

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

**Brooklyn Family
February, 2 1999**

BROOKLYN FAMILY (INTRO) (2/2/99)

There will be exercising. But I'm as happy to be here as I can possibly be to be in a group of people who are committed to their community and to their children and to the idea that working families deserve the support they require to do the very best job in raising their children and that's what we are going to talk about.

I too want to thank some people. I am delighted to be at yet another of the great Y's of the greater New York YMCA and I want to thank Paula Gavin, the President of the YMCA of greater New York. I want to thank everyone associated with the Y's throughout New York. I want to thank Kevin Jeffrey for not only his kind words but hosting us here and the work you do here with all of your partners, some of whom you mentioned. I know that there are a number of elected officials and Congressman ask them to stand and I want particularly to thank all the members of the City Council who have come out today and I had a chance to greet you and I am delighted that you could be here.

I know that there are members of the Board of Managers also of this Y and I want to thank you for being committed to the work that this Y does and this community. There are also representatives of the Borough President's Office and others of you who are very much involved in doing what needs to be done to create a good public private partnership on behalf of our families and children here in New York. And it is a special pleasure for me to be here with these panel members who will be introduced to you in just a few minutes.

They really are going to tell their stories, what their lives are like. I think many of us will find some very familiar themes in what we hear this afternoon because each of these panelists is really standing in for hundreds of thousands if not millions of other New Yorkers and Americans because we are all very concerned about how we balance family and work responsibilities and there are no greater experts about that than parents. So we're going to hear from some parents and we're going to be able to learn a little bit more about how they have done what they needed to do to care for their children, to care for their aging parents, to face very serious physical health problems and the like.

I also want to thank some of you in this audience for responding to the request from Lifetime Television's child care campaign, to e-mail your stories to Lifetime Television and I know that Lifetime is here this afternoon to continue to try to bring to a broader audience the real true life stories. Because sometimes when you only hear people in public life talking about statistics, you know Congressman, when somebody says, "Well, there are X number of children under the age of 5 in New York City and there are X number of mothers in the work force and there are X number of single parents". It doesn't have the impact that one single story of one of those children, of one of those parents can have. So thank you for sharing your stories with us.

And I also want to really acknowledge that what we're talking about here is the kind of partnership that this Y represents because what the Y does is try to make sure that no child, no young person, no adult for that matter falls through the cracks, that there is something for everybody, a recreation program, a learning program, a counseling program. Last year I was in (inaudible) at one of the Y's virtual after school programs and I saw for myself what a difference that program was making in the lives of youngsters. Now as many of you may know yesterday at the White House the President presented his budget, a historic balanced budget, that answers fundamental questions about what our families, indeed what our entire nation will need in the next century.

Now many of the headlines are about what the President has proposed with respect to how he thinks we should use the surplus, how we should use it to save Social Security, how we should use it to save Medicare, how we should use it to make sure that every working American can have a pension, the so called USA Accounts. Those are very important issues that are going to be debated in the next months but I also think that it is very critical that we look at what the President's budget has really put forward in terms of an agenda for working families. Because the President understands as all of us who are trying to support his budget and his agenda that we know that the world has changed in the last 25 years, mothers are in the work force, more Americans are getting older and the older I get the more I like the fact more are getting older and living longer but that presents additional problems that we are going to have to face.

So we need to really understand what is going on in the lives of our fellow Americans and at events like this, my husband and I, and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, other people from the Administration, members of Congress, they will all be looking for ways we can learn more about what really works for parents and children. The President's budget significantly increases our investments in child care. You know one working woman recently wrote to Lifetime Television it is difficult enough to raise healthy and happy children in today's society without having to worry about whether they are receiving affordable and quality day care. Well that is certainly a sentiment that many of us could echo. We know that whether a family has access to better, safer, affordable child care is one of the great concerns of any working parent facing this.

The President's budget will help lower income parents pay for child care and we hope that if the Congress goes along with the President's proposal more than 1.15 million more children will have access to quality child care and the budget will provide an average tax cut of about \$350 for low and middle income families as well as making sure that the child care that is offered better helps prepare children to go to school. The President's budget also makes an unprecedented commitment to after school care, something that was started last year (inaudible) and others who supported the President's budget. We are now really seeing effective after school care such as Program (inaudible) and the one that I saw in Harlem. But we have to do more because too many children are still left to themselves because their parents aren't home when they get out of school. We haven't yet figured out how to get work hours and school hours to coincide so we have too many children still left on their own.

The President last year fought hard for and won a significant expansion in after school programs and in this budget he wants to triple that investment so that one million more children will have safe places to learn and to play and to grow, both after school and during summer, because that is another one of the (inaudible) with more mothers in the work force there aren't people at home during the summer when schools are out. So we have to do more to help our families do the best job they can. The President's Budget also includes an historic initiative to support America's long-term care needs.

I'll just like to see a show of hands--How many in this audience and on this panel have had to spend anytime caring for an older relative or a relative with disabilities? How many have? So this is a problem that a lot of people are facing and increasingly, as our population ages, we're going to see more of that. I had someone tell me the other day that the people my age and around the "baby boomer" generation, it used to be that you'd spend more time raising your own children than caring for your aging parents, but now we're going to spend more time worrying about and caring for our aging parents, than caring for our own children.

About 40% of the care that is already being given is being given by Americans helping someone in their family. The President's call for a new \$1,000 tax credit to help pay for a wide range of formal and informal care--that's for \$625 million to provide more (rested?) and homecare services and information so that we know where to go to get the help we need.

The President's budget also expands access to family and medical leave. I don't know how many of you have actually taken advantage of Family Leave--we're going to hear from a panelist who has, but everywhere I go in our country I meet people who have said it has been a lifesaver, literally. You know your job will be there if you are off with a new baby--which is a joyous event, or if you are caring for a child or another family member who been stricken by a disease or been in a terrible accident.

The President [is] proposing to expand the promise of the Family Medical Leave Act to 10 million more Americans who work in companies smaller than the 50 employee limit that is currently in the law. So what we're going to do now is hear why the President came up with this budget. You know he didn't just pick it out of thin air. He arrived at it after talking to many many people in all different kinds of walks of life, and he really sees it as a 21st century budget because it will be the budget for the FY 2000. So how do we want to structure our national priorities as we move into the 21st century--and luckily, we've got someone here who has done a lot of work on families and what they need for many years. Someone that I've had the privilege to work with for a very long time, and that is Ellen Galinsky, President of the Family and Work Institute. Ellen will you moderate this discussion and share with us some of the views that people might have in all your years of work.

STORIES FROM PEOPLE HERE

You know your story, (name) is one that I've heard often because I think it's this Friday we celebrate the 6th Anniversary of the date that the President signed the Family Medical Leave Act, and the Congressman can tell you that before my husband became President, Congress passed it twice and vetoed twice. And then they passed it again and decided, very first bill he signed as President, and it has made such a difference in so many people's lives. And what you just described--that terrible, tragic feeling that any parent would feel when their child is in an accident like Aaron was in--uh, you don't have a choice if uh you have to choose between losing your job and taking care of your child.

Now, most parents I know in that situation would have to lose their jobs because how can you walk away from your child when your child's in need. Umm, but it is not a (good?) choice and uh, so what we want to do is make it, as more employers understand (what your employers did?)--is that they were able to (get along?) and to just (inaudible) and keep that job for you and let you have the 12 weeks, unpaid weeks, and that's something that a lot of companies should recognize because it is, I think, not only a human moral response to a situation, but it's also makes for business sense, it turns out because now they have an employee who is really devoted to them, and willing to go that extra mile.

Uh, so I'm really hoping that more employers will support the President's call on this budget to drop

the number of companies who are covered. Let's cover more people so that if, God forbid, people will find themselves in situations (inaudible) they can fulfill their responsibility as a parent.

And I think you illustrate the point of the fact that the government, and business, has to work together because, in a sense, it was your employer and the policy that made it work. And you illustrate the fact that neither of them right now is working for you. And we're going to go on and go to (name Reed) who has a daughter, 8 years old, who (inaudible). Want to talk about what's happening with you...

Ms. Reed Speaks Here

You know (name), I'm glad that you were able to find that *Virtual Y* program and as I said, I saw one in action in Harlem--would you describe what it is that your daughter does in the program...

Angelina tells her Story

Well, you know Angelina, the story you just told which I think from the sense in this room really affected all of us, is not just your story. There are so many people and it's particularly women, but not exclusively women who are caring for, not just moms and dads, but uncles and aunts, or even older siblings with disabilities who need that kind of constant attention. And one of the ways that the President has tried to address that, as I mentioned, is the new tax credit for long-term care. But we're gonna have to really confront this issue because more and more people are going to live longer in life.

And even with some of the diseases that older people have now, they can be managed so that they can live with Alzheimers or other kinds of chronic conditions. So I hope that more people will understand that the agenda that we are trying to put together for working families really is a lifetime agenda. It spans from your earliest obligations to your own children to your later obligations to your own parents. Now I also hope there is somebody in the audience who can help you with this rather incredible fact that your mother has to teach you (inaudible-forty years-inaudible). There's got to be something that should be done about that and also that uh home health and home care needs that you should have for your own respic(sp?) care and the assistance that you require, perhaps there's somebody here who can help you with that. Uh, but we will follow-up with each of these individual situations and try to make sure that we can. And I wish that we could do that for everybody who might read about this or see this on t.v. and might say "well you know, I'm just like (name-Eileen), you know I can't find decent childcare" or just like Angelina, "I don't know what to do with my poor mom or my dad and I've had to quit my job and I'm there by myself and you know our family is holding together thanks to a lot of prayer and a lot of hard work. But it really puts a terrible strain on what this family is able to do."

Dialogue with more individuals and Mrs. Clinton

BROOKLYN FAMILY (CONCLUDING REMARKS)

You know Ellen, I'd like to follow-up something that the Congressman said which is so important

and he really hit the nail right on the head. Uh, what we're talking about today has a real human face as we heard and seen from our panelists. But it also has implications for our convey and for our country, and what we now know from a lot of good research and really just from common sense, is that the more that we support family, the more we support parents--particularly single parents, particularly parents who are struggling where there are two working parents in the home is to try to keep things together and move forward, the more we help our economy and the more we contribute to our country's well-being. Uh, and we now can absolutely prove that when you support an employee with childcare help or family leave or other kinds of support services, you increase productivity, you improve your bottom line over the long-run, and you certainly contribute to the kind of country that we want the United States to be in the next century.

So Congressman, you're absolutely right, and that's the message that we're going to try and take to even more people so they can understand what you just said.

Questions and Answers Session