But it just won't work. ROBERT P. DESIENO

Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Dec. 16, 1997

NATO Moves East

To the Editor:

"Albright, at NATO Meeting, Tells of Peril From 'Eurasia' " (news article, Dec. 17) clearly illustrates the much-debated purpose for NATO's eastward expansion. Following the West's success in the demise of the Soviet Union, Eurasia's natural resources are now being rediscovered by the rest of the industrialized world.

With a potentially uncertain and unstable Middle East in the years to come and probable Russian fragmentation, there is a need for monitoring, containing and countering threats to foster businesses in these mineral-, oil- and natural gas-rich regions.

The United Nations is turning out to be unwieldy with its global scope and focus, but a regional NATO is a viable substitute, hence NATO survives and expands. SUMIRAN V. NERIYA

Southfield, Mich. Dec. 18, 1997

Separate the Sexes

To the Editor:

Your Dec. 18 editorial on separation of the sexes in the military for the purpose of basic training asserts that integration works well at the service academies.

But as a former student at one of the academies, I know that these schools have their intergender problems.

Harassment is an accepted reality, and sexual fraternization policies are ignored and abused regularly. Perhaps separating the sexes during basic training, as suggested by Nancy Kassebaum Baker, the head of the Pentagon's advisory committee, is not so outlandish. THOMAS PITTA

New York, Dec. 18, 1997

Pollution's Slippery Slope

To the Editor:

Michael J. Sandel ("It's Immoral to Buy the Right to Pollute," Op-Ed, Dec. 15) raises the perennial means and ends debate. The right to pollute may be compared to the right to gamble. Lotto and Off-Track Betting were permitted because the ends (money for public education) supposedly justified the means (depriving those who can least afford it of their money by removing a moral stigma).

Once we accepted the premise that the ends did indeed justify the means, society found itself on the slippery slope to more gambling, more dependency on the money and more advertising to lure more hapless souls. In the process, as Mr. Sandel argues, we have become a bargain-basement society with no shared responsibility.

Trading emissions "credits" will distort the public dialogue and only lead to less awareness and more pollution. MICHAEL SPATARO

Brooklyn, Dec. 17, 1997

NYT

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The New York Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1997

Worth the Struggle

To the Editor:

Re "For the Infertile, a High-Tech Treadmill (front page, Dec. 14): As one of the couples featured, we wish to make two points.

First, technology has not yet solved the problems that women over 40 experience in achieving pregnancy. There are often chromosomal anomalies in older eggs that make pregnancy unlikely. Therefore, donor egg may be an option for older women who wish to achieve a pregnancy.

Second, even though we still grieve that Nancy was never able to carry a child, and though we are not ready to say we will never attempt a donor-egg pregnancy, we can say with certainty that we would want no child other than our adopted child, Sophie. If failure at infertility treatment was what led us to her, it was worth the struggle. NANCY B. ALISBERG

MICHAEL G. ALBANO

Brooklyn, Dec. 14, 1997

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Alternative Therapy

To the Editor:

Your Dec. 14 front-page article on infertility patients mentions the suspected link between lack of success in conceiving and depression. During 40 months of trying to conceive, I became severely depressed. Just before a psychopharmacologist prescribed Zoloft for my depression, she suggested that I seek help from an acupuncturist, reasoning that the acupuncture points for depression were the same as for infertility. This simple observation turned out to be an important, never-mentioned fact.

Within three months of completing treatment, I became pregnant. In no way do I believe that acupuncture is a magic pill. However, I do feel that the treatment contributed to some change within my body that allowed me to become pregnant and altered my brain chemistry positively. KAREL LITTMAN-WEINSHANK

Teaneck, N.J., Dec. 17, 1997

Question & Answer on Michael Kelly Editorial

Q. Yesterday, Michael Kelly wrote a strong editorial attacking the President's child care initiative because it does not help parents to stay at home with their children, even though parents are the best caregivers for their children. Do you agree with him?

A. The President and I believe that we should respect and support parents in whatever choices they make, whether to work or to stay at home. The President has throughout his presidency supported that choice through a variety of measures to increase family income, such as expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing the minimum wage, and passing the $500 per-child tax credit. Also, through the Family and Medical Leave Act, which was the first piece of legislation that the President signed into law, parents are able to take time off to care for their newborn without worrying about losing their job.

The Administration has looked into ways through the tax code to promote choice further and enable more parents to stay at home with their children for some period of time. So far, we have found those options to be prohibitively expensive in the context of a balanced budget. In fact, the "income splitting" option that several Republicans have suggested -- which would lessen the tax burden on married couples in which one parent stays at home by allowing the couple to divide the income of the single breadwinner -- has been estimated by the Congressional Budget Office to cost about $25 billion each year, nearly six times the cost of the President's entire child care package. We do, however, believe that these are important issues to consider, and are looking forward to working with the Congress in the coming year.

The President's child care initiative responds to the very real fact that more than ever, by choice or by necessity, parents are relying on child care to take care of their children for part of each day. And we must do what we can to enable parents who make this choice to find and afford high quality care for their children.

Michael Kelly

The Child-Care Experiment

BY JOHN OVERMYER

In the background paper that the White House provided for its child-care proposals last week, there was one page describing, in hard numbers, the way Americans care for their children. It was a depressing document.

In 1995, nearly 13 million—more than half—of the nation's 21 million preschool children were receiving child care from someone other than their parents. Of children under the age of 1, 45 percent were under such care. And these infants and toddlers and preschoolers are, on the average, in child care for a large chunk of their little lives; a 1990 study found that more than half of child-care children were in child care for 35 hours a week or more. Of school-age kids, every week an estimated 5 million come home to empty houses.

We are engaged in a vast and radical experiment on our children. We are betting, against the wisdom of the ages and the lessons of our own childhoods, that it does not really matter if parents leave to others the quotidian business of raising their young. The increasing evidence is that this is wrong. While it may sometimes be necessary for both parents to work full time, it is undeniably better for children that they be raised in their own homes, mostly by their own parents.

As the White House's data sheet noted, children in child-care programs are not, in a great many cases, well cared for. One four-year study of child-care centers rated only one out of seven as of good quality. This absence of quality reaches catastrophic levels in the care of poor children. In the bland bureaucratese of one report: "Many children living in poverty receive child care that, at best, does not support their optimal development and, at worst, may compromise their health and safety."

Most parents know the obvious truth, and they refuse to trust the raising of their children to the kindness and competence of strangers. In 22 percent of families where both parents work, the parents still care for their children themselves. When they turn to others, 25 percent use relatives, 17 percent use babysitters or nannies who mind the children in the sitters' own homes, and 5 percent use sitters or nannies in their own homes. Only 30 percent choose child-care centers.

In 22 percent of families where both parents work, the parents still care for their children themselves.

So, what would an intelligent child-care policy look like? It would seek to strongly discourage out-of-wedlock births. It would seek to strongly reinforce the idea that it primarily takes not a village but parents—two of them—to raise a child. It would offer help for parents who must work, but it would send an unmistakable message that, whenever possible, it is better that one parent stays home with the kids.

The policy put forward by the Clinton administration last week fails this. The main proposal, to increase funding for child-care block grants to the states for more subsidized child care for poor children, is a good and necessary idea. And it is not a bad thing to provide more after-school programs for kids, or to give businesses tax credits for child-care programs, or to enforce higher standards for health and safety in child-care centers.

But the policy as a whole is irrationally biased toward the form of child care most parents like least—institutionalized group care—and against what most parents want most: to be able to afford to have one parent stay home. This bias is most obvious in the proposal to offer tax credits of up to 50 percent of child-care expenses to low- and middle-income two-worker families—but nothing to families who keep a parent at home. Why does the administration seek an economic incentive for parents to choose work over child-rearing?

It doesn't, says Bruce Reed, the president's domestic policy adviser. But extending tax credits to all families with children would be awfully expensive, Reed worries. He's right. But if the administration is serious about the best interests of the children, it will correct the anti-home-care bias in its policy.

One possibility would be to enlarge the $500-per-child tax credit signed into last year's budget law. Another would be to give a parent who stays at home a tax rebate for at least the early years of a child's life, in partial reimbursement for the income sacrificed by the parent's lost job. Another is "income splitting," in which a one-income family may, for tax purposes, divide the income between husband and wife, both thus bumping down to lower tax brackets. Reed says the White House is "completely open to ideas on how best to help families where one parent decides to stay home with the children." He should be taken at his word and tested.

Michael Kelly is a senior writer for National Journal.

The Washington Post
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1998

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PHOTOCOPY PRESERVATION

Abiding Repression in Vietnam

Despite reports to the contrary, Vietnam still does not have free emigration and does not deserve a waiver to the Jackson-Vanik amendment. The Post's Dec. 19 news story "U.S. May Waive Anti-Communism Law to Lessen Trade Restrictions on Vietnam" reported that, according to the White House, Vietnam has recently shown sufficient cooperation with a U.S. program to resettle repatriated Vietnamese boat people to justify a waiver of the free emigration requirement under the Jackson-Vanik amendment. The White House must have been either seriously misinformed or seriously misquoted by The Post.

With its eyes on most-favored-nation status, Vietnam indeed no longer requires exit permits as a precondition for repatriated boat people to gain access to U.S. interviewers. However, this rather minor technical modification can hardly qualify as a major improvement. Even for this limited group of repatriated boat people, Vietnam does not really drop its requirement on exit permission; it only delays this requirement to a later stage—successful applicants still need exit permission to emigrate.

For all other Vietnamese citizens—including many former political prisoners, political dissidents and religious leaders—exit permission remains a precondition for access to foreign delegations. The White House, if not misquoted by The Post, is once again sending the wrong signal to Communist Vietnam.

In establishing diplomatic relations with Vietnam in 1995, the administration argued that "constructive engagement" would help promote political liberalization in that country. Since then more dissidents and religious leaders have been imprisoned. Freedom of the press has been much more severely curtailed than before. And this trend continues.

Last month the Ministry of Interior established a new center to further tighten its grip on the press. Less than two months ago, the chief editor of a trade journal was arrested on charges of divulging state secrets when in fact he only exposed corruption. Earlier in 1997, the government promulgated Executive Decree 31/CP, authorizing the administrative detention of all political suspects for up to two years without trial.

The United States should not reward Vietnam with trade privileges until the Vietnamese government makes significant concessions on human rights by truly honoring the right of its citizens to freely emigrate and by releasing all political and religious dissidents from its system of prisons and labor camps.

NGUYEN DINH THANG
Executive Director
Boat People S.O.S.
Fairfax

The Clergy: There Till the End

The Gallup poll numbers showing that "only 36 percent of respondents expected that a member of the clergy would offer real comfort to them in their dying days" is not as, Richard Morin suggests, "a stunning indictment of the clergy" [Unconventional Wisdom, Outlook, Dec. 15]. It might be so if 100 percent of the respondents were members of a house of worship and attended services there. My guess is that the 36 percent is made up of the same people who regularly worship and thus have a relationship with their priest, rabbi or pastor. The other 64 percent don't know us and so don't expect us to be at their bedsides as they die.

Most of us clergy willingly go to people who are dying, even if we don't know them. We take turns in local hospitals being with families who have no regular church.

These figures, far from indicting the clergy, may be a more realistic description of those who are serious about their faith than the overwhelming number who say they believe there is a God. I, for one, encourage those who think they are missing out on the care from clergy to begin worshipping regularly.

THE REV. THOMAS VAN BRUNT
Rector
St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Delaware, Ohio

Plugging Up the Pike

Having lived in Garrett Park—within walking distance of Rockville Pike—for almost 40 years, I have great familiarity with the enormous increase in the number of motor vehicles there over that time ["Is Rockville Pike at Its Peak?" front page, Dec. 26]. Some statistics from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration indicate how we got into the colossal traffic jam on the pike, but not, I'm afraid, how to get out of it.

On April 30, 1953, 71,870 pleasure vehicles were registered in Montgomery County as well as 8,515 commercial vehicles, for a total of 80,385. On Nov. 30, 1996, the number had soared to 605,950 for vehicles of all categories. That's an increase of almost 800 percent in 43 years.

If that increase continues at the same rate, in 2040—43 years down the pike, so to speak—the number of vehicles registered in Montgomery County will be 4,847,600. The staff of the county Motor Vehicle Registration office will have to be increased, maybe even by 800 percent. We certainly hope not.

PAUL E. EDLUND
Garrett Park

Missing Citation

How—in his Dec. 28 op-ed column, "The Brooks Brothers Appeal"—did George Will omit the most famous literary mention of Brooks Brothers of all time? I refer to Mary McCarthy's story, "The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt." Since the story first appeared in the Partisan Review in 1941, it's been reprinted in 1942, 1946, 1960 and 1975, if not more often.

CHARLES OLSEN
Washington

A Skeptical Reader

I note some important inconsistencies in Lucy Murray's comments on the behavior of the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority's (WASA) employees, ["Cleaning Up the Water Authority," letters, Jan. 5].

First, Ms. Murray, who is on WASA's board of directors, says the employees' wrongful behavior "will not be tolerated." May I point out that it already has been and continues to be tolerated, so much so that The Post can report on it?

Second, she says that we can "expect more such horror stories" of defrauding D.C. taxpayers. Does she know more than she's telling but won't let us in on it?

Worst, does she really think that we will believe that "I also expect employees to know right from wrong. I expect them to say no to illegal and unethical behavior and to report all wrongdoing, no matter how uncomfortable it may make them."

These employees are "double dipping" off the taxpayers. And now Ms. Murray expects them to turn themselves or colleagues in? Get real. She gives me zero confidence in any future action by this WASA board.

ELAINE RAND
Washington

Judge Mason's Hands Were Tied

Steve Twomey's personal attack on Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge Michael D. Mason was lacking in facts regarding the legal process for dealing with adoption ["Wouldn't Bet His Life on It," Metro, Jan. 1].

Why didn't Mr. Twomey mention the legal burden that needs to be established in order to take away a child from its biological mother? Why doesn't he place the blame where it belongs: on misplaced social policies promulgated as a result of weak sociological studies rather than simply attack Judge Mason as a "gambler"?

We are a country of laws, for better or worse. There is not a scintilla of evidence that Judge Mason made a decision that in any way is inconsistent with the laws of this country.

For Steve Twomey to attack Judge Mason does a real disservice to Judge Mason. More important, The Post's readers probably believe that this awful result came about because the judge didn't do his job, rather than because we live in a country that hands a judge some bad choices.

DAVE SISLEN
Rockville

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1998

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Shouldn't We Help Parents Be Parents?

The New York Times
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1997

By David Blankenhorn

Guided by an admirable desire to address the nation's child care problem, President Clinton is preparing to announce two proposals that are socially irresponsible and morally wrong. He wants to create new tax breaks for corporations that provide day care for children of employees, and he wants to expand the tax credit for employed parents who use paid child care.

Both of these proposals are flawed for the same reason: this Democratic President is making the classic Republican mistake of believing that we can solve a social problem by subsidizing private business. As a result, instead of focusing on all children, these policies focus on a minority of children whose parents are relatively affluent. And, because the heart of the President's plan consists of special subsidies for commercial child care, it would, in effect, punish parents who want to spend more time with their children.

David Blankenhorn is president of the Institute for American Values.

About 77 percent of preschoolers are cared for by mothers, fathers or other family members, according to Census Bureau data. Day care centers serve only about 15 percent of preschoolers; the rest are cared for by baby sitters or other nonrelatives, most of whom are unlicensed.

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