IDEAS

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 27, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR SYLVIA MATHEWS

CC: DON BAER
MARK PENN

FROM: BRUCE REED
ELENA KAGAN EK

SUBJECT: IDEAS

Because Bruce will miss this week's political meeting, we thought the following status report on ideas for executive action might prove useful. If you have any questions, please call Elena.

Ideas from last week

AIDS Vaccine: We are still vetting the proposal for the President to issue a challenge on developing an AIDS vaccine. We will know within a week or two how the scientific community would greet this challenge.

Race Commission: We have been reviewing a proposal to establish a President's Commission on Racial Reconciliation. Elena will get together with Sylvia to compare notes.

Patients' Bill of Rights/Quality Commission: The counsel's office is currently vetting our nominations for the Quality Commission, which will be charged with developing a Patients' Bill of Rights. We have been told that the nominations will not be ready for announcement until the week of March 10. Announcement of the Commission can be combined with the release of a HHS regulation that would guarantee an expedited appeal whenever a plan proposes to deny care that a Medicare patient believes is urgently needed.

Home Health Care Regulation: After reviewing the home health care regulation, DPC and HHS concluded that it was not substantive enough to warrant a presidential event. As a result, it will be released next week during HCFA Administrator Bruce Vladeck's congressional testimony. We have asked HHS, however, to review more substantive regulatory or legislative proposals that we could announce in the future. One legislative proposal, which will not be ready for at least several weeks, would require criminal background checks for home health providers participating in Medicare.

New ideas you asked about

Ban on Human Cloning: Congress has banned the use of federal funds for cloning, but privately funded research is not similarly restricted. The President could call on the scientific community to institute a moratorium on human cloning research -- at least while the National Bioethics Advisory Committee implements the President's request to study the issue over the next 90 days. We will make a recommendation next week on this proposal -- sooner if absolutely necessary.

Extradition of Child Pornographers: We are still discussing this issue with the Justice Department. We will have a better sense of possible actions next week.

Tobacco Advertising: We are reviewing a proposal for the President to take action responding to tobacco companies' use of the internet and other fora to get around our tobacco regulation. We must run this proposal by the Justice Department to ensure that such action does not compromise our efforts to defend the regulation in court.

Testing in Military Schools: We are currently looking into securing the commitment of the Department of Defense to give students in its schools our proposed 4th and 8th grade tests. (We believe it would be preferable for DOD to volunteer to give these tests than for the President to order the Department to do so.) We should know next week whether DOD will agree.

Advisory Panel for Education Tests: The Education Department is putting together a panel of teachers and other trusted educators to advise on the development of our 4th and 8th grade tests. We are attempting to press this forward as soon as possible, but need at least a few weeks to determine the best structure for the panel and to vet potential appointees.

Other ideas

Trigger Lock Executive Order: Dennis Burke just proposed an executive order requiring agencies to provide all federal law enforcement officers with trigger locks, so that the officers can protect their children against accidental shootings. We should have this executive order completed within a week.

Medicare fraud legislation: We are working with HHS to finalize a new package of fraud and abuse initiatives for unveiling the week of March 10. Since Florida is the "fraud and abuse capital" of the nation, we believe the President's visit there would provide an excellent opportunity to announce the new package, perhaps in a March 15 radio address. Governor Chiles would give the package a strong endorsement.

Governmental hiring of welfare recipients: We are currently putting together a package of proposals to facilitate the federal government's hiring of welfare recipients. We think that this package will include an executive order establishing a separate hiring track for welfare recipients

and providing nonfinancial incentives to federal agencies to make use of this new hiring authority. We hope to be ready to go by the end of next week.

Classified research with human subjects: In response to recommendations of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, we have prepared (1) an Executive Order strengthening protections for human subjects of secret research; and (2) legislation expanding compensation for Cold War-era uranium miners. With one week's notice, we can be ready to announce these policies and release a summary report detailing the Administration's full response to the Committee's 18 recommendations.

Seat Belt Study: The Department of Transportation will give the President a report on March 10 on ways to increase seat belt use. DOT's report is likely to include ideas for presidential challenges to states and business groups, as well as a proposal (consistent with our budget) to offer financial incentives to states to improve and enforce seat belt laws.

Children's Health EO: The DPC, NEC, CEQ, and OSTP are working on an executive order designed to ensure that the federal government considers the special needs of children when taking regulatory action. The executive order requires every agency to determine whether a regulation may impose disproportionate risks on children and, if so, to evaluate the specific effects of the regulation on children. The order may be ready within a few weeks, but with interagency discussions still going on, there is some possibility of a last-minute hitch.

Welfare-to-Work Transportation Plan: We can announce at any time our Access to Jobs proposal, which would allocate $100 million of ISTEA funding to improve transportation systems so that welfare recipients and other low-income workers could get to work more easily. Lack of convenient and affordable transportation is currently an obstacle to getting people from welfare to work, and this proposed program is a very serious attempt to address this problem.

Service Summit: We could announce "commitments" from the federal government to the service summit -- proposals for how the federal government can support service and voluntarism to help youth. We could be ready to make such announcements in 2-3 weeks if necessary.