

May 8, 1995

*WR - Personal  
Responsibility  
Agreements***THE WELFARE REFORM RECORD  
PERSONAL EMPLOYABILITY PLANS**

**A Contract for Work.** President Clinton believes that the main goal of any welfare reform plan is getting people into the work force. That is why, as part of his own proposal for reform, he insisted that states require welfare recipients to develop a personal employability plan designed to move them into the work force as soon as possible. Such agreements should be part of any national welfare reform legislation passed by Congress.

**A Paycheck, Not a Welfare Check.** Personal responsibility agreements send a clear message: welfare is a transitional system leading to work. In states with personal employability plans in place, each recipient is required to identify the education, training, and job placement services needed to move from welfare to work. Each individual's contract outlines what activities must be done to achieve independence, establishes a time frame for accomplishing goals, and imposes sanctions on those who do not make a good faith effort to comply.

**Bipartisan Agreement.** Many of the nation's governors, from both parties, agree that the personal employability plan is a powerful tool to help welfare recipients get off and stay off of welfare. Fifteen states have applied for and received approval to require welfare recipients to sign personal employability plans as part of their welfare demonstration projects. (\*)

**A Proven Tool.** In states like Iowa and Utah, personal responsibility agreements are moving welfare recipients into the work force. Since Iowa's Family Investment Agreement program began in January 1994, approximately 27,000 welfare recipients have signed the agreements -- and the percentage of welfare recipients with jobs has increased from 18 percent to more than 32 percent. In Utah, 92 percent of families on assistance have signed agreements and are participating in required activities like education and work.

**Moving Forward.** Today, with the approval of the Delaware "A Better Chance" waiver demonstration project, Delaware becomes the 15th state to require welfare recipients to sign these contracts. Delaware's demonstration project embodies President's Clinton's vision of welfare reform by focusing on work from the very first day an individual enters the welfare office.

**Practical Reforms.** As President Clinton has said, welfare must be tough, but also practical. In contrast to our approach, the House welfare bill is weak on work and responsibility. The House bill cannot be serious about moving people from welfare to work because it does not: require welfare recipients to sign a personal employability plan, establish real work requirements, give states incentives for focusing on work, or provide temporary supports -- like education, job training and child care -- that single moms need to enter the work force.

(Amy - put this in small type.) (\*) Thirteen of the 15 states that require personal responsibility agreements were approved by the Clinton Administration. States with mandatory plans include Connecticut,

Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. All states except Utah and Wisconsin were given permission to require personal responsibility agreement by the Clinton Administration.