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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

Bruce Reed
Domestic Policy Council
Room 216 OEOB

For Immediate Release

PRESS BRIEFING
BY MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

2:32 P.M. EDT

MR. MCCURRY: McCurry, can you top what the President just did, or should we just --

Q Thank you. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: It's good for me. It works for me if it works for you. We do have Bruce Reed and Elaine Kamarck on. They're enjoying the Cabinet meeting now underway and they can be here to answer some more questions on it later, or I can try, and muff it up.

Q Mike, what about the three-day deadline the rebel leaders are giving Mobutu?

MR. MCCURRY: As the Alliance and Kabila announced yesterday, they have set up a period in which they've given President Mobutu that option. We believe there should be negotiations between the government and the Alliance with respect to some interim arrangement for new constitutional authority in Zaire, as we said yesterday, but we'll have to see how that plays out. There's been an obvious response given by President Mobutu. The political situation remains very uncertain at the moment, although the situation itself in Kinshasa today has been relatively calm.

Q So do you regard that threat as a serious one that will be acted upon if he doesn't leave? What would the U.S. do?

MR. MCCURRY: The United States, along with others, are close in monitoring the situation, continuing to urge the parties to commence negotiations that would lead to a cease-fire and an end to the hostilities between the two factions.

Q Mike, in a lot of instances on this welfare reform issue, it's cheaper for many mothers to stay home with their children versus working for the federal government at an entry-level salary, and Ms. Wilson, who was just in there in the Cabinet Room, was saying that she had a support system. There are a lot of people out here who don't have support systems. Will the federal government have a support system or some kind of day care situation provided?

MR. MCCURRY: As the President indicated, we have made substantial proposals for increased funding for day care opportunities, and also for another critical link in the transition that must occur from welfare to work, and that's transportation for people who need to be able to get to the jobs that are there.

One of the features of our recently announced surface transportation proposal was increased funding for exactly that purpose, a welfare reform aspect to transportation funding that allows more -- would provide for more availability of public transportation for people who have to get to work, and also day care is clearly one of the real keys to making welfare reform a success.

One of the things we have learned from looking at the experience of those states that have used the waivers granted by the White House to conduct their welfare reform experiments is that you really do have to factor in the day care needs that must be available if women are to successfully gain employment. In fact, where we are bringing the welfare rolls down, that has invariably been a very important and central part of the experimentation taking place at the state level.

Q Mike, the figures that you show, the 10,000 slots overall in the federal establishment, would indicate a very small, modest example to the rest of the country. By your own figures, the federal work force is 1/70th of the total national work force. If you multiply 10,000 by 70, you only get 700,000, not the 2 million slots you need nationwide to meet your goal of getting enough welfare recipients off the rolls and on to work. So you're not even a third of the way to where the President wants to be in terms of setting an example.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we did the math a little bit differently, Leo. Our view is that the federal government is approximately 1.5 percent of the total work force in the country. To meet that portion of the challenge that the President has put forward, which is moving 2 million people off of welfare, and that amounts to moving about 700,000 adults into the work force, because remember you're counting welfare dependents, including children. If you do the calculations in that fashion, according to our experts who will be here shortly, you come up with about 10,000 would be what is the proportional share of the federal effort that should be made if you're tracking consistently.

Now, obviously everyone can do more. One of the things the President is hearing now from Cabinet officials is that, look, this is the commitment that they're comfortable making agency by agency now, but they see lots of different ways that they could build on this, maybe do more. They're also in a position -- some of these agencies that are contracting agencies will be in a position to encourage those that do business with the federal government to try to factor in the effort to hire welfare dependents as part of their --

Q I'll just follow up on one statistic. Fully 40 percent of your 10,000 slots come from Commerce, and I'm just surmising that's Census Bureau --

MR. MCCURRY: That's Census Bureau, and remember, because we're approaching the decennial census, there will be many jobs opportunities that become available because of the census.

Q But that's going to be temporary, right?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, they -- it's a multi-year process that they conduct the census. And there will be an ample amount of time during that -- during -- I think they begin the first hiring next year, if I'm not mistaken. There will be time in that period for welfare-dependent mothers to get valuable work experience.

Q Is there any disappointment in the White House with the rather puny performance of a lot of these agencies that have huge work forces and come in with just a mere 100, 200, or 300 slots?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, if you look through it in many -- I think just about all cases, they have proportionally done what their share of the total federal work force amounts to. Proportionally, they come out about right. But look, they also had to be realistic in putting together goals that were going to be achievable and setting out what they think, given their own experience with the

worker trainer program or with other hiring that they do, to put out some realistic assessment of what they think they're going to be able to accomplish.

On the whole, this is a fairly impressive number; 10,000 is a good start in making the federal government a partner in the effort that has to obviously include the private sector in providing all these jobs.

Q These are 10,000 that they're sure they can make?

MR. MCCURRY: They're sure they've got -- well, they've got, as you can tell, 8,000 in definite in the first two fiscal years. The 2,000 beyond that, they bring it up to 10,000. They feel comfortable about it. It's a little harder to project that for the out-years, but some of these agencies are now reporting to the President that they think they might even be able to do better than the targeted figure that they've got.

Q And the -- all the 8,000 jobs on paper will still exist when the last 2,000 kick in -- maybe not the same people, but the same jobs?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, some of them there is some restructuring and churning in the federal work force, and a lot of these are worker-trainer positions, too, because that's the program that we're encouraging people to use. But it will provide, in any event, valuable work experience, and not all of these 10,000 will be destined to become permanent career federal employees, obviously. Many of them will gain work experience in the time that they are able to work in one of these agencies, and then transit into private sector employment opportunities.

Q I assume they're entry-level positions. How much can someone get paid, and what are the six people going to do at the White House?

MR. MCCURRY: The worker training program, which currently exists, pays an established stipend. I think maybe either Bruce Reed or Elaine Kamarck can tell you more about that when they come. Some of the slots are subject to the regular and civil service GS scale, but in other cases they're looking to try to create things that fall under that trainee program.

One of the interesting things we found was it was by and large not used as extensively or as effectively as it could be used. So one of the things we're doing is putting a little bit more focus in that program that's been available within the federal government and seeing if we can't use that as a way of stimulating the agencies to respond.

Now, here at the White House, the six that we're hiring, we will design suitable job opportunities. The first, my understanding, will be in Bruce Reed's shop itself in the Domestic Policy Council staff, and they're prepared to locate a good candidate right away. I think they might even have one, and Bruce might be able to tell you more about that.

Q Mike, a sort of follow-up on that. Have you calculated that whatever it is they get as the stipend is more than they get on welfare? I mean, because they get health benefits on welfare. In other words, does it solve the problem the President has always talked about, that sometimes it pays to stay on welfare?

MR. MCCURRY: It won't -- well, when the experts come, we'll tell you with certainty. It will if they go into a regular GS slot, but the worker trainee program I think might calculate it a little bit differently. But, remember, these folks will then get

work experience that then is effective in translating to other work opportunities that will exist in the private sector. That's the real shortcoming now, and many of these women do not want to be on public assistance, and they would prefer, of course, to be in a work situation. We think there's value in encouraging them to do that and, of course, there is a requirement that they do that as well.

Q But they will lose their health care, they will lose the kinds of benefits they now have on welfare, just as if they moved into any other private sector job that doesn't provide -- any other job that doesn't provide health care.

MR. MCCURRY: I'll have to defer that question. I think they still are available for coverage under federal employee health benefits, right? But we'll have to check with them when they come in.

Q I understand the White House was looking at two plans, two proposals to train these people, the welfare recipients. Are you gearing towards the Marriott plan?

MR. MCCURRY: I think they've looked at the Marriott experience in designing the work opportunities that will be available here at the White House. I don't know that they've modeled it directly on that program, but they have certainly found that to be an instructive model.

Q What percentage of the workers that are hired by Commerce generally in the census period of hiring will be welfare workers? If 4,000 people here will be --

MR. MCCURRY: What percentage of that is of the total hire that they will do for census? I don't know. We'll see. Maybe you can check at Commerce and see if they can tell you.

Q What do you mean by encouraging contractors? Is there going to be some policy of tying federal contracting to hiring welfare -- similar to what's done in affirmative action already?

MR. MCCURRY: We haven't done that. We haven't proposed that as a specific policy now, but certainly there are ways in which these agencies can encourage that type of involvement by contractors -- not a requirement, is my understanding, but some of them think that they will have opportunities to encourage those who are doing business with the government to step up to the challenge the President has put out.

Q But not as a formal requirement of the contract.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't heard that described yet as a formal requirement.

Q Financial incentive, I'm sorry.

Q How is this going to work practically? I mean, if there are two equally qualified people who walk into an office and one of them is a welfare recipient and one of them is not, does the welfare recipient now get the job?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, each agency has got its own human resource management personnel that makes those kinds of hiring decisions in any event. And then we're not -- it depends on the nature of the position, depends on the qualifications. Federal employee personnel make those kinds of judgment calls all the time, based on a whole number of factors, but these are jobs that we think are not -- remember, in many cases -- newly created jobs. This is not adding to the federal work force. We're taking available slots as they come along or in the worker trainer program, and then adding

this as an element in the recruiting, in the outreach that offices do to locate candidates for these jobs.

Q Right, but presumably, if they're not newly created job, I mean, they're jobs that people would otherwise be applying for anyway. My question is --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, maybe not in every case. One of the things that the agencies have responded to is to think of assignments and work that can be done within these agencies in which these would be suitable candidates for that type of work.

Q Is there a surplus of jobs now, Mike? Is that the situation? Are these jobs unfilled now?

MR. MCCURRY: They're -- in some cases, in these agencies, there are unfilled positions. In some, they are restructuring because of the overall downsizing of the federal government, they're redeploying resources. And in some cases, again, this worker trainer program will be available where it hasn't been used extensively in the past.

Q To follow up on what Bloom was asking, is there a sense that there is quotas within the agency to fulfill --

MR. MCCURRY: Not quotas.

Q -- you have to be welfare --

MR. MCCURRY: Not quotas, but they have now given the White House and given the President some pretty specific targets that they're going to try to meet agency by agency.

Q Is there a certain number of jobs set aside --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, there's --

Q Are there a certain number of jobs set aside for welfare recipients?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are these jobs that they've identified that have been set aside and targeted. They don't -- they're not drawn from the type of career positions that are for different types of functions that these agencies have. These are jobs that the agencies themselves have identified would be suitable for candidates coming from this universe of applicants.

Q Following up on that, Mike, will there be or will there not be preferential treatment to these welfare recipients when they apply for a job?

MR. MCCURRY: This is not like -- let's use an example -- it's not like the veterans preference that currently exists in civil service hiring. This is an added factor that will be considered. And the agencies themselves have identified specific jobs that they think these candidates would be eligible for. But it's not a formal preference the way the veterans preference works.

Q If I wanted to -- if I were a welfare recipient and wanted to work at the White House, how would I apply for a job?

MR. MCCURRY: You would go to -- we will have a procedure here, but you would it like you would now -- you would contact the Office of Administration, which manages the personnel office here at the White House for the Executive Office of the President, and make a formal application. And we will post jobs, just as we already do at the White House, with this being an element of the outreach and the recruiting, saying here is an attractive

opportunity. And as the President indicated to you earlier, we will also be working with state welfare agencies to make sure that they understand the availability of these types of jobs and try to match candidates up to job opportunities that are available.

Q Is there a standard background check with them?

MR. MCCURRY: You'd have to -- anyone who works here at the White House would have to go through all the same clearance procedures that exist for full-time White House work.

Q You talked very briefly on this CIA story. I know it wasn't on your watch, but do you contemplate any changes now in the CIA procedures, and do you have any reaction to that coverup?

MR. MCCURRY: Remember, this all, in a sense, comes about -- these matters relate to events that occurred during the previous administration, but lots of this information is now coming out of the affected agencies, principally Defense and the CIA because the President put the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses to work pressing the agencies to get a more thorough explanation of whatever exposure or risk Gulf War veterans faced during the conflict. So a lot of this is -- you know, the system itself is disgorging the information, too slowly as the CIA readily indicated yesterday, but disgorging it in part because they're getting a lot of good pressure and necessary pressure from the advisory committee to do so.

Q What's the practical effect now on the veterans? What happens now?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, if I'm not mistaken, this information was made available yesterday when it was posted up on Gulf Link, which is the network that's available now for the veterans, which is monitored closely by veterans' advocates who are tracking the Gulf War illnesses issue. It was made available to them precisely so they could learn more and understand more about the sequence of events that led to the destruction of that one site, which is, since these documents deal specifically with that, but it's part of the effort to make literally thousands of pages of documents available to them, and will certainly and already has become part of the formal inquiry that the advisory committee is making pursuant to the President's decision to extend the life of the committee.

Q But do you see it meaning any more money to them in the near future.

MR. MCCURRY: They were -- there was some continuation funding provided. When the President decided to extend the life of the committee, they had to make some type of financing arrangements for it.

Do you know?

MR. JOHNSON: It shouldn't in and of itself mean that, but what it does mean is that the people who are trying to reach out to the veterans and gather more information about exactly what happened now have information that they can use, and it's now unclassified, to try and get more information about the impact on the veterans. So I think that's where the impact on the veterans community is going to come. They've got more information. Therefore, they can gather more data about exactly what happened when this destruction took place.

And that in and of itself could yield information that's helpful to the PAC and to others who are trying to get to the bottom of this.

Q Mike, does the administration plan a program of incentives and penalties to try and push states to increase seat belt use?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, the President some time ago said we were interested in working to increase seat belt usage, and he tasked the Department of Transportation with coming up with ideas on how we could accomplish that goal. I expect sometime in the not too distant future we'll say a little bit more about how we might go about doing that. It's not fully prepared yet, although I've seen some reporting on it that looks generally accurate.

Q Mike, on Monday, trade sanctions are set to go into effect on Japanese ships if Japan does not reform its port practices. And U.S. and Japanese negotiators are meeting right now in Washington to try to head off the sanctions. Is the White House confident that the negotiators will succeed this week in their meetings?

MR. MCCURRY: We're confident they're going to work hard at trying to do so.

Q On your state-by-state chart on the welfare caseloads going down by 2.7 million in the last four years, you show California going against the trend and actually having somewhat higher caseload. Does the White House see this as strictly a function of the longer recession in California? Or is it that California lagged in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: If I'm not mistaken, my belief is it's changing demographics more than anything else. It was the rise in immigration and in some -- in legal immigration into the state, and that was principally the change that accounted for it.

MS. GLYNN: Immigration from places like Chicago as well.

MR. MCCURRY: Right.

Q That's legal. (Laughter.)

Q Mike, what's the administration's reaction --

I'll just have to refer it to Bruce. Bruce, will you see if these guys can come here because they've decided to kick the questions to them, obviously.

Q Mike, what's the administration's reaction to Hong Kong's, the future Hong Kong government's announcement that there would be more restrictions on citizens and activities there?

MR. MCCURRY: We -- if you can hold it for a second, I'll get it precisely. Since I made up a -- I made up a perfectly fine one earlier but I can't remember it now. The foreign policy boys really organized this really well.

We are obviously concerned about any changes in Hong Kong's legal structure that restrict civil liberties for the citizens of Hong Kong. One of the features of the joint declaration and basic law that we attach great importance to, and certainly we believe the United Kingdom and the People's Republic do, are the aspects of the formula that insists upon one China, two systems. The system that has existed for the people of Hong Kong has been valuable in encouraging commerce, encouraging the kind of freedom that has led to the economic success of Hong Kong. And our belief is that the transition foreseen by the declaration and by the basic law would continue to protect those types of freedoms for the people of Hong Kong. So, we view with some concern any effort that would diminish

the civil liberties and freedoms that the people of Hong Kong have enjoyed.

Q Have we conveyed that message to the Chinese?

MR. MCCURRY: We have very regularly and very recently had contact with the Chinese government on the subject of Hong Kong. It was reviewed, if I'm not mistaken, by both the Vice President and the Secretary of State during their recent visits.

Q Mike, assuming that the Chinese ahead once the hand-over is complete, what recourse would the United States or anybody else have?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, the People's Republic knows that the entire world is watching very closely the transition that will occur later this summer. And that transition is one that should be based upon the commitments made already by the People's Republic and the United Kingdom.

Q Well, Mike, with respect, the world has watching carefully over a lot of things in China -- human rights and treatments of its workers -- and it hasn't made any difference to the Chinese government. Why would it make any difference now?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I don't know that I would say that's true. It's made some considerable difference to them because they have labored fairly extensively to address the criticisms that they have faced in the international community on exactly that issue. We have said repeatedly that the full benefits of the policy of engagement that we are pursuing bilaterally with the People's Republic cannot reach their full potential while we have impediments related to our fundamental disagreements over issues like human rights. And a step backwards instead of a step forwards with respect to Hong Kong would certainly have some consequence.

Q Mike, if the assisted suicide bill that the House passed today came to the President, would he sign it?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, the President opposes assisted suicide. We have also, as a government, through the Justice Department, taken that position in court.

Q Mike, can I follow up on the one question on Hong Kong? Is Martin Lee going to be meeting with the President?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Lee will be received at a senior level here at the White House. The level has not been determined. We value our opportunity to exchange views with him.

Q When will that be?

MR. MCCURRY: Sometime next week.

Q Mike, on Evans and Novak last weekend, Sandy Berger was asked about the perception in the Arab world at least that the United States is tilted now in the Middle East toward Israel. Does the President -- is the President concerned by headlines such as The Washington Times following the Netanyahu meeting, that the President was unable to budge the Prime Minister? Is there any concern in the White House that this perception might be growing that the United States is no longer evenhanded in this Middle East policy?

MR. MCCURRY: The President understands that, ultimately, perceptions yield to reality, and the President's hard work at the moment on the peace process is aimed at getting the parties back in the course of dialogue that will resolve their differences, and that will ultimately prove the value of U.S.

mediation efforts and the role we play as, we believe, an evenhanded facilitator of the dialogue between the parties. That has been our historic role; it has been one that has led to considerable success in the past for both Arab countries that have participated in the process, people of the region, and also for the government of Israel as it deepens and nurtures its contacts with Arab nations in the region, particularly in the Middle East.

That is a process we're committed to, and we do so delicately because, given the delicate nature of the process, and we have even just recently been criticized within Israel by those who feel we have been too critical sometimes of the actions of that government.

So there are, from time to time, roles that we have to play that do raise some measure of criticism, both in the Arab world and Israel; we understand that, but we think we do what is necessary to advance the process that we believe in that we think holds so much promise for the people of the Arab world as well as the people of Israel.

Q Does the President plan to meet with the Palestinian delegation?

MR. MCCURRY: There are no plans currently scheduled to meet. The Secretary of State begins her meeting right about now with the delegation that is here today, and the President is, of course, available if his participation is warranted or is recommended by his foreign policy advisors.

Q On a completely different subject, Mike, the First Lady was asked on CNN about having donors stay in the Lincoln Bedroom, and she was asked if she intended to change policies on having guests at the White House. She said no. Does that mean that the First Couple is still having donors stay in the Lincoln Bedroom, or that they would in the future, or both, or neither?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not aware that they've had any guests recently, but I don't know why they wouldn't in the future. They've got, as you know from the list we gave you, a lot of friends who also happen to be financial supporters of the President's political efforts.

Q Of the 10,000 jobs in the welfare initiative, how many of them are full-time, permanent jobs?

MR. MCCURRY: We'll have to check with the folks. They'll be here in a second and you can ask them.

Q Also, another question on the 10,000 jobs. If you're not generating new jobs, these are jobs that would exist anyway, don't you just hire welfare recipients for these jobs that would otherwise be held by other low-skilled workers that would apply and get them?

MR. MCCURRY: Look, we are creating for all Americans a growing economy, providing millions of new job opportunities, nearly 12 million new job opportunities in the last four years. Ultimately, the goal is to provide employment opportunities for anyone who is seeking employment. And that's why we've got an unemployment rate that's on the decline. Some of these jobs will be a fraction of the jobs that are necessary to make good the commitment of moving people from welfare reform to work, will come in the federal sector, but the vast majority of them obviously will be in the private sector. So the answer is, in some respects we hope there will be jobs available for anyone seeking employment, ultimately.

Q Do you have any concern that what's really happening is that working poor people are being kind of disadvantaged in favor of poor people who have been on welfare?

MR. MCCURRY: Look, we're talking about welfare-dependent mothers who in most cases have small children, and that's the typical case we're talking about. We make no apologies for making federal employment opportunities available for exactly those kinds of people. They are, in many cases, the poorest of the poor, which is why they are AFDC caseload individuals to begin with.

Q But, Mike, for precisely that reason, the question that Mara asked about the calculation that those people make about the reason why they don't go to work is because they might lose their health benefits, their welfare benefits.

MR. MCCURRY: Sure.

Q If you can't assure them that they'll be better off in the short term -- you're talking about --

MR. MCCURRY: David, you're missing the fundamental premise of welfare reform. That is, in fact, one of the reasons why we are ending welfare reform as we have known it for exactly that reason. That's the calculation that welfare-dependent mothers have always been making, and that's why they no longer will be able to live in that condition of dependency permanently. I mean, they know and they -- certainly, many -- as adjustments in the implementation law has taken place, they know they're going to face a cutoff, so many of them now know that it's important for them to get the kind of job experience, job training opportunities that will get them back in the work force, because that's ultimately where they're going to have to be.

Q Mike, just so I understand the math, you --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo, I'm going to save that -- let me --

Q No, no, on the overall national figure to reach the 2 million, your point was that if you get 700,000 job slots --

MR. MCCURRY: Bruce can help you as soon as he gets here. Any other subjects?

Q Yes. Has the White House decided to ask the FEC to ban soft dollar donations?

MR. MCCURRY: We have not made that decision that I am aware of. There have been some discussions about that here at the White House, but we're still reviewing the matter.

Q Mike, the CIA says that George Tenet's nomination has not gone to the Hill yet because of White House bureaucracy. Is that true?

MR. MCCURRY: Probably. (Laughter.)

Q Mike, has the President decided who to appoint to the Federal Gambling Commission study or study commission, or --

MR. MCCURRY: You guys are here in the nick of time. (Laughter.) Leo Rennert wants to -- I hope you brought your calculator with you, because you're going to need it.

He has not -- we are very close to making final decisions on that. I expect a nomination soon. Let's do all the other outstanding ones. FCC, we don't have any final decisions on that. Fed, the recommendations have not gone to the President.

Q FAA.

MR. MCCURRY: FAA -- haven't even heard -- that's the first time I heard about that one. (Laughter.) Ambassadors, President's making a lot of final decisions on that, and the announcement is expected soon. What else do we want out there? Surgeon General -- thinking about that, looking for a good candidate.

Q White House press spokesman. (Laughter.)

What else have we got? (Laughter.) White House Press Secretary, always looking for an attractive, available candidate for that job, so the incumbent can go do something better than this.

Q Do you have an agenda for this meeting that's been announced, at least in Japan between Prime Minister Hashimoto and President Clinton? There have been reports out of Japan --

MR. MCCURRY: Have they announced it?

Q -- is going to be --

MR. MCCURRY: They haven't announced it.

Q The report is out of there. Are you going to announce it now?

MR. MCCURRY: No. But let's just say hypothetically. if the Prime Minister and the President were going to meet anytime soon -- let's say towards the end of the month -- they would, as they always do, review the full range, full aspects of our bilateral relationships. Increasingly, when we meet with the Prime Minister of Japan, we no longer focus on those difficult trade issues that so dominated the relationship in the past. We now have an opportunity to fully explore regional security issues, the full host of items that are on our bilateral agenda. The Japanese are being very helpful in so many places around the world where we're working with them together -- in the Middle East, with respect to our efforts to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula, and with respect to our engagement with China and how that deepens the commitment the United States has to the Pacific community.

On all of those things, we have very cordial and warm exchange of views with the Japanese government. And I'm sure, hypothetically, if we got together with the President of Japan towards the end of the month, we would have exactly that kind of meeting.

Q Why don't we do it in California?

MR. MCCURRY: By the way -- and I still can't -- for theological reasons that the NSC cannot explain to me, I can't tell you when this blessed event might occur, but the Prime Minister and Secretary of Defense Cohen had a very good visit -- I guess, what, two days ago? Two days ago. And among other things, the Prime Minister talked about how much he was looking forward to seeing the President. They reviewed some of the issues that would be under discussion. The Secretary and the Prime Minister had an excellent discussion about the forward deployment of U.S. forces in the region and in Japan specifically. They obviously talked about the continued need for that forward deployment consistent with the local sensitivities that obviously must be addressed. And the Secretary of Defense said that the Prime Minister is obviously addressing those with a great deal of courage.

Q Thank you. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Save that tape and we'll make that the read out of the meeting after it occurs -- (laughter) -- whenever it occurs.

Q Would a key point of the hypothetical --

MR. MCCURRY: You want to keep me going on this.

Q Yes.

MR. MCCURRY: Excellent, excellent, keep going.

Q -- hypothetical discussion of the foreign exchange rate. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: No. Let me see. On exchange rates, matters related to exchange rates and currency, the White House relies on our chief spokesman, the Secretary of the Treasury. As you know, the President believes that a strong Secretary of the Treasury is in the nation's interest. And we have had a strong Treasury Secretary for some time now. (Laughter.)

Q Mike, with the BLS discussions on experimental CPI, does the White House see anything sooner rather than later on a revised CPI?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we know that the Bureau of Labor Statistics is working very hard and very effectively on that issue, and they will report in the time -- along the lines of the timetable that they have already suggested they would report. And we'll see what happens then.

Q Just to clarify on the Fed, are you still expecting the President to look at the memo today -- to look at the Fed memo?

MR. MCCURRY: He hasn't gotten it yet. Right? As of noon he hadn't gotten it.

Q Are you expecting him to get it this afternoon?

MR. MCCURRY: It's aimed in that direction and probably going to end up there soon. But then what he does with it or whether he accepts the recommendations or wants to revisit it is the kinds of decisions Presidents get to make.

Q Is he getting more than two names?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe he's getting two recommendations for two vacancies.

Q Have you set a date yet for the meeting at the White House with the Big Three automakers?

MR. MCCURRY: Still not -- still no, have not yet.

Q What is the agenda for that meeting? (Laughter.)

Q Bilateral relations.

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, bilateral relations with the -- full explorations of the issues of mutual concern that might exist between the leaders of the major automakers and representatives of the President and the federal government.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

Q Really, you can go now, Mike.

MR. MCCURRY: I can go. No, I can't go. I can introduce the honorable Bruce Reed, assistant to the President, head of the Domestic Policy Council; Dr. Elaine Kamarck, Vice President Gore's chief policy -- what is your title -- chief policy advisor, fantastic guru of reinventing government, explainer of all charts -- (laughter) -- and intricacies related to the welfare reform announcement the President made today.

END

3:15 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 10, 1997

PRESS BRIEFING BY
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY DONNA SHALALA,
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR DOMESTIC POLICY BRUCE REED
AND
SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR TO THE VICE PRESIDENT ELAINE KAMARCK

3:15 P.M. EDT

Q Bruce?

MR. REED: Yes, sir.

Q If all employers in the country, public and private, followed today's example, would you meet your goal of getting 2 million folks off the caseloads in the next four years?

MR. REED: Okay, a little math; we'll try not to make it too confusing. The President said in the State of the Union that he wanted to move 2 million from welfare to work over the next four years. The average size of a welfare family is 2.8 people. Two million people translates into about 700,000 adults. Ten thousand is around 1.5 percent of 700,000. The federal government, at 1.9 million -- 300,000 smaller than when Elaine started four years ago -- represents about 1.5 percent of the nation's work force. So we feel that the federal government is doing its part. And if the federal government, which has been shrinking in recent years, can meet this commitment, then surely the private sector, which has generated 12 million new jobs in the last four years, can do even more.

Q Could you also address these wide disparities, percentage disparities, among the agencies, and explain this heavy reliance on Commerce to bring in 40 percent of the total?

DR. KAMARCK: The disparities between the agencies are partially due to the kinds of jobs they have available. I mean, these are very -- remember, these are very realistic plans. We think we can meet these goals. So there is partially the kind of work forces they have.

Commerce has a special situation. Commerce in the next four years will prepare for the decennial census. They will hire thousands and thousands of people as enumerators. These are jobs that go from six months to two years, in preparation for the decennial census. Many of these jobs, they're going to start piloting these jobs with welfare recipients in the next few months in major cities. Many of these jobs are good jobs. There is good training involved. And one of the points the President made, I think in his public statement and also in the Cabinet meeting just now, is a temporary job is still a very important step for a welfare recipient. It puts something on their resume, gets them training, gives them confidence, allows them to go to the next employer with a job reference and a referral. Imagine trying to get a job if you've never had one before. And so these are very, very important.

The federal government will be hiring in the next four years a huge number of people to conduct the decennial census, and that's why you see the disproportion in commerce.

MORE

Q What is that huge number? I'm sorry.

DR. KAMARCK: You know, I think he said 280,000. Is that --

Q For the census?

DR. KAMARCK: The decennial census, yes. I think it's 280,000. It is a very large -- remember, these are enumerators that actually go and --

Q Four thousand -- three thousand would be welfare recipients?

DR. KAMARCK: Right. You will see that these are small percentages. Generally, these are small percentages of the federal work force. They are very realistic numbers. The federal work force is, compared to the private work force, a more highly educated, highly skilled work force. There's more college graduates, more professionals. So this is, I think, a very realistic assessment.

Q Elaine, what does an enumerator do?

DR. KAMARCK: The basic enumerator goes door to door in neighborhoods finding -- asking the basic census questions: how many people in the household, et cetera, et cetera. Those are the basic enumerator jobs.

Q Is this percentage of the federal work force something that you would -- is that the model you have for private employers that you should -- I don't know what -- about a half a percent of the work force?

DR. KAMARCK: Well, the number of people -- the federal government is about 1.5 percent of the total American work force. So what we did, as Bruce explained, is we made a rough calculation. We said, okay, what is our share? What is our -- as an employer, what is the federal government's share of these 2 million people that the President would like to move from welfare to work. And we came up with approximately 10,000 jobs that we should supply.

Obviously, if the private sector steps up to the plate -- and some industries will be able to do so more than others, just as some departments have been able to do so more than others -- obviously, we can actually do this. We can actually move 2 million people from welfare to work.

Q Is that the percentage that you would urge large employers to take about between a half percent and one percent of their work force devote to --

MR. REED: Well, I think that it's important for any business to do what's consistent with its business interests. As Elaine said, a number of businesses and a number of industries are better poised to hire entry level employees than other companies that are relying heavily on Ph.Ds.

Q What is the national average?

MR. REED: That works out to be about the right national average. But, again, the federal government is not a representative employer. We are so much bigger than, you know, and we have a much more diverse set of -- I mean, we have several different agencies with several different needs.

Q Bruce, the federal government also has some very stringent requirements for hiring, a very complex procedure involved

in hiring people. What kind of problems is this going to give you? And did you give federal unions -- I know there were talks with AFG -- did you give them some assurances that the government will not become the hirer of last resort and won't get up into jobs that significantly impact on their membership?

DR. KAMARCK: We absolutely did. We talked to them about this program. The two largest federal unions -- AFG and NTEU -- are planning to hire welfare recipients themselves in their own unions. This is not a new preference. We are not establishing a new legal preferences as, for instance, we have now for veterans. This is not a new preference. This is going to be an aggressive outreach program on the part of the federal agencies who have responded quite enthusiastically to this charge to fill a variety of jobs, both temporary and permanent, that come up in the course of doing business in the federal government.

Even though we are downsizing, we're still a work force of almost 1.9 million people. Each year -- last year, for instance, we hired 58,000 full-time people, just because of turnover. In other words, we're downsizing, but we still have to hire people as people leave.

We hired over 100,000 temporary employees last year so, again, there is a large amount of turnover each year, there's a wide variety of jobs from GS-1s to microbiologists at NIH, and we think that this is a realistic number.

Q Do you know how many --

Q -- will you offer for these welfare recipients, a training program here at the White House?

DR. KAMARCK: What training program here?

Q What kind of training program for these welfare recipients, especially here at the White House. I understand there were two you were looking at, and one was the Marriott.

DR. KAMARCK: There are a variety of private sector training programs out there that have shown great promise. Marriott, of course, being probably one of the best-known, that are very successful in keeping welfare people to work. The agencies will develop their own training programs. There is already in the federal law a worker trainee entrance slot, which is, in fact, for exactly this purpose -- bringing people into the federal work force and training them.

Just now in the Cabinet meeting, the Vice President and President led a discussion about two important aspects of helping people keep jobs: child care and transportation to work. And among the things that they decided to do is that Dave Barram, the head of the General Services Administration, is going to look at ways to make federal day care centers more affordable so that between the TANF money that the welfare recipient brings with them for child care and perhaps some fundraising on the part of these local day care centers, we can make sure that welfare recipients get to use the centers.

Q What about training for the work ethic, though?

DR. KAMARCK: That program goes on -- that will go on agency by agency. In other words, each agency hiring will conduct and create its own training program. Both HHS and OPM will be involved in assisting the federal agencies in developing those.

Q Can we go back to the math equation for a second? You talked about how 700,000 workers would be enough workers to get

up to the 2 million goal that the President set. Is it enough workers to satisfy the states' work requirements?

MR. REED: Yes. Our projections for the state requirements on the welfare law are in the neighborhood of 700,000 to 800,000. A lot will depend on continuing case load reduction over the next four years, because the work rates are based on the overall size of the caseload. States get credit for caseload reduction. We've seen a historic drop in the last four years. If that continues, then the number of people who we would need to move from welfare to work would be smaller.

DR. KAMARCK: For the people who are on the worker training program -- so they're essentially getting a lower wage than maybe they would with all the benefits they'd get on welfare --

Q Do you know how much that is, first? Worker trainer slots, how much they get paid?

DR. KAMARCK: They're usually around GS-1 level. They're usually around a GS-1.

Q Which is what?

DR. KAMARCK: General Service One level. I think \$12,000.

Q But for those people who are giving up health care or whatever in exchange for the work experience that they hope will be more valuable in the future, some of them will bring with them these child care subsidies. But do they get anything that existing federal workers don't get? In other words, do they get put ahead in line for slots in federal day care centers? Do they get any help with buying their health care or paying --

Q Do they get health care?

DR. KAMARCK: Yes, they get -- well, remember, they get health care. And temporary hires in the federal government under these authorities do get health care.

Q But they have to pay for the premiums themselves.

DR. KAMARCK: Yes, but they get the subsidy that the other hires get. In other words, the federal government kicks -- the federal government has a very nice health care package.

Q But they don't get any -- but they don't get ahead of the line for the -- the federal day care centers are already oversubscribed --

DR. KAMARCK: No, actually, there are vacancies in the federal day care centers. The problem with the federal day care centers is that they are expensive. And so what the discussion was, and Dave Barram is going to work out, is ways that the day care centers themselves, which are locally run and have local boards, can perhaps do sliding scales and the Defense Department does or some plan so that the TANF money or whatever money that a welfare recipient might bring with them would allow them to use the federal day care center.

Q If you hired about 158,000 people last year to the federal government, do you have any idea how many of those people had been on welfare -- just like the two women who were in the Cabinet meeting with the President?

DR. KAMARCK: You know, we did not have time in this month to figure that out. And what we found is there was really no

way to figure that out. In other words, the records that OPM keeps of hires are by grade and by agency, but they are not by any previous experience.

But what we have learned anecdotally is that the Social Security Administration has, in fact, been doing this for years now. That's why these two women came from SSA. And then once we began to talk about this with the rest of the Cabinet, people did say, you know, I think there's some former welfare recipients in my department, et cetera. But there is no way of actually knowing that.

Q Can you describe the kinds of jobs that will be opened and --

Q You don't if this 10,000 is any greater magnitude of what you have?

DR. KAMARCK: No way of knowing.

Q Can you describe the kinds of jobs -- in general, across the board -- that people would be applying for and accepted for, and be also specially here in the White House, what kinds of jobs? Are you talking about clerical or --

DR. KAMARCK: Six.

Q All clerical here?

DR. KAMARCK: Yes. The White House jobs are clerical -- clerical and support.

Q And across the board, what else is there?

DR. KAMARCK: Oh well, if you just look at -- look at these -- look at the different departments and I can give you some ideas. Obviously at Commerce, the big jobs are the census enumerators. You go down -- Interior hires a large number of temporary employees in the summer in the parks, in the park services.

Q Doing what?

DR. KAMARCK: Cleaning up, taking your tickets when the visitors come through the park. They ramp up -- Interior always ramps up during the summer months. A lot of people have made commitments to hire in the Washington area in clerical, mail room kinds of jobs. Social Security Administration hires entry level telephone operators. One of the women here was a claims representative, which is an entry level job, usually with an associates degree from community college.

Again, some of these agencies -- the Veterans Administration runs a whole canteen operations for their veterans hospitals -- and, of course, in their hospitals themselves. So there's orderly jobs and kitchen jobs, et cetera.

So there's a sort of variety of different things. And then what I think was heartening was there is a commitment to hire people in headquarters in clerical jobs, mailroom jobs and other jobs where there's actually opportunities to get into full-time positions and move up.

Q Is it that commitment a quota?

DR. KAMARCK: No, it is not.

Q What's the difference between a commitment -- a commitment with aggressive outreach and a quota? What happens if they don't fill the jobs? Do they fill them with other people?

DR. KAMARCK: Yes, I mean, again, this is not a special preference being created. This is an aggressive outreach action.

Q In practice, what's the difference?

DR. KAMARCK: In practice, this is the target that you aim for. And I would submit, based on what we heard, that these are all low-balls, and that the Cabinet departments feel that they can comfortably meet these and with a little bit of luck, we may actually exceed them.

Q Can I ask you guys a question I asked Mike? All things being equal, two applicants walk in, one is a welfare recipient, one is not. Does the welfare recipient now get the job?

DR. KAMARCK: No.

MR. REED: No. What the agencies will be doing that hasn't been done in the past, and what private sector employers need to do as well, is building the bridge from employers to the welfare office. So the outreach that we talk about in an agency headquartered in Omaha that reaches out to the state welfare office, the state welfare office has a bunch of welfare recipients it's trying to move from welfare to work, that federal agency knows about them, wouldn't have otherwise known about them, a connection is made that opens the world of work to these welfare recipients.

So it's not special treatment, it's really just making a connection that otherwise wouldn't have happened.

Q Bruce, Mike talked about the federal government encouraging contractors to hire welfare recipients, but was vague about what that encouragement means. What does it mean?

DR. KAMARCK: Yes. There are many of these agencies that, as you well know -- Defense, Energy, EPA -- have a lot of people under federal contract. And, again, the responsibility of the Cabinet officer is going to be to encourage them to do their part and hire some welfare recipients in their work force.

Q Will there be specific incentives, or will this be rhetorical encouragement?

DR. KAMARCK: No. This will be rhetorical encouragement. We hope by making this commitment today that the federal government is setting an example for the private sector and, of course, the first part of the private sector we ought to be setting an example for are our own contractors.

Q Mike says that this has not yet happened, making this a formal requirement or in some way putting an incentive formally in the process. He said, not yet. Is the administration considering anything with --

DR. KAMARCK: No, no.

Q Why not? I mean, you do with affirmative action, for example is an explicit part of federal contracting --

DR. KAMARCK: Yes. Affirmative action is an explicit part of federal contracting, and obviously probably part of those affirmative action plans can be amended to include outreach to the welfare offices. But we really haven't gotten that far, and we don't think that we actually need to, because the reception we've gotten from the private sector so far in other efforts has been that they've fairly receptive to hiring welfare recipients.

Q Elaine, do you know how many or what percentage of these employees are going to be permanent employees of the government, what percentage are temporary, and also, are they all full-time or are some of them part-time jobs?

DR. KAMARCK: Some will be part-time, some will be full-time. The government hires temporary employees, but after three years can make them into permanent, civil service employees with all the protections. I think many of the entry-level positions here may be temporary, but as you saw the two women today actually made the transition from temporary to permanent work force ones, they did well in the work force.

Q What are the percentages?

Q How many jobs are permanent, full -- I realize there's a value --

MR. REED: The numbers for --

Q -- how many are permanent, full-time jobs?

DR. KAMARCK: How many of which?

Q Of the 10,000 jobs.

MR. REED: We don't have an estimate on that. But to give you the overall numbers for the federal government last year, last year the federal government hired 58,000 permanent and 140,000 temporary, a total of 198,000.

Q At least 40 percent of the jobs that we see have a time limit on it, plus you're talking about some Park Service employment that's summer stuff. So is it fair to say that certainly half the jobs are looking -- at best, half the jobs are temporary?

DR. KAMARCK: Look, I think that you do what you can do. I mean, some of these jobs will be temporary. Do not underestimate the value of a temporary job to somebody who hasn't had a job and who is seeking to go get a job. Try, any one of you, imagine going out to find a job with nothing on your resume. You've got --

Q There's a difference in the stories -- we're trying to write factual stories about what you guys are doing, and if it's a temporary job -- we all know if we went to apply for a job, we'd like to know if it was temporary or permanent. It just makes a difference.

Q I mean, and you're expecting businesses have at least half their jobs be temporary?

DR. KAMARCK: There are temporary jobs in businesses, too, of course. It goes with the cycle. Look -- and a lot of what happens in the government is temporary jobs, in fact, become permanent jobs. Because what -- we have a very tight definition of a permanent job in the government, which is all the rights and privileges that go with the civil service system. So there is -- for everybody we hire, there's always this sort of intermediate period before you get into the permanent civil service.

Q But you have 140,000 temporary and 58,000 permanent last year. I mean, what percentage of those -- do you have any idea what percentage of those temporary jobs actually become permanent?

DR. KAMARCK: You can probably ask OPM. Here comes Donna. (Laughter.)

MR. REED: Let me just say -- Donna will answer. But keep in mind that the welfare problem, by and large, is not a problem of a shortage of jobs. The problem for most welfare recipients is getting attached to the work force in the first place. The vast number of long-term dependent welfare recipients have no work history whatsoever. For them, any job is a good job, and a start in the world of work.

Q Doesn't that go just exactly the opposite of what the President just got through saying here a little while ago and what he's been saying all along, that the problem is that we need to create jobs so that jobs are there for the welfare recipients when they come off the rolls? And now you're saying, you're telling me that the problems isn't --

DR. KAMARCK: No, that's not what he said just now.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Let's start again. Pretend I'm the CEO of Marriott and starting out in the business of trying to do outreach to employee welfare recipients. What the President described today -- and you're focusing on the end game what the numbers are going to be -- was the beginning of the process. And in many ways, the federal government is going to learn, along with the private sector, in both creating job opportunities and using their hiring rules to try to bring welfare recipients -- we've contracted out a lot of our lower-level jobs, so one of the things I'm going to do in my own department is to make sure that whatever we do, whatever services we provide, whatever new kinds of support systems we provide, we provide them for everyone in the department that's in those kinds of jobs.

But you have to see us at the beginning of a process, not at the end. Can I tell you how many jobs will end up as permanent in my department for the 300 commitments we've made? The answer is no. Many of our jobs at that level happen to be on Indian reservations. This is what I will tell you. What we're focusing on is getting people in and giving them successful work experiences so they can either move into permanent jobs in the department, or in other places.

What do we know in the literature about welfare reform and training? What we know is the difficulty is not the initial getting the job, but staying in the job, having a successful experience in that job. That requires a support system. Learning how to put your own safety net together in terms of child care and transportation and other things falling apart, having people that will coach you as you go along in the job.

In Social Security offices across this country, they have long worked with welfare offices to bring people in and created a culture within different offices that would support the new worker coming on. And the point that we're making, I think, is that this government is no different from the private sector employees that we're asking to come into this enterprise. And that is, we're all going to learn together as we take people that have either had no work experience, or have had unsuccessful work experiences, and make sure that our employee assistance programs are adjusted to these new employees, but for everyone that's entry-level and to strengthen those experiences for people.

Q The program that you're using -- if I could ask, the program you're using really is only a temporary program to begin with. I mean, is that not the case?

SECRETARY SHALALA: No, wait a minute.

Q The people who were hired in that program do not stay in those jobs forever.

SECRETARY SHALALA: No, in fact, what every federal agency will do is use what hiring authority seems appropriate for the individuals that are involved. For some workers, it will be the temporary hiring authority. For others, it may be a term hiring authority. For others, it may be the permanent hiring authority.

The personnel offices in the federal departments are pretty sophisticated about using a variety of different authorities. We will use all the flexibility we have honoring the preferences rules for veterans and for employees who have been RIF'd in other federal departments. We have more restraints on us than the private sector, so it's going to take more creativity. And we have long experience with temporary employees who have moved to permanent jobs after a certain period of time as jobs opened up. So it's working the system so that we can offer job opportunities.

Q In essence, what you're saying, this is a test case. Is this a pilot project?

SECRETARY SHALALA: No, and let me tell you why it's not a pilot project -- because every federal department is going to take their vacancies and their hiring authority and use the flexibility of that hiring authority to provide opportunities for, and to build the connections with welfare offices around the country to try to identify who we can help to begin their work experience in the federal government. I would not describe it as a pilot.

I run pilots. I sign waivers. I do demonstration projects. This ain't it.

Q So is this -- when you say this is the beginning of a process, why such the emphasis on 10,000 when you don't know if you're going to get there?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Because you guys were going to ask us what kind of numbers we were going to have and because in general we work better with goals and time tables. And so, within that, we were asked to identify looking at our vacancies, looking at our hiring experience, looking at the experience what we know about the work experience of welfare recipients, what did we think we could do so we could give the President a ballpark as to what we were going to be able to do.

Some of us will be under. Some of us will be over. And some of it depends on what happens to the work force over the next couple of years in terms of whether people are starting to retire, what kind of jobs we have to do. In my own department, we're changing the nature of jobs. So it will take some work to do some of this.

Q The issues of helping pay transportation for these people and making federal day care more affordable to them have yet to be worked out?

SECRETARY SHALALA: No. In some departments, it will have to be worked out. But, remember, the federal government already provides child care. The problem we have with our child care system now is a problem we've started to work on, and that is, it is generally too expensive for our lower income workers. And, therefore, one of the things we're going to target for all of our employees that are relatively low income is to see what we can do about either some private sector money raising or subsidies for our lower income workers. We now, in some departments, subsidize transportation for our workers.

In my own department, the National Institutes of Health, and the Administration for Children and Families actually provides

some transportation subsidies. Again, we have the flexibility to do that kind of thing.

Let me take two more questions, and then I'm going to get back to work.

Q Could you calculate how much the welfare benefits a person on the rolls would be against going on one of these part-time, entry level salaries?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Yes, let me -- it depends on what community you live in, what the subsidy is. But one of the things we did in welfare bill was try to make work pay. And that is, as someone comes out of welfare, if they have children under six, they automatically must get child care that goes along with the job.

The President has made a huge investment in the earned income tax credit. The average family of four would get about \$1,400 of wage supplement once you go into the work force -- add that in. In addition to that, in every state, you get to keep Medicaid for at least a year. In 26 states, you get to keep it for two years.

So if you start to put all these pieces together -- and we're going to work very hard at the jobs coming with benefits, the jobs that many of us are talking about, coming with benefits. But we still have to work out child care system, but not just for these workers, for all lower income workers.

Let me do one more.

Q First, just a technical question. The 10,000 then is a cumulative figure. At the end of the administration, there would have been 10,000; not on any specific date, there will be 10,000 effective --?

MR. REED: It could go higher.

SECRETARY SHALALA: It could go higher.

Q And then more broadly, several times, we've heard the President say, look, the welfare system works for approximately half the people who are on it. They go on for a short time, then leave and get jobs.

SECRETARY SHALALA: That's right.

Q It's the 50 percent who are in a state of more or less permanent dependency that they're concerned about. Is there anything in this program that is specifically aimed at that 50 percent? It seems like all things being equal, the 50 percent who would get these jobs would be the ones who are more attractive candidates for jobs anyway. And the people for whom welfare reform was not addressed.

SECRETARY SHALALA: It is true that the vast majority of people that get on welfare come off fairly quickly -- and Bruce knows these numbers better than I -- and move into the work force. But often in unsatisfactory experiences, they rotate back. That's why those of us that have been in this business for a long time feel very strongly that it's the nature of the support system and the successful work experience and the training that goes along that makes all the difference.

We have been very successful at popping people off, but keeping them in the work force is the challenge. And that's what we expect to be the federal challenge at the same time.

I've got to go. I'm sorry, I've got to go.

MR. REED: I think, John, just one other point -- one other point on that. Keep in mind, as I said before, this is a partnership. We will be working with state welfare offices, who will be working very hard to try to move the most difficult long-term welfare recipients into the work force.

Q -- the fact that California goes against the national trend in terms of actually having an increased welfare roll?

MR. REED: I think that they've had population growth, the recession lasted longer in California. I think that their case load has a larger number of U.S. citizen children born to illegal immigrants who are eligible for welfare. There was an increase there. So those are the nature --

Q In all fairness, with downsizing of the federal government, corporate downsizing and reform of welfare, for every 10,000 people that you're going to employ at the end of this period, won't there be 150,000 new, needy people who will have been pushed out of the system either by corporate, government downsizing or welfare reform?

DR. KAMARCK: I think you're assuming that all downsizing in the corporate world and in the federal government occurs to people who are hard to employ. That's simply not true. And so corporate -- federal government downsizing, we've downsized a huge amount of people. We don't have as severe unemployment problem around here and the reason is that when you downsize a college graduate, Ph.D., biochemist, whatever, they find another job. It's not a problem of the jobs. And, in fact, most of the federal downsizing has been at middle levels. And people have, in fact, gone and found other jobs. So we're dealing with a very small piece of the work force here.

MR. REED: We have a 5.2 percent unemployment rate. The economy's adding 200,000 jobs a month. We've added 12 million in the last four years. We have a growing economy. The problem is not a shortage of jobs in America.

Q Why didn't we do it in 1960, then?

Q -- percent is only one part of the population. There are some populations that are double that figure. You know that. So let's get back to the point of whether people are going to be left -- when you get to your goal, are there going to be people simply left out?

MR. TOIV: One more question after this.

MR. REED: Well, thank you for raising that point. Let me answer -- I'll answer this one Barry -- because we are pressing in our budget negotiations with Congress for an additional \$3.6 billion that states and communities can use to help move people from welfare to work because we want to make absolutely sure that in the areas that do have a shortage of jobs that we can make welfare succeed there, as well.

Q Bruce, how big is the child care problem in dollars? If federal child care is too expensive and you're going to have to subsidize it for people at the bottom end of the scale anyway, how big is the problem in dollars?

MR. REED: Well, for people moving from welfare to work, as Donna said, they already have a guarantee of child care if they have children under six. In the welfare bill, we gave states \$22 billion for child care, an increase of \$4 billion from what they had otherwise. So we're increasing the amount of child care

available.

A number of states are also going to try to expand the availability of child care by training welfare recipients to be child care workers. But there's no question that -- ask any parent across the income scale -- child care remains a big problem for every working parent trying to make ends meet.

It's not going to be a particular problem for our effort to move people off of welfare into work and get jobs in the federal government, because most will come with a subsidy that they get from their own state.

Q Bruce, what is the income range, the salary range in dollar figures that these 10,000 jobs will --

MR. REED: Well, a GS-1, which is the most common of these, is about \$12,000 a year.

Q Do you think a person can live on \$12,000?

Q A number of states are looking at a waiver that Texas has -- at HHS that would privatize its entire welfare program. Is that causing some concern with the administration?

MR. REED: I don't have an answer for you. Thanks.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

3:49 P.M. EDT

**Welfare to Work Meeting For Non-Cabinet Agencies and Departments
(Closed to Press)**

**Room 450 OE08
10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
April 10, 1997**

To: Secretary Shalala
Elaine Kamarck
James King
Bruce Reed

From: Lyn Hogan, Domestic Policy Council
Audrey Choi, National Performance Review

Subject: Welfare to Work Meeting For Non-Cabinet Agencies and Departments

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is two fold: 1) to thank the small agencies and department heads for participating in this effort and to encourage them to work as hard as possible to meet the goals they have laid out for themselves, and 2) to give the agencies a couple of examples of how other agencies are approaching this challenge.

II. BACKGROUND

On March 8, 1997, President Clinton directed each head of a Federal agency or department to use all available hiring authorities to hire and retain welfare recipients in jobs in the government. The President called for agencies to prepare individualized plans for hiring welfare recipients and asked the agencies to explore and report on ways to help low-income employees gain access to the Earned-Income Tax Credit (EITC), transportation subsidies, and affordable child care.

Each head of a Federal agency or department was asked to assess its hiring capacity and to develop a hiring and job retention plan suited to that particular agency's workforce, resources, and needs. All Cabinet agencies and over 100

non-Cabinet agencies and departments have responded. The Cabinet agencies are meeting with the President the afternoon of April 10. This is an opportunity for the small agencies to meet with some of the key participants in this effort.

III. PARTICIPANTS AND AGENDA

10:30 a.m.- Bruce Reed
10:45 a.m. Assistant to the President For Domestic Policy
The White House

(Will talk about the President's strategy to make welfare reform a success, the Federal hiring effort as one piece of that strategy, and will thank the agencies for their participation.)

10:45 a.m.- The Honorable Donna E. Shalala
11:00 a.m. Secretary.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

(Will talk about the importance of everyone doing his or her part to make welfare reform a success and will discuss welfare reform generally and the HHS plan for hiring welfare recipients.)

11:00 a.m.- James B. King
11:15 a.m. Director
Office of Personnel Management

(Will thank all of the agencies for their participation, will talk about the OPM plan, and will discuss briefly a few of the existing hiring authorities agencies might use.)

11:15 a.m.- Elaine Kamarck
11:30 a.m. Senior Policy Advisor for the Vice President
The White House

(Will talk about the role of the VP's office in running and monitoring this effort and what she hopes the final outcome will be; the need for small agencies to partner with each other to make this a success; the necessity for continued outreach to welfare recipients to target hiring; and the option each agency has to encourage its contractors and grantees to hire welfare recipients.)

THIS FORM MARKS THE FILE LOCATION OF ITEM NUMBER 1
LISTED IN THE WITHDRAWAL SHEET AT THE FRONT OF THIS FOLDER.

THE FOLLOWING PAGE HAS HAD MATERIAL REDACTED. CONSULT THE
WITHDRAWAL SHEET AT THE FRONT OF THIS FOLDER FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Tonya JoAnn Graham, T2 Claims Representative

Work Number (806) 296-7613
Home Number (806) 297-6879

Social Security Number
Date of Birth 11/28/60

- **Born in Littlefield, TX**
- **Attended school in Friona, TX**
- **Dropped out of school in the beginning of the 10th grade**
- **Had a child at age 16 (1976)**
- **Obtained high school equivalency (GED) in 1980**
- **Started college in 8/84**
 - **Went on welfare at that time as a single parent**
 - **Obtained AA at Levelland College (5/87)**
- **Found out about the SSA Access vacancy when her college professor announced it in class. Hired as a GS-4 ACCESS student on 1/3/89, promoted to a GS-5, then received subsequent promotions as a claims representative to GS-7,9,10 and 11**
 - **Dropped off welfare in 1/89**
- **Obtained BBA from Lubbock Christian University in 12/90 and began working full-time as a title 2 claims representative**
 - **Her GPA was 3.26 on a 4.00 system**

Prepared by the Dallas Region 4/8/97

Author: BILL THEISS at ~RO-KC
Date: 4/8/97 12:40 PM
Priority: Normal
Subject: Welfare to Work - Kansas City Region

The following capsulizes the work history of Rebecca Rae Wilson, a "Welfare to Work" employee in the Kansas City Region:

Rebecca Rae Wilson is a 41-year-old female with two children, one of whom is learning disabled. Prior to beginning work as a Stay-In-School participant she was receiving ADC, Food Stamps, and HUD assistance. She was not receiving any regular financial assistance from the father of her children. She was attending Clinton Community College working on an associate degree. She readily admits that while on the public assistance rolls she had very low self-esteem and had a great deal of uncertainty about her future and that of her children.

- ❖ Hired as a temporary clerk, GS-2 (Stay-In-School), May 10, 1996, with the Clinton Iowa Branch Office
- ❖ Continued with her schooling while in our employ and will graduate in May with an associate degree in secretarial science
- ❖ Wages earned while working as a Stay-In-School participant have allowed her to get off of ADC
- ❖ In January she wrote a personal letter to the President requesting his assistance in keeping her job after graduation
- ❖ In response to her letter the Area Director, in concert with the Branch Office manager, encouraged Rebecca to continue with her education and begin work on a baccalaureate. Rebecca enthusiastically agreed, and thereby qualified for continuing employment under the Stay-In-School Program. She will attend Mt. St. Claire College beginning in August to work on a degree in business administration
- ❖ In developing historical data for reporting on our experience with "Welfare to Work" participants she willingly shared her story. She even indicated that she would be glad to share her experiences publicly if it might benefit or motivate others on welfare
- ❖ She has just recently been converted under the Student Career Experience Program (Co-Op Student). This allows her to continue her employment with SSA, continue with her education and provides for conversion to a career-conditional appointment upon graduation.

Rebecca's employment in the Clinton Branch Office is best described as a family affair. Even though the nature of her appointment was originally temporary, she has been considered and treated as an extended family member. The Branch manager and all of the employees in this small rural office have offered continued support and guidance to Rebecca during her year of employment. That support has even extended to Rebecca's children as well. Rebecca, her children, and all those with whom she works are justifiably proud of how far she has

come in the last year. Each member of the office has helped groom Rebecca to become the productive and conscientious employee she is today. Everyone in the office is supportive of her goal to completely free herself from public assistance and to eventually become a career federal employee with the Social Security Administration.

I've asked Bill Theiss of my Human Resouce Center staff to gather the information provided above. If you need additional information Bill may be reached at (816) 426-3720.



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR - 8 1997

Mr. Bob Stone
National Performance Review
750 17th Street, N.W.
Box 101
Washington, D.C. 20006

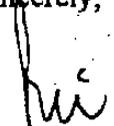
Dear Mr. Stone:

In accordance with the President's directive, I am transmitting the Department of Commerce's Plan for the hiring of welfare recipients. I am fully committed to the use of all available Department resources for providing employment opportunities for welfare recipients and helping them succeed once hired.

The Year 2000 Decennial Census presents a significant potential opportunity to hire welfare recipients. We plan to hire 100-200 people this year. In 1998 we will conduct a dress rehearsal of the Decennial Census. We plan to experiment with hiring welfare recipients as part of the dress rehearsal. We could hire as many as 4,000 in 1998. Depending on our experience in the dress rehearsal, we could then hire a very significant number of welfare recipients in the Year 2000. Although all of these jobs will be phased out upon completion of the Census, they would serve as an excellent opportunity for people who need work experience. Placement opportunities will be available throughout the United States. I will seek appropriate exemptions from other Departments to permit the employment of welfare recipients for the Decennial Census without loss of benefits under programs administered by those Departments. Additionally, other agencies in the Department estimate they will be able to hire a minimum of 80 welfare recipients this year.

I have asked the heads of our operating units to give the hiring of welfare recipients their highest priority attention, and I am confident we will be successful in this endeavor.

Sincerely,


William M. Daley

Enclosure

Q&A
The Federal Government Plan to Hire Welfare Recipients

Question: How many welfare recipients is the Federal government comitted to hiring?

Answer: To date, the Cabinet agencies estimate they can directly hire into the Federal government 8,000 welfare recipients during the first two years of this program. And some agencies have already committed to hiring at least 2,000 more over the next two years bringing the initial total to 10,000. Further, most agencies will be encouraging their grantees and contractors to hire welfare recipients.

Question: Hiring a total of 10,000 welfare recipients over four years seems ambitious. Are these figures realistic?

Answer: This is an ambitious plan and it is a testament to the leadership and creativity of this Administration. However, you must remember that these numbers are preliminary estimates and may go up or down depending on future budgets as well as the success of agency outreach and retention plans, and other factors such as the strength of the economy.

Question: These numbers seem modest given the enormity of the problem. Why are they so skimpy?

Answer: Actually, these numbers represent what is essentially the Federal government's fair share of the effort to hire welfare recipients. The Federal government is approximately 1.5 percent of the nation's workforce. To meet its portion of the President's challenge to move 2 million people off of welfare by the year 2000-- which amounts to moving about 700,000 adults into the workforce -- the Federal government ought to hire about 10,000 welfare recipients. As you can see on the chart we've handed out, the Federal government has committed to hiring close to 8,000 welfare recipients in the first two years, and we fully expect that number to grow once agencies complete more surveying and have their programs fully operational.

Question: What sort of hires are included in the 10,000 figure?

Answer: All agencies have surveyed their existing hiring capacity and have reported available entry-level positions through all existing hiring capacities including the Worker-Trainee program the President encouraged them to use. The 10,000 number refers *only* to those who would be hired *directly* by the Federal government. Additionally, many of the agencies will be encouraging their grantees and contractors to hire welfare recipients, thereby further increasing the number of

recipients likely to be hired.

Question: What are the common elements of each plan?

Answer: While every agency plan is different, most plans address the following elements: Agency hiring capacity and available resources; plans for outreach to potential employees both within the Federal government and in the private for-profit and nonprofit sectors through government contractors and grantees; job preparation including formal training, job readiness and education; and plans to retain employees once hired including addressing child care and transportation issues, as well as using existing Employee Assistance Programs and creating mentoring or buddy programs to address personal issues that may arise.

Question: How are you going to hire welfare recipients at a time government is downsizing and budgets are tough?

Answer: It is true that the government has been downsizing. Since the President took office, he has actually shrunk the Federal government to its smallest size in three decades. However, downsizing does not mean that there are no jobs to fill. As in any organization, there is a natural amount of turnover in jobs at all levels. The Federal agencies have surveyed *current* vacancies and have committed to reaching out specifically to the welfare population to fill those positions.

Question: How many Federal employees are there and what percentage of the workforce does that represent?

Answer: There are 1.9 million Federal employees that account for 1.5% of the nation's workforce.

Question: How much will this effort cost?

Answer: This effort should not cost anything. All personnel offices conduct recruitment and outreach as part of their normal activities and build in these necessary activities as part of their normal budgets. Essentially, we are expecting agencies to carry this out within their existing budgets.

Question: Will agencies be hiring only in Washington, D.C.?

Answer: No. We're talking about jobs all over the country. More than 85 percent of federal jobs are located outside the Washington metropolitan area.

Question: The White House has over 1,500 employees. Why is the White House hiring only six recipients?

Answer: While this number might sound small, it is actually comparable to other agency hiring targets when compared to the percentage of each agency's workforce. For example, the Department of Transportation has committed to hiring 206 welfare recipients, the GSA 65 and DoD 1,605--but each is hiring approximately the same percent of its total Federal employees.

Further, the White House is ready to hire six welfare recipients now. Once the White House program is in place and the initial six are hired, we expect to continue to hire more over the coming years.

Question: In which departments will the White House place the first six welfare recipients?

Answer: One of the first welfare recipients will be placed in the Domestic Policy Council, the agency primarily responsible for welfare reform. Others will be placed through the Executive Office of the President.

Question: Aren't you favoring welfare recipients over everyone else?

Answer: We are not creating any preference such as the one that exists for veterans. We are encouraging the departments to use an existing hiring authorities, including programs that allow departments to cut through red tape and hire entry-level workers quickly and easily. We are also encouraging outreach efforts. This is the same commitment that the President has asked of the private sector.

Question: Why are we specifically helping welfare recipients rather than other poor people?

Answer: We make no apologies about the fact that we are asking the agencies to hire needy single mothers with children. These are the people whom it is most crucial to reach and put on the track of work. We want to help these families move from dependence on welfare to independence through self-sufficiency.

Question: Now that the agencies have turned in their plans, what are the next steps?

Answer: Agencies will begin working right away to fill available jobs by reaching out to welfare recipients to notify them of those jobs, and to fully use the existing programs to help recipients take *and keep* the jobs.

Question: Why did it take the Administration so long to get its hiring program off the ground?

Answer: The Federal hiring process has lots of complex rules and regulations and it took some time to figure out the best ways for agencies to hire entry-level people quickly and easily. We are thrilled that so many of the agencies presented us with

creative and ambitious plans that show their commitment and leadership to the pressing issue of moving welfare recipients permanently into the workforce.

Question: Does the President think federal government hiring is the way to reform welfare?

Answer: The Federal government's role is an important one, but it is only part of the formula for success. The President wants the Federal government to do exactly what he has asked the private sector to do -- help meet his challenge to move 2 million people off the welfare rolls by the year 2000, and to *continue* to move recipients into work thereafter. The President is extremely pleased that all of his Cabinet Secretaries and other agency and department heads have response so enthusiastically.

Question: What can you tell me about the meeting the President is planning with business leaders in May?

Answer: As you know, the President has met several times with key business leaders to discuss their role in making welfare reform a success. Most recently, the President met with 14 CEOs of major corporations, each of whom pledged to become involved in this effort. Now, this May, the President will again meet with many of those CEOs as well as 25 additional CEOs to talk about their specific commitments to the welfare to work effort.

Question: Nearly half of the total hiring figures you've cited for all Cabinet agencies come from the Department of Commerce's commitment to hire 4,000 people to help with the Census. Don't these temporary hires artificially inflate your numbers?

Answer: We are extremely pleased that the Department of Commerce has committed to hiring so many people over the next four years to do work on the 2000 Census. Most of these jobs will last up to six months while some will last up to one year. There will also be options for some of the individuals to be converted to permanent employment. However, as you know, every job is significant because whether it is short term or long term, a job offers a welfare recipient valuable work experience and on-the-job training that can help her achieve permanency in the labor market. Further, even without the Census numbers, the Cabinet Secretaries' numbers are extremely significant and only represent a start. Once agency programs are up and running, we will likely see the numbers continue to rise.

Welfare to Work Cabinet Meeting
The White House, Cabinet Room
1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
April 10, 1997

Announcement

Today, President Clinton holds the first full cabinet meeting of his second term to receive responses to his March 8, 1997 directive asking all Federal agencies to develop plans to hire welfare recipients. All of the Cabinet agencies, as well as over 100 non-Cabinet agencies and departments, have submitted hiring plans to the President through the Office of the Vice President. To date, the Cabinet agencies estimate they can directly hire into the Federal government 8,000 welfare recipients during the first two years of this program. And some agencies have already committed to hiring at least 2,000 more over the next two years bringing the initial total to 10,000. Further, most agencies will be encouraging their grantees and contractors to hire welfare recipients.

The President is also releasing today new data showing that welfare caseloads have declined by 2,755,000 or 20 percent during his first term and he is announcing plans to meet in May with a large group of corporate CEOs to discuss their specific commitments to make the welfare reform effort a success.

Background

On March 8, 1997, President Clinton directed each head of a Federal agency or department to use all available hiring authorities to hire and retain welfare recipients in jobs in the government. The President called for agencies to prepare individualized plans for hiring and retaining welfare recipients.

Each head of a Federal agency or department was asked to assess its hiring capacity and to develop a hiring and job retention plan suited to that particular agency's workforce, resources, and needs. All Cabinet agencies and over 100 non-Cabinet agencies and departments have responded.

Since signing the historic welfare reform law, the President has urged businesses, non-profit organizations, and religious groups across the nation to help make its promise of opportunity real by offering jobs to welfare recipients. In today holding a special Cabinet meeting to discuss the hiring plans of all agencies, the President helps to ensure that the federal government, as the nation's largest employer, does its fair share to move welfare recipients to work.

Making Welfare Reform Work

The Federal government hiring effort is only one piece of President Clinton's larger strategy to make welfare reform a reality. First, the President is visiting state legislatures to share the country's best welfare to work practices and to encourage every state to rise to the challenge he has laid out to them. Second, the President has enlisted key members of the business community in his effort, soliciting pledges of help from major CEOs and working to build a larger network of business people who will hire welfare recipients. Third, he continues to reach out to nonprofits and the faith community, similarly urging them to meet his challenge and offering them information and expertise on how to do so. Finally, the President has included \$3.6 billion in his FY 1998 budget for several welfare to work initiatives including tax credits and other incentives for businesses that hire people off welfare; incentives for states and communities to create more jobs for welfare recipients; and transportation and child care to help people go to work.

Facts and Figures

Federal Government Employees

- There are 1.9 million Federal employees nationwide
- Federal employees represent 1.5% of this country's workforce
- Last year, the federal government hired over 190,000 permanent and temporary workers.
- There are 1,513 employees in the Executive Office of the President -- a number including all employees of the Office of Management and Budget, the US Trade Representative, the National Security Council, the Domestic Policy Council, the National Economic Council, and others

Additional Hiring Power In the U.S.

- There are 826,000 U.S. businesses with more than 20 employees
- There are 1.1 million nonprofit organizations (not including congregations).
- There are 135,119 congregations with more than 200 members and 205,583 congregations with more than 100 members.

The Welfare Rolls

- There are 20 percent *fewer* people on welfare than the day the President took his first oath of office -- the largest decline in the history of the welfare system.
- The welfare caseload fell by 2,755,000 from 14,115,000 in January 1993 to 11,360,000 in January 1997, decreasing as much in the last four years as it increased in the first 25 years of the program.
- Before the President signed the welfare reform bill, he worked with states to test reform strategies, giving 43 states waivers from federal rules to experiment with reforms that required work, imposed time limits, and demanded personal responsibility. In 1993, the President made work pay better than welfare for 15 million low income families through an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit which he proposed and the Congress adopted.

Additional Welfare Q&As

4/10/97

Question: Having the federal government hire welfare recipients is all well and good, but what are you doing to fix the faults of the welfare bill, as you promised to do when you signed it last August?

Answer: I signed the welfare bill into law because it restores America's basic bargain of providing opportunity and demanding in return responsibility. The law also protects children by guaranteeing medical care and nutrition and by providing \$14 billion for child care.

The best evidence that welfare reform works is the fact that welfare rolls have declined 20 percent since I became President. The decline is in part due to the waivers I granted to 43 states to allow them to take the kinds of tough actions now allowed in the welfare law.

As I said when I signed the bill, I strongly oppose some of the budget cuts the Congressional leaders attached to the welfare reform bill, cuts that have nothing to do with welfare reform. My budget would correct these problems, restoring benefits to legal immigrants who become disabled after entering the U.S. and to children who are too young to naturalize. I would also put a real work requirement into the food stamp law which would help those who want to work but can't find jobs.

Question: You've released new numbers today showing the welfare caseloads declined by 2.8 million or 20 percent since you became President. If the welfare rolls have declined anyway, why did you need to sign the welfare bill?

Answer: The caseload reductions show why I signed the welfare law -- they're the best evidence that welfare reform works. As you know, my Administration granted welfare reform waivers to 43 states so they could impose tough work requirements and time limits and provide incentives that made work pay better than welfare. The caseload decline shows that these kinds of actions work. And now, governors no longer have to petition Washington to put them into effect. The welfare reform law imposes time limits and lets states design sanctions for those who don't work.