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CALIFORNIA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION



CALIFORNIA STATE
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA CITIES

March 10, 1993

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the nation's fiscal crisis has severely hindered the provision of needed services, including valuable services to children and families. This is particularly devastating since conditions of children and families continue to deteriorate. The California School Boards Association, California State Association of Counties, and League of California Cities are alarmed by the rates of poverty, crime, drug use, child abuse, and other indicators of social and economic hardship in our state. We are deeply concerned about the lack of well-being of our children and the impact this will have on their ability to serve as the leaders of tomorrow.

It is clear that our current service delivery systems will not be able to provide an adequate level of services unless significant changes are made in the structure of those systems at all levels, including the federal level. The current system of categorized, fragmented services among the federal government, state governments, counties, cities, schools, and community organizations is too costly and cannot adequately meet the demand for services.

We believe that improved coordination of children's services is needed now more than ever to reduce fragmentation of services, fill gaps in services, and reduce duplication of services. It was this belief that guided our creation of a Joint Task Force on Youth Policy and our solicitation of input through twelve regional Children's Summits, for which Governor Pete Wilson served as honorary chair.

The summits yielded helpful input from locally elected officials in schools, counties, and cities; their staff; representatives from community-based organizations; and community and business leaders. Input from the summits, particularly relating to existing barriers to coordination and potential solutions, formed the basis of the enclosed report, *Cutting Through the Red Tape: Meeting the Needs of California's Children*.

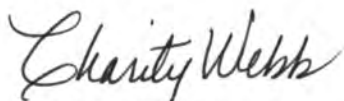
The report recognizes that coordination must ultimately be a local and state effort and gives some guidelines to encourage the development of local and state plans for coordinated services. However, federal leadership and involvement are also critical.

First and foremost, we urge our federal leaders to develop a comprehensive national policy on children and youth. This policy should set forth priorities for services to children and families, guidelines to govern the allocation of resources, and recommendations for federal, state, and local responsibilities for working in partnership at all levels to ensure effective family-centered, preventive, integrated services. It must resolve to tackle teen-age pregnancy, dropouts, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, and illiteracy by recognizing that such problems do not stand alone but are interrelated.

In addition, children and families must be a top priority in the federal budget. While we recognize the realities of today's economy, we believe that adequate funding of services for children and families, which are preventative in nature, will result in future savings in terms of higher productivity and reduced social costs. A strong pro-children budget would not only make a bold statement at the federal level but would set an example for immediate and similar action at the state level. Furthermore, we need a reexamination of the federal funding scheme; its restrictive nature has been identified as a major barrier to effective coordination.

We have seen a tremendous willingness among local officials and our state leaders to bring about change in the way we address the needs of children and families, recognizing that it will be a long and difficult journey. Your strong support and leadership in this effort are essential.

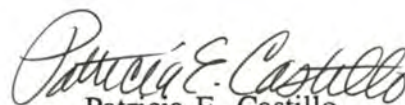
Sincerely,



Charity Webb
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California School Boards
Association



Leon Williams
President
California State Association
of Counties



Patricia E. Castillo
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President of the United States
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CUTTING THROUGH THE RED TAPE



Meeting the Needs of California's Children