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May 22, 1998 - DPC Weekly Report

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN  
5-25-00

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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May 22, 1998

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Bruce Reed  
Elena Kagan

SUBJECT: DPC Weekly Report

*Need  
Camp  
analysis*

**1. Tobacco -- Senate Update:** As you know, after soundly defeating amendments to (1) cap attorneys' fees, (2) eliminate industry payments, and (3) raise industry payments to the equivalent of \$1.50 per pack of cigarettes, the Senate passed an amendment to the McCain bill to remove the \$8 billion annual cap on industry liability. We are fearful that the passage of this amendment will make the bill appear unbalanced to some Senators and will introduce a kind of open season on further amendments. When the Senate returns from recess, it is scheduled to take up an amendment by Sen. Durbin to increase lookback penalties and an amendment by Sen. Gramm to devote most of the bill's revenues to a tax cut for married couples with income of less than \$50,000 per year (advertised as an elimination of the marriage penalty). Some moderate Republicans might join Democrats to pass the Durbin amendment; just as likely, some Democrats might join Republicans to pass the Gramm amendment, which would wipe out most of the public health and research spending in the bill, but provide a significant tax cut to low- and middle-income people. We will have to decide in the next week whether to develop and/or support a smaller tax cut proposal. Such a proposal would take the pressure off Democrats to vote for the Gramm amendment and if passed, would enhance the attractiveness of the bill to Republicans; inevitably, however, the proposal would diminish the funds available for spending on health research and public health programs.

**2. Tobacco -- MMWR Study:** The Centers for Disease Control released on Thursday new statistics on teenage smoking patterns and addiction. The data found that: (1) teenagers find it difficult to quit smoking -- 86 percent of teens who smoke daily and try to quit are unsuccessful; (2) teenagers underestimate the addictiveness of nicotine -- 75 percent of teenage daily smokers who expect to quit are still smoking five years later; and (3) casual smokers easily become hooked -- 42 percent of young people who smoke as few as three cigarettes per month go on to become regular smokers. About 36 percent of high school students currently smoke.

**3. Crime -- COPS Event:** You are tentatively scheduled to participate in an event on Friday to: (1) announce that the COPS initiative has now funded the hiring of 75,000 new police officers and (2) launch a new pilot project to target COPS funding toward distressed and

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underprotected neighborhoods. The first phase of the pilot will fund more than 500 officers in 10 large and 10 small cities across the country.

**4. Crime – Police Legislation:** Congress passed two pieces of legislation last week that the Administration and law enforcement groups strongly supported. One bill will create a grant program to help local law enforcement agencies purchase additional bulletproof vests; the other will help fund counseling services for dependents of slain officers. We are working with Rahm and the Legislative Affairs Office to schedule a signing ceremony for these bills, perhaps as part of the COPS event described above.

**5. Health – Patients' Bill of Rights:** Amidst reports that Speaker Gingrich is trying to stop Congress from passing a patients' bill of rights this year, Rep. Norwood has begun quiet discussions with Rep. Dingell about filing a discharge petition to bring such legislation directly to the floor for a vote. To highlight the necessity for immediate Congressional action on this issue, you are scheduled to participate in an event next week to release a state-by-state analysis showing how many Americans are not currently covered by patient protection laws. This event also will highlight why the protections in the patients' bill of rights are so important to women: in particular, studies show that doctors view health complaints made by women as less urgent than those made by men and as a result, refer women to specialists less often. Nancy Dickey, the newly-appointed first woman chair of the American Medical Association, is scheduled to participate in the event.

**6. Education – Bilingual Education:** The House Subcommittee on Children, Youth and Families last week approved a bill offered by Rep. Riggs that would replace the current bilingual and immigrant education programs with a block grant to states to help LEP students learn English. The bill would (1) require states to cut off funds to any local program that does not place all LEP students in regular English-language classes within two years; (2) prohibit states from exempting any student who has been in school for two years from participation in English-language tests; (3) void existing compliance agreements between the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and local school districts under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act regarding the provision of services to LEP students; and (4) prohibit OCR from entering into additional agreements until it proposes, and Congress ratifies, new guidelines and compliance standards for Title VI. DPC is working with other White House offices and the Education Department to develop a strategy for addressing the Riggs bill; as part of this strategy, we may wish to propose alternative legislation that reflects the principles you have articulated for strengthening programs for LEP students. We will send you a more detailed report on this issue next week.

**7. Education – New Orleans Schools:** You recently asked about how the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is handling a complaint brought by parents against a selective magnet school in New Orleans for using high IQ scores as a strict admissions requirement, regardless of grades or other indicators of academic performance. In response to this complaint, the local school board already has agreed to work with OCR to develop new



restructuring the immigration system, but has indicated that he does not expect Congress to approve a plan this year.