

NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 050 - Folder-012

Race-Race Initiative Policy: Family

**Progress on Breaking Down Racial And Ethnic Barriers To Adoption
Implementing the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA)**

The Clinton Administration has made great progress in prohibiting discrimination in adoption and foster care placements as a result of extensive efforts to implement the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA), which President Clinton championed in 1994. Since the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance on compliance with MEPA in April 1995, HHS has worked with each state to ensure that their laws, policies and practices prevent discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

As a result of our continued review, support and technical assistance, since MEPA was passed:

- Four states have revised their statutes;
- Eleven states have made regulatory changes; and
- Twelve states and the District of Columbia have amended policies or policy-related materials to prohibit adoption agencies from denying or delaying placement of a waiting child based on race, color and national origin.

Due to the Clinton Administration's commitment to removing racial and ethnic barriers to adoption, currently 48 States and the District of Columbia have statutes, regulations, and written policies that are in full compliance with MEPA and with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The two remaining States have already made substantial changes and are in discussions with the Department regarding the remaining changes necessary to achieve full compliance.

To strengthen MEPA, in August 1996 President Clinton signed the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 which included Interethnic Adoption provisions (IEP) imposing strict penalties on states for non-compliance with MEPA. As part of the Clinton Administration's plan to move children more rapidly from foster care to safe and permanent homes, HHS will issue guidance to states on these new provisions soon. In addition, HHS will continue to monitor states' progress, swiftly review any complaints and provide additional training and technical assistance to states to ensure that states comply with these laws.

**Upcoming DHHS Adoptions Events for
Possible Presidential/FLOTUS Participation**

June 1997

- ◆ Permanency Partnership Forum II - June 4-6th
- ◆ Father's Day - June 15th
(potential recognition of adoptive fathers)
- ◆ OPM - DHHS Adoption Fair - June 25th

September 1997

- ◆ Announcement of Adoption Opportunities Grant Awards
(Notice published in Federal Register - May 21, 1997;
Grant Awards by September 30th)

October 1997

- ◆ Announcement of preliminary state goals - Oct. 30th

November 1997

- ◆ National Adoption Month activities - ongoing
- ◆ Annual Awards to key contributors to national efforts
to support adoption and promote permanency for children
in the child welfare system - (date to be determined)
- ◆ Thanksgiving - November 27th
(potential Thanksgiving/Adoption event)

Additionally, an event can be designed around the passage of pending legislation.