

MAY 20 REC'D

April 30, 1994

Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Rasco,

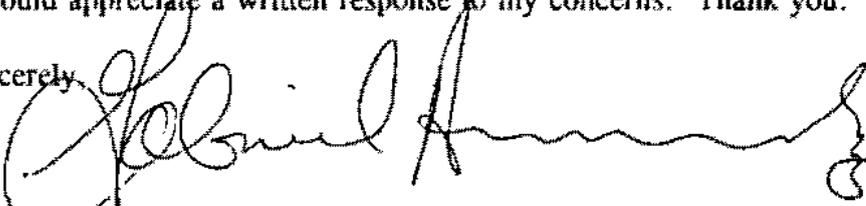
I am writing to urge President Clinton not to disqualify noncitizens from receiving SSI, AFDC, food stamps or Medicaid as a way of financing his welfare reform plan. Immigrants and refugees who receive these benefits need them because they are poor, old, sick, hungry or disabled. It is simply unacceptable to finance any welfare reform by imposing greater burdens on one segment of the poor and the needy.

Immigrants and refugees do not come to the United States to get welfare. They come to the United States because they are fleeing persecution or because they want to be reunited with their families or to work. Immigrants work hard and pay taxes and should be entitled to the same benefits and services as all other taxpaying residents of our communities.

I would appreciate a written response to my concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Name



Gabriel Hernandez

Address

1020 9th St
Albany, CA 94710

6950 North Barnett Lane
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217-3603

April 5, 1994

Mr. Bruce Reed, Deputy Assistant to the President
Domestic Policy
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500

RE: FINANCING WELFARE REFORM BY CUTTING BENEFITS TO LEGAL
IMMIGRANTS AND OTHER LOW-INCOME GROUPS

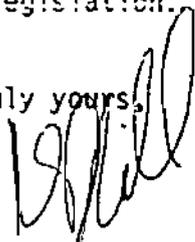
Dear Mr. Reed:

Just to be on record and to express to you my opposition
of cutting benefits to legal immigrants and other low-
income groups to reform welfare.

I believe in welfare reform and think it is most important.
However, I don't believe this is the way to achieve it -
on the backs of the people who need it at the moment.

I would appreciate you doing as much as you can to
see that this practice does not occur in the forth-
coming legislation.

Very truly yours,



Robert S. Brill

RSB/cpr

NAPAFASA

National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse, Inc.
420 East Third Street, Suite 909, Los Angeles, California 90013-1602; (213) 617-8227; fax (213) 617-2012

FOUNDER

FORMER NATIONAL DIRECTOR

K. Patrick Okura, MA
Bethesda, Maryland

March 26, 1994

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Jean Lau Chin, Ed.D.
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Reed,

VICE-CHAIR

Jeff Mori, MA
San Francisco, California

The National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA) is a national, private, non-profit, membership organization. It is devoted to addressing the problems of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse (and related human service problems) among Asian and Pacific Islander populations. NAPAFASA is therefore concerned about the handicapped and disabled that need help. There are many Asian and Pacific Islanders that are disabled and need financial assistance.

TREASURER

Mike Watanabe, MSW
Los Angeles, California

We are concerned about the proposed welfare reform package which would deny Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for people who have yet to attain citizenship.

SECRETARY

Barbara Benavente
Tennessee, Guam

Denial of benefits to Asians and Pacific Islanders (API) who are over 65 and are non-citizens would mean that a significant percentage of the API community would not be able to maintain their independent living because SSI is their sole source of support. To remove this safety network for them would result in the inability to pay for housing, food, clothing, and minimal subsistence requirements.

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Ford H. Kuramoto, DSW
Los Angeles, California

Those who believe that "these people" should just become citizens (and therefore qualify for the SSI benefits), need to look at the English language requirements for naturalization. Most of the elderly cannot read and write at the 5th grade level. In order for a permanent resident to take the naturalization examination in their own language, they need to be here for 20 years.

Almost all the immigrant elderly are not citizens because of the English language requirement. For many of the immigrant elderly, SSI is their sole source of support. Those who worked the requisite number of years already get SSA (regular social security), but most of the elderly have not been here that long.

On a more human level, it would affect many elderly immigrants who suffer from mental health problems as a result of their traumatic experiences in their war-torn native countries. These elderly individuals cannot work, and have great difficulty learning English well enough to apply for citizenship.

We demand that this portion of the welfare reform package be eliminated. At the minimum, denying benefits to those who cannot vote or otherwise participate in the political process is undemocratic. The API community is not adverse to bearing our share of the inevitable cuts which must be made in the area of social services. However, we will not allow our community to bear a disproportionate burden.

Sincerely,

Ford H. Kuramoto, D.S.W.
National Director



MAR 21 REC'D

March 21, 1994

Ms. Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Via Facsimile

Dear Ms. Rasco:

I am writing on behalf of Travelers & Immigrants Aid (TIA) to urge you to refrain from cutting Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other benefits to legal immigrants in order to help fund welfare reform initiatives. While we strongly support your efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal welfare program, we believe that pitting one vulnerable community against another in order to do so is both unnecessary and unjustifiable.

Immigrants contribute tremendously to the growth and vitality of this country and, as numerous studies have shown, pay far more in taxes than they use in public assistance. The majority of immigrants and refugees come to this country to be reunited with their immediate families, who are more than willing to sacrifice in order to provide for their needs. However, legal immigrants are subject to the same hardships as U.S. citizens and occasionally must turn to public assistance. This is especially the case with the elderly, blind or disabled.

The period of deeming of sponsor's income for SSI was recently extended from three to five years. The Republican welfare reform proposal would eliminate eligibility until the time of citizenship, not only for SSI but for sixty other benefits including AFDC, school breakfast and lunch, nutritional assistance for the elderly, and foster care. This action would seriously undermine the hard work of immigrant families and would perpetuate the "us versus them" attitude advanced by immigration restrictionists.

True welfare reform will be expensive, and we realize that choices will have to be made. Denying essential services to needy immigrants and refugees would be the wrong choice. We urge you to seek alternative funding mechanisms for this critical initiative.

Sincerely,

Sid L. Mohn
Chief Executive Officer

TRAVELERS & IMMIGRANTS AID
208 S. LaSalle St., Suite 1818
Chicago, Illinois 60604
Fax 312-629-4550, Phone 312-629-4500

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1994

Sid L. Mohn
Chief Executive Office
Travelers & Immigrants Aid
208 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 1818
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Mohn:

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your thoughts with me on funding national welfare reform. It is very important that this Administration hear from groups like yours who have valuable information to contribute. I have shared your letter with staff members of the Domestic Policy Council.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Carol H. Rasco
Assistant to the President for
Domestic Policy

CHR:ram

(D)

Annis Leuts
2800 So Emerald Lane
Chicago Ill 60616
May 24, 1994

M.R. Bruce Reed
white house Senior advisor for Domestic affairs

I am writing to express my concern over the proposal to reengineer the SS disability program.

I am 54 years old and have been a waitress all my life. and now I am unable to waitress any more because of very bad feet. I have applied for disability benefits.

I am in favor of the proposals to improve the service to the public. like don't give disability payment to 20 or 30 year old Drunks or DOPEKS who has never payed into SS. But don't make it hard on the people who have worked hard all there life and paid into SS to receive it when it becomes impossible for us to work any more.

Under current law a person's age, education and work experience must be considered in reaching a decision of disability. This is as it should be.

As a person grows older especially over 50 and 55 years of age, it is very difficult for them to adjust to a new work place when he or she is unable to do there previous work. Due to illness or disability and cannot expect there self much any longer. There is no one want to retrain you for

2
New jobs and therefore leaves you with
very very few job options.

The lack of job skills and advanced
education are also very important obstacles

My lawyer has explained that the SSA
proposes to change the law so that almost
every claimant will have to show that he
or she cannot perform baseline (sit down &
unskilled) work. This change would make my
Valid Claim rejected. My attorney and I
feel that I would probably be found
eligible for disability benefits under
the current law. Please don't change
that part of the law that could help
me at my age and work skills and
education.

I don't think a person in their 50's
or 60's is as disable as a person in their
20's or 30's because a younger person is more
likely to find and adapt to a new job or field
of work than I would be at my age.

This proposed change would penalize
those of us who has worked very hard
all our life and paid into social security
the longest. It would also be very
harsh to those people who has depended
on others for support or stayed home
and raised families or finds our selves
with little or no work skills or experience.

3

The current Law is a sensible way
of advancing age and our educational
Short Comings

Please don't change the way
you determine the way people over
50 or disabled.

Sincerely
Annas Stewart
2800 So Emerald Ave
Chicago ill 60616

Jeanney M. Kutner

ATTORNEY AT LAW

900 CIRCLE 75 PARKWAY
SUITE 1350
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30339

(404) 859-0395
FAX (404) 955-9303

April 26, 1994

Bruce Reed, Deputy Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

RE: Welfare Reform and Benefits to Permanent Legal Residents

Dear Mr. Reed:

I am writing to express the concern of the Atlanta Jewish community over legislative proposals to cut the availability of SSI, public assistance, Medicaid and food stamps to legal immigrants in order to finance welfare reform.

It is our understanding that the Administration's task force on welfare reform and many members of both Houses are considering legislation similar to H.R. 3500, the Republican Welfare Reform bill, which would finance welfare reform by denying these benefits to legal immigrants.

Proposals to cut essential benefits to elderly, blind and disabled immigrants will put many families in the untenable position of having to choose between family reunification and poverty. These policies threaten the health and well being of the most vulnerable members of our communities, particularly the elderly, blind and disabled immigrant family members of American citizens. Such choices offend the basic values of this country and the broad array of ethnic communities which make it strong.

Our nation's immigration policy is predicated upon the concept of family reunification. Studies conducted by a wide range of academic institutions as well as by the U.S. Department of Labor show that immigrants pay more in taxes than they use in benefits. The nation enriches itself economically and culturally by reuniting immigrant families.

We are very concerned that many of our leaders are perpetuating an atmosphere that can only be interpreted by our communities as a threat to legal immigrants and Americans alike. We urge you to reject any proposal that would finance welfare reform by cutting benefits to legal immigrants.

Very truly yours,


Jeanney M. Kutner

JMK:mas



SOUTH FLORIDA CONFERENCE

A VOLUNTEER, ACTIVIST ORGANIZATION WORKING FOR EMIGRATION, JEWISH SURVIVAL AND
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

10691 N. Kendall Drive, Suite 309, Miami, FL 33176 • (305) 279-1435 • Fax No. (305) 279-1921

March 28, 1994

**Mr. Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy
Old Executive Office Building, Room 216
Washington, D.C. 20500**

Dear Mr. Reed:

It has recently been brought to my attention that the Administration's welfare reform task-force is considering limiting eligibility for Social Security and other federal government programs to United States citizens. As a Board Member of the Union of Councils, (formerly the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews) and Vice Chairman and Congressional Liaison for the South Florida Conference, non-governmental organizations which have long been deeply involved in the struggle for human rights and freedom of emigration in the former Soviet Union, I am deeply concerned. This potential policy undercuts the historic promise that the United States has represented to immigrants and refugees throughout the years.

The possible victims of this policy are hardworking legal immigrants, both U.S. citizens and those who have yet to obtain citizenship. Many of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union and other regions of the world who benefit from these programs legitimately need the assistance to support their households. Legal immigrants should not be forced to choose between family reunification or poverty, and should not be left without assistance in times of hardship including disability or old age.

It must be remembered that immigrants as a community use public services at a lower rate than the general population. Furthermore, studies show that immigrants pay more in taxes than they use in benefits like social security.

Emigrants from the former Soviet Union, like legal immigrants generally, have come to the United States seeking protection and freedom, and hope to join the American community as hardworking contributors to the nation. As legitimate as the goal of welfare reform is, it is unacceptable to seek to obtain that goal at the expense of legal immigrants.

On behalf of the members of the Union of Councils and South Florida Conference, I urge you to oppose any Administration proposal that discriminates against legal immigrants by discontinuing Social Security or other assistance to the most vulnerable members of this community, and to request that the Administration seek alternate funding mechanisms for its reform program.

I respectfully await your response on this most critical issue. Thank you for your time and consideration of this viewpoint.

Sincerely,

**Sandy Cantor
Board Member, Union of Councils
Vice Chairman/Congressional Liaison, South Florida Conference**

North of Market Senior Services

March 24, 1994

Mr. Bruce Reed
The White House
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

We are very upset to learn that the Federal government is considering eliminating Supplemental Security Income benefits for all non-citizens. We believe that the elderly, and disabled permanent residents of the United States should continue to be eligible for SSI based on financial need.

At North of Market Senior Services we see low-income elderly citizens on SSI struggling to live independently in the community in spite of advancing years and increasing frailty.

The largest group of non-citizens on SSI at North of Market Senior Services are Southeast Asian refugees, specifically Chinese-Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians. They were forced to leave their countries after the Vietnam war, sometimes spending years in refugee camps in Southeast Asia before coming to the United States. Immigrating to the United States was a matter of survival after being victims of war.

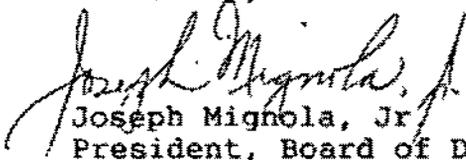
Many of the elderly Southeast Asians came from rural areas and many had not been educated. Illiterate in their own language they could not find jobs in this country and did not learn sufficient English to pass the complicated U.S. citizenship test. Most had relatives in the war and some were disabled themselves.

The only source of income for these elderly individuals is SSI and, in spite of the reductions by the State of California, they survive and contribute to improving their communities. Some help take care of grandchildren, enabling their children to work. Often their adult children have low-paying jobs and cannot support their parents without facing great financial hardship. SSI links the elderly to Medi-Cal which provides the means for maintaining routine health care and treating the chronic illnesses so common to the aging population.

The elimination of SSI for permanent residents will be disastrous for local economies that rely on its purchasing power and tax revenue. The infrastructure of the inner city will weaken as a result. Many permanent residents will be forced into homelessness and greater poverty. Any effort to abolish SSI for permanent residents is shortsighted.

It is essential that SSI for eligible permanent residents continue. We urge you to use your influence in seeing that the Federal government maintains its current policy.

Sincerely,



Joseph Mignola, Jr.
President, Board of Directors

Francis J. Curry Center

JM:ps

333 TURK STREET • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102 • (415) 885-2274



NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC CENTER ON AGING

MELBOURNE TOWER
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SUITE 914
SEATTLE, WA 98101-1622
TEL: (206) 624-1221
FAX: (206) 624-1023

March 7, 1994

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Don Watanabe

Ms. Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Dear Ms. Rasco:

The National Asian Pacific Center on Aging, the nationally recognized advocacy organization for the Asian and Pacific Island elderly in the United States, joins the National Immigration Forum and the impressive and lengthy list of individuals and organizations in urging you to support our efforts to stop the movement to eliminate Supplementary Security Income (SSI) entitlement benefits for elderly, disabled and blind lawful permanent residents who are immigrants.

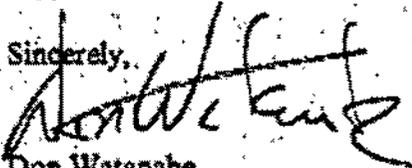
The attack on these vulnerable and powerless victims can result in driving 145,980 Asian elderly further into the abysmal throes of poverty, hopelessness, homelessness, despair and misery. The specific Asian immigrant communities that will be heavily impacted by the proposal and comprise the 145,980 are; Philippines (35,900), Vietnam (34,870), China (33,190), South Korea (22,620) and Cambodia (19,400). Many of the Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants are refugees who were granted political asylum to enter the United States. It is hypocritical for the government that made their escape from the intolerable conditions in their countries of origin, offered them hope and opportunities to improve the quality of their lives, to move towards withdrawing some of the life sustaining opportunities.

The attack is unconscionable, amoral and genocidal. We intend to educate Asian, Pacific Islanders and others who support the efforts to maintain SSI benefits for immigrants, and encourage them to exercise their rights of free speech, assembly and the electoral process.

We bring this issue to you as a matter of conscience, basic human need and a call for political leadership on behalf of Asian, Pacific Islander and all other elderly, disabled and blind who will be categorically denied access to SSI benefits, if the welfare reform measures that are proposed become law.

We want to know if we can count on your support and how you will validate your support.

Sincerely,


Don Watanabe
Executive Director

Document Tracking System

DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

INCOMING PROFILE

Date: 3/8/94

To: Carol H. Rasco

From: Leon Watanabe

Subject: National Asian Pacific
Center On Aging

ACTION

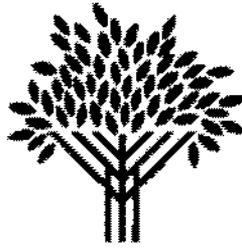
Assigned To:	Date:	Action Required:	Due Date:
Bruce Reed	3/9	Reply - CC/CHR	COB - 3/16

Signature Level:

Copies Sent To:

Comments:

This letter concerning SSI entitlements will be answered by a standard letter being drafted by the Working Group on Welfare Reform.



MILWAUKEE JEWISH FEDERATION

March 24, 1994

The Honorable Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

We applaud President Clinton's efforts to make welfare reform one of his administration's top priorities for 1994. However, it has come to our attention that in doing so, the administration is actively considering cutting benefits to legal permanent residents until they obtain US citizenship. Included among these benefits are supplemental security income, food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Medicaid. As part of a large coalition of ethnic and voluntary agencies, we are opposed to the concept of financing welfare reform by denying legal immigrants access to Federal programs and services.

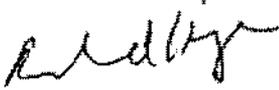
Over the last four years, 1,300 refugees from the former Soviet Union have reunited with their family members and resettled in Milwaukee. Another 300-400 are expected to arrive in each of the next two years. Over one million dollars each year is generated by the family members, individual philanthropic contributions, government agencies and private foundations in the first year to assist these newcomers in making a successful transition. The vast majority, over 75%, find employment and become self-sufficient. However, an increasingly significant percentage of these people are the elderly parents of other refugees or other low income immigrants. In many instances, these legal residents are unlikely to become US citizens because of limited language skills and cultural barriers which deter them from taking the exam for citizenship. Family members living in limited financial circumstances and facing the burden of supporting these relatives indefinitely will be placed in the untenable position of being denied the opportunity for family unification unless they choose to live in poverty. For those newcomers who are already here, restricting immigrant access to national benefit programs will increase their dependence on state, local and non-profit assistance programs. Communities such as our own, which already devote substantial resources to helping new immigrants, will be pressed to provide even more service. This kind of cost shift would unfairly impact social service agencies, many of which are already overburdened.

Page Two

While we support efforts to help people move out of poverty, we reject those proposals which reduce poverty by denying benefits to one needy group in order to assist another. Therefore, we need your assistance in alerting members of Congress and the administration to the consequences of these proposed financing mechanisms for welfare reform.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Richard H. Meyer
Executive Vice President
Milwaukee Jewish Federation



Betsy L. Green
President
Milwaukee Jewish Federation

RHM/BLG:jj

cc: . Senator Herbert Kohl
Senator Russ Feingold



Migration and Refugee Services

National Office

3211 4th Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194

Public Affairs

Tel. (202) 541-3315

Fax (202) 541-3245

Administration

Tel. (202) 541-3354

Fax (202) 541-3399

Policy/Program Development

Tel. (202) 541-3385

Fax (202) 541-3245

Pastoral Care

Tel. (202) 541-3230

Fax (202) 541-3351

Mr. Bruce N. Reed
Domestic Policy Council
Room 216
Old Executive Office Building
17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

March 2, 1994

Dear Mr. Reed:

We understand that the Administration is considering funding its welfare reform initiative by denying Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and possibly other federal benefits, to immigrants until they become U.S. citizens. This requirement would force the citizen or lawful permanent resident sponsors of immigrants to choose between shouldering a tremendous financial burden and reuniting with their close family members. While we support the Administration's desire to improve the effectiveness of the U.S. welfare system, we deplore any funding mechanism that would deny benefits to one needy community in favor of another.

Our immigration laws have traditionally embraced family reunification as their cornerstone. Extending the financial burden carried by U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who wish to reunite with and care for their blind, disabled or aged relatives is a hardship that will undermine the ability of families to support each other in time of need. Many immigrant and U.S. citizen families have already sacrificed a great deal to meet the previous deeming requirement of three years. Moreover, Congress recently increased this burden by extending the deeming requirement to five years.

The United States is enriched by the cultural and economic contributions of immigrants. Many studies, including those conducted by the federal government, show that immigrants contribute more in taxes than they use in benefits. Penalizing sponsors of family immigrants contradicts our belief in strong families and the strength that our diversity gives us.

We strongly urge you to seek alternative funding mechanisms that achieve the goal of an effective welfare system: enabling poor families to overcome poverty and provide the support and care so crucial to their loved ones. Thank you for your compassion in considering this important issue.

Sincerely,


Rev. Richard Ryscavage, SJ
Executive Director



WASHINGTON OFFICE

122 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-1681

Laura Murphy Lee
DIRECTOR

National Headquarters
132 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 944-9800

Nadine Strossen
PRESIDENT

Ira Glasser
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 4, 1994

The Honorable Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter we sent President Clinton to express our deep concern over his administration's recent suggestion that welfare reform will be financed by cutting off benefits for legal immigrants. We urge you to consider our concerns over the discriminatory nature of this suggestion. We would be pleased to discuss our concerns with you further.

Sincerely,

Deborah Lewis
Legislative Counsel

*Kathi
has this
letter*



WASHINGTON OFFICE

122 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-1681

Laura Murphy Lee
DIRECTOR

National Headquarters
132 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 944-9600

Nadine Strossen
PRESIDENT

Ira Glasser
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 3, 1994

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are deeply concerned about the recent suggestion from representatives of your administration that welfare reform will be financed by cutting off benefits for legal immigrants. We urge you to find a way to finance welfare reform which does not discriminate against people lawfully in the United States.

There is no positive reason to target immigrants for exclusion from the welfare safety net. We believe that excluding immigrants from receiving benefits violates the promise of equal protection in the Constitution.

Our laws have allowed, or even encouraged, these immigrants to come to the United States because of our proud heritage as a haven for refugees and a beacon of hope for those who have historically made great contributions to this country. Since these immigrants come to the United States in full compliance with the law, excluding them will not curb illegal immigration.

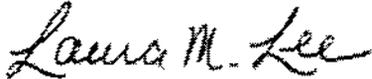
The only recent immigrant group that is allowed to participate in welfare programs are refugees. Refugees are also the only immigrant group that receives welfare benefits at a higher rate than citizens. These refugees flee war and oppression, often in haste. There are strong reasons to allow a welfare safety net for these particularly vulnerable immigrants and no rational reason for excluding them from welfare coverage. Neither is there a rational reason for targeting non-refugee immigrants for exclusion since they receive welfare coverage at a relatively low rate.

Immigrants receive welfare for the same reasons that citizens receive welfare: loss of jobs, illness, disability, divorce or other changes in life circumstances. Often, these are only temporary setbacks. If immigrants are excluded from protection by the welfare safety net, their temporary setbacks are more likely to develop into chronic marginalization.

Many of these immigrants have children who are citizens. As a result, the government cannot draw a line between immigrants and citizens without drawing a line through American families.

Immigrants have traditionally been the object of both our highest hopes and our ugliest scapegoating. We urge you to follow the former path of inclusion and not the latter path of discrimination.

Sincerely,



Laura Murphy Lee
Director



Deborah Lewis
Legislative Counsel



Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry

(A Not-for-Profit Corporation)

726 Merrick Avenue • East Meadow, New York 11554
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Lynn Singer
Executive Director

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March 14, 1994

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Tobie Newman

Lynn Singer

Murray Singer

Allyn Odell

Mr. Bruce Reed

Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy
Old Executive Office Building, Room 216
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

Please find attached copy of a letter sent to President Clinton on potential welfare reform plan. We would appreciate the Administration bypassing such an effort as it can only manifest deeper problems.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Singer, Director

LS:ls
Enclosure



Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry

(A Not for Profit Corporation)

726 Merrick Avenue * East Meadow, New York 11554
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Lynn Singer
Executive Director

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March 14, 1994

President William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

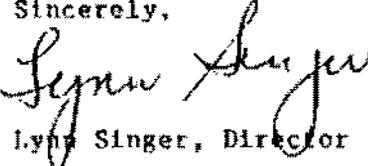
As an organization that has been deeply involved in the struggle for human rights and freedom of emigration in the former Soviet Union, I am deeply concerned that your Administration's welfare reform task-force is considering limiting eligibility for Social Security and other federal government programs to United States citizens. This potential policy undercuts the historic promise that the United States has represented to immigrants and refugees throughout the years.

The possible victims of this policy are hardworking legal immigrants, both U.S. citizens and those who have yet to obtain citizenship. Many of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union and other regions of the world who benefit from these programs legitimately need the assistance to support their households. Legal immigrants should not be forced to choose between family reunification or poverty, and should not be left without assistance in times of hardship including disability or old age.

It must be remembered that immigrants as a community use public services at a lower rate than the general population. Furthermore, studies show that immigrants pay more in taxes than they use in benefits like Social Security.

Emigrants from the former Soviet Union, like legal immigrants, generally have come to the United States seeking protection and freedom, and hope to join the American community as hardworking contributors to the nation. As legitimate as the goal of welfare reform is, it is unacceptable to seek to obtain that goal at the expense of legal immigrants.

We urge you to abandon all proposals that would discriminate against legal immigrants by discontinuing assistance to the most vulnerable members of this community.

Sincerely,

Lynn Singer, Director

LS:ls



Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry

(A Not-for-Profit Corporation)

726 Merrick Avenue • East Meadow, New York 11554
(516) 489-3482 • Fax: (516) 485-5883

Lynn Singer
Executive Director

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March 24, 1994

Mr. Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy
Old Executive Office Building - Room 216
Washington, Dc 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

As a follow-up to my letter of March 14, 1994, regarding Welfare Reform and Immigrant Rights, I understand the Cabinet has been discussing the issue and may still recommend to President Clinton that he finance his Welfare Reform Plan by barring all non-citizens from welfare programs including Social Security, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, and Food Stamps.

We urge the Administration to find a mechanism to fund its plan in a way that does not discriminate against legal immigrants.

The Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry would appreciate hearing from you concerning this very urgent matter.

Sincerely,


Lynn Singer, Director

LS:ls

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1994

Ignatius Bau
State Attorney
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the
San Francisco Bay Area
301 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. Bau:

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your thoughts with me on funding national welfare reform. It is very important that this Administration hear from groups like yours who have valuable information to contribute. I have shared your letter with staff members of the Domestic Policy Council.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Carol H. Rasco
Assistant to the President for
Domestic Policy

CHR:ram

MAR 14 REC'D

HOUSTON IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE COALITION

3520 Montrose Blvd.
Houston, TX 77006
(713) 228-5200/ FAX (713) 526-1546

FAX TRANSMISSION

DATE FAXED: 3-13-94 TIME: _____

TO: Ms. Carol Rasco

ATTN: _____

FROM: Susan Maxwell, HIRC Coordinator

REFERENCE: proposal to finance welfare reform by cutting benefits to legal immigrants

NUMBER OF PAGES TRANSMITTED: COVER + 2

COMMENTS: _____

IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS, OR IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL PAGES, PLEASE CALL (713) 228-5200.

HOUSTON IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE COALITION

3520 Montrose Blvd.

Houston, TX 77006

(713) 228-5200/ FAX (713) 526-1546

March 13, 1994

Ms. Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Dear Ms. Rasco,

I am writing on behalf of the Houston Immigration and Refugee Coalition, which is a network comprised of many area organizations representing, serving, and concerned about the immigrant and refugee community of Houston. Our Houston Coalition is part of the statewide Texas Immigration and Refugee Coalition, and includes legal and social service providers, human rights and civil rights organizations, religious orders and organizations, and various ethnic organizations.

We are very concerned that the Administration's task force on welfare reform is considering cutting the availability of SSI and possibly other essential benefits to immigrants legally in the U.S. in order to finance its welfare reform initiative. Such a proposal severely threatens the health and well being of some of the most vulnerable members of our community, especially elderly, blind, and disabled immigrant family members of U.S. citizens. We agree that significant reform of the welfare system is appropriate and overdue, in an effort to reduce real poverty in the U.S.; it is socially and morally unacceptable, however, to finance such policy change by creating and perpetuating poverty in major U.S. ethnic communities.

Some media coverage has attempted to show significant levels of so-called "SSI abuse" by immigrants, by citizens allegedly petitioning for elderly parents with the intention of turning over their support to U.S. taxpayers as soon as possible. Such reports are inaccurate and offensive; they belittle the very real struggles of those immigrant and refugee families, many among the hardworking poor, who legitimately need some assistance in supporting their households. Increases in SSI use among immigrants merely reflects increases in the overall immigrant population, and many sources of research have conclusively shown that immigrant use of public services is consistently lower than that of the general eligible U.S. population.

Family reunification is rightly the fundamental basis of our nation's immigration policy. Studies by the Department of Labor and other academic and research institutions have shown that immigrants and refugees pay far more in taxes than they use in benefits. As a result, our nation is enriched not only culturally but economically by reunification of immigrant families. Here in Houston, we believe that our community is representative of the U.S. in this sense, as our city contains a rich and vital blend of ethnic communities, and thousands of immigrants. If the Administration proposes to cut essential benefits to elderly, blind and disabled immigrants, as a direct result many families will literally be forced to choose between family reunification and poverty. This counteracts both the basic values of our nation and drastically impacts the many ethnic communities which have always made it strong.

In the larger sense, we are concerned about the increasing levels of misinformation and scapegoating regarding immigrants in our society. This has led to unfair characterizations of immigrants themselves and of their their contributions to the larger community. Even more disturbing is the xenophobic sense of distinction--a divisive and artificial "us vs. them" dichotomy between U.S. citizens and newcomers.

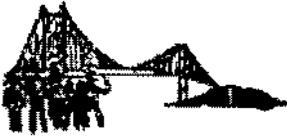
We were shocked by the first proposals to cut benefits to legal immigrants, when these were supported by Republican members of Congress in their attempt to hang issues of immigration control on welfare reform. We are alarmed that the Clinton Administration--which has taken a more constructive view on immigration issues--would contribute to a mentality and a destructive trend which threatens the legal immigrants and the U.S. citizens of our community alike. We urge that the Administration strongly reject any proposal which seeks to finance welfare reform by cutting benefits to legal immigrants.

Sincerely,



Susan Maxwell
HIRC Coordinator

MAR - 9 1994



Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights & Services

ACLU, N. CA.
 AFSC
 Agallo, Inc.
 American Immigration Lawyers Assn.
 Asian Immigrant Women Advocates
 Asian Law Caucus
 Asian Pacific AIDS Coalition
 Bar Assn. of S.F. Legislative Project
 Battered Women's Alternatives
 CA Human Development Corp.
 CARBCEA
 Catholic Charities, Maria
 Catholic Charities, Oakland
 Catholic Charities, San Francisco
 Catholic Charities, San Mateo
 Catholic Charities, Santa Clara
 Catholic Legal Immigration Network
 Center for Employment Training
 Center for SE Asian Refugee Aid,
 Center American Refugee Services
 Project CHONG
 Clarity Cultural Services
 CHORCA
 Chinese American Citizens Alliance
 Chinese for Alternative Action
 Chinese Progressive Association
 Community Community Center
 Comité de Padres Unidos
 Commission United Against Violence
 (CUAV)
 Commission, Education, Information
 Univ. S.F. Dept. of Public Health
 Community in Response to
 ABUSION (CURAS)
 CRECE
 CA Rural Legal Assistance Fdn.
 Daly City Filipino Organizing Proj.
 Eastern Spain Community Center
 East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
 Empleo
 Employment Law Center
 Equal Rights Advocates
 Family Violence Prevention Fund
 Filipinas in Transition
 Filippines for Affirmative Action
 Gasa Latina De Ambiente
 (GLAAM)
 Immigrant Legal Resource Center
 Inmigrantes Project
 Instituto Familiar de la Raza
 International Institute, EB
 International Institute, SF
 Jewish Vocational Institute
 Labor Exotic Program, CCEP
 La Casa de las Madres
 La Raza Centro Legal
 La Raza Information Center
 Legal Aid Society of San Mateo
 County
 LIAAC Center 2055
 Latina Services of N. CA
 MALDEP
 Multicultural Ed., Trng., & Advocacy
 (MECTA)
 Mission Adult Day Treatment Cn.
 Mission Housing Development Corp.
 Mission Neighborhood Youth Center
 Monterey County Sanctuary
 Mutual Assistance Assn. Council
 National Forum
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 NLD Immigration Committee
 Options For Women Over 40
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 PLAN Outreach Project
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 Services
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 SFINI Local 790
 SF AIDS Foundation
 SF Lawyers Committee for
 Urban Affairs
 SF Women's Building
 United Methodist Church of CANEY
 United Way Information & Referral
 USF Pulviner Ayubhai Clinic
 YMCA, Leaveny School
 Women's Initiative for
 Self-Employment (WISE)
 World Relief

TO: -Ms. Carol Rasco, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, fax
 202/456-2878.
 -Mr. George Stephanopolis, Senior Advisor to the President for Policy and
 Strategy, fax 202/456-2883.
 -David Ellwood, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Dept.
 of Health and Human Services, fax 202/690-7203.
 -Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Chair, Senate Finance Committee,
 fax 202/224-9293.
 -Dan Rostenkowski, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means,
 fax 202/225-4064.

FROM: LINA M. AVIDAN, SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR *LA*

DATE: MARCH 8, 1994

RE: RETAINING PUBLIC BENEFITS FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

The Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services is a network of over 90 non-profit community organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area.

We urge you not to pit one group of poor people against another by eliminating SSI and other public benefits to legal immigrants in the United States. This proposal seriously threatens the well being of the most vulnerable members of our communities, particularly the blind, disabled and elderly immigrant family members of U.S. citizens.

California would be one of the hardest hit states if these proposals are enacted. As many as 262,000 legal immigrants receive SSI in our state. This could easily cost city, county and state governments millions of dollars.

Family reunification is the cornerstone of the nation's immigration policy; studies conducted by the Department of Labor as well as a wide range of credible academic institutions are nearly unanimous in showing that immigrants pay more in taxes than they use in benefits. The U.S. citizens whose parents receive SSI are long time tax contributors. It is also important to note that immigrants underutilize public benefits.

We are deeply concerned with the unscrupulous attempt to link immigration control with welfare reform. The suggestion that immigrants are taking advantage of the system does a great disservice to hard working members of U.S. ethnic communities, and exacerbates the wave of xenophobia that is sweeping our country. We urge you to reject any proposal which would finance welfare reform by cutting benefits to immigrants.

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DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

INCOMING PROFILE

Date: 3/9/94

To: Carol H. Rasco

From: Linda M. Avielar

Subject: Coalition for Immigration
& Refugee Rights

ACTION

Assigned To:	Date:	Action Required:	Due Date:
Bruce Reed	3/11	Reply - cc CHR	COB 3/18

Signature Level:

Copies Sent To:

Comments:

This letter concerning SSI entitlements will be answered by the Working Group on Welfare Reform. A standard letter is being drafted.

American Association of Russian Jews

45 East 33rd Street, Suite B2, New York, NY 10016
Tel.: (212) 779-0383 FAX: (212) 251-0569



March 16, 1994

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Mr. Bruce Reed, Co-Chairman of Task Force
Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy
Old Executive Office Building, Room 216
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Co-Chairman:

We, emigres from the former Soviet Union (FSU), are deeply concerned that the Administration's welfare reform task-force is considering limiting eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other federal social programs to U.S. citizens. The proposed funding source of welfare reform undercuts the historic promise that the United States has represented to refugees throughout the years.

The potential victims of this policy change are refugees from the FSU and elderly permanent residents who don't have other means of income. Emigres from the FSU, who came to the United States seeking protection from bloody ethnic conflicts and threatening activities of ultra-nationalist and fascist groups in the FSU, can't leave behind their elderly parents or disabled family members. That's why 14.5% of Soviet refugees are older than 65 and depend on SSI. Their children have high level of education, but they need support, medical insurance and efficient re-training in order to put their talents in service to their new homeland. Eliminating support for non-citizens will create an army of homeless and hungry people legally admitted to enter this country.

Immigrants always make a positive contribution to the strength of our great nation. Studies show that immigrants pay much more in taxes than they use in benefits as SSI, Medicaid, Food Stamps and AFDS. According to the HHS survey of 1991, half of refugees from the FSU start working during their first year in the United States.

No question, the welfare program should be reformed. We believe the proper computerization, which will cut in half the army of welfare officers, restrictions on eligibility and a period of support, stringent control against abuse, job training and efficient employment placement should give money necessary for the reform. However, it is unfair to seek obtaining that goal at the

expense of legal immigrants and to set off non-citizens vs. citizens. Such discrimination contradicts the democratic principles of America.

We urge you to abandon the proposal that discriminates against legal immigrants by discontinuing Medicaid, SSI, and other assistance to the most vulnerable members of our community. The alternate funding mechanism for the welfare reform has to be found.

Thank you for your attention regarding this matter. We believe America will continue humanitarian tradition of welcoming those who look for refuge and hope in our great country.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Inna Arolovich".

Inna Arolovich
Vice President

ACTION FOR POST-SOVIET JEWRY, INC.

24 Crescent Street, Suite 306, Waltham, MA 02154 (617)893-2331 FAX(617)647-9474 Assisting Jews in the former Soviet Union

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Tatyana Robson

March 23, 1994

Mr. Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy
Old Executive Office Bldg., Room 216
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed,

I recently learned that the Clinton Administration's welfare reform task force is exploring ways to limit eligibility for Social Security and other federal programs to U.S. citizens. This would exclude those who legally enter the U.S. as refugees, parolees or under asylum.

Our organization forcefully urges your task force not to exclude from government benefits immigrants, refugees and those seeking asylum. Such a move would severely restrict the ability of those fleeing persecution to come to this country and would certainly create undue hardship for those least able to cope. In many instances, it would mean leaving part of a family in the former Soviet Union (FSU) because relatives here, often recent emigres themselves, could not afford to carry them financially. With the rise in grass roots anti-Semitism and chauvinism in FSU, that would be a disaster.

Our organization has worked with Jews in FSU since the early 1970's and has been deeply involved in monitoring their persecution and assisting in their struggle to emigrate. Many families we worked with have come to the U.S. with little money, but they obtained jobs, educated their children, cared for their parents and have succeeded in America beyond their wildest dreams.

However, it is not clear what these families would have done without the initial boost from the U.S. government to provide basic medical care and social services. Within one year, most of these families are tax-paying wage earners and no burden to anyone. Indeed they enrich the fabric of American life with their talents, their commitment to hard work and through their many contributions to their new country. To deny these people government support until they get on their feet is short-sighted and would ultimately hurt the U.S. as well. If the U.S. is to remain a haven for those flee-

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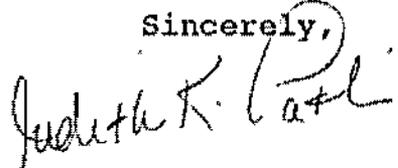
March 21, 1994

Page 2

ing persecution, it must provide basic services, or we will condemn these people to further persecution.

Again, I urge you not to limit government programs only to U.S. citizens. The consequences would be damaging to all concerned.

Sincerely,



Dr. Judith K. Patkin
Executive Director



Los Angeles Association Veterans of World War II
Who Emigrated to the United States from USSR

BOARD COMMITTEE

March 31, 1994

Messrs. David Elwood and Bruce Reed
Welfare Reform Task Force
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Messrs. Elwood and Reed,

I am writing to you on behalf of Association of Veterans and Invalids of World War II who emigrated to the U.S. from the former Soviet Union. Members of our Association have fought alongside American troops during the Second World War against common enemy - Hitler and his fascist army of thugs who have brought evil and deprivation to millions of people worldwide. After the war ended Russian veterans have had to live through even greater hell under the totalitarian communist regime. Of those who survived many emigrated to the United States, where they settled down and tasted true freedom for the very first time in their lives.

Today these people are old and frail. They are in poor health and without means for survival other than their only source of income - Supplemental Security benefits. Presently there are 680 members in our Association and we all urge you to exclude that part of the welfare reform program which denies federal assistance and social security and benefits to legal permanent residents of the U.S. who are not U.S. citizens.

Passage of the proposed package would equal to slow and horrible death sentence for many elderly people whose only life-line and source of income are their Social Security benefits and MEDICAL. It will force many out of their apartments and into the streets, as children and relatives of these brave but old and frail people will not be able to financially support them. Due to current state of economy in California many people can't either find jobs or don't have permanent work to support their families, let alone extended families. Those who work often make just enough money to support themselves and no one else.

Immigrants from the former Soviet Union came to the U.S. hoping to find protection from injustice, human rights and freedom to practice religion. They found all that in the most open and democratic country in the world - United States of America. This great country provided and continues to provide our people with means for survival in the form of Social Security benefits, medical assistance, affordable housing, and much more. We think it would be most unfair and unlike the humanitarian U.S. government and its elected officials to deprive legal permanent residents who have lived in this country for years but are not yet U.S. citizens of these privileges and rights.

We strongly urge you to delete any proposed changes in the reform program which may negatively affect or deny Social Security benefits to legal permanent residents on the grounds that they are tantamount to discrimination against considerable segment of the population in the United States of America.

Respectfully,

Naum Sapozhnikov
President of the Association



1010 South Flower Street, Suite 302
Los Angeles, California 90015-1426
(213) 748-2022 • Fax (213) 748-0679

March 27, 1994

Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) is a non-profit organization providing legal assistance and civil rights support for low-income people, especially those of Asian or Pacific Islander origin. The APALC has recently participated in several important civil rights matters. Therefore, we feel compelled to speak out against the Clinton administration welfare reform package. The package would deny Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to a significant number of elderly Asian Pacific American immigrants. Stripping them of these benefits would deprive them of their only source of income.

Most of the elderly immigrants in concern have not worked in the United States long enough to receive social security. Thus, Supplemental Security Income is their only means of support. If Congress were to pass this package, the only possible solution for many immigrants would be to pass the naturalization exam. The exam, however, is almost impossible to pass for these people due to the harsh English language requirements. Failing the naturalization test will be a major setback to these individuals. Thousands of elderly immigrants will be unable to pay for basic necessities such as rent, food, medicine and clothes.

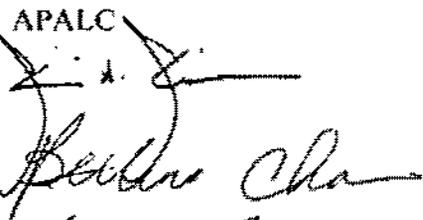
Mark Vongseuth is one person who would be affected if the Clinton Administration denied SSI benefits to non-citizens. Mark and his wife came to the United States from Laos in 1980. They are both in their mid 70's. Since the Vongseuth's are too old to work, their only means of income is derived from SSI benefits. Struggling every month to survive, the SSI benefits barely cover living expenses. Without the SSI benefits, Mr. Vongseuth believes "you will see within a month how many elderly will be killed or dead. Because what we depend on is this [SSI benefits] - there would

be no food, no place to live". The Vongseuth's know very little English and have not lived in the United States long enough to take the naturalization exam in their own language. Unfortunately they are unable to become American citizens due to the harsh English language requirements needed for naturalization.

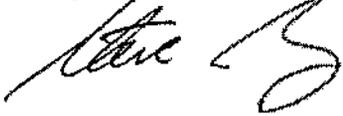
When considering the welfare reform package, please keep in mind what will happen to people like Mark Vongseuth. His situation is not unique in the APA community. As Mr. Vongseuth states, " With no SSI, the most important needs for our lives would be lost." The APA community is willing to bear our fair share of the cuts in social services. We will not, however, allow our entire community to bear this disproportionate burden.

Sincerely,

APALC



Peter Chan



Steve B



1010 South Flower Street, Suite 302
Los Angeles, California 90015-1428
(213) 748-2022 • Fax (213) 748-0679

March 27, 1994

Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) is a non-profit organization providing legal assistance and civil rights support for low-income people, especially those of Asian or Pacific Islander origin. The Legal Center has recently participated in several important civil rights matters. Therefore, we feel compelled to speak out against the Clinton administration's welfare reform package.

The package would deny Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to a significant number of elderly Asian Pacific American citizens. Denying SSI benefits would deprive these individuals of their only source of income, and jeopardize their independent status. As a result, many elderly citizens would be forced to rely on already struggling family members for support.

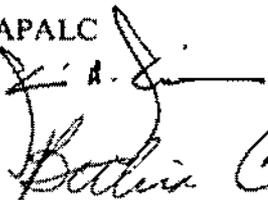
Almost all of the elderly immigrants dependent on SSI benefits lack citizenship due to the harsh English language requirements needed for naturalization. Those who have not lived in the U.S. long enough to take the exam in their native language (20 years), are helpless during the naturalization process. In most cases, elderly immigrants will not pass the exam. Under the reform package, this would leave these individuals ineligible for virtually any program funded with federal money.

Esther Kwan is one of many people who will suffer if this portion of the package is passed. Esther came with her husband to the United States in 1978. After her husband passed away, she lived on Social Security. Currently, however, her sole source of income comes from SSI benefits. The only reason she is receiving these SSI benefits is due to her medical ailments. The SSI benefits

barely let her pay for expenses such as, medical (not covered by Medicare), rent, food and clothes. Ms. Kwan depends on the SSI benefits because her daughter, who holds two jobs, cannot even support her own family.

Esther Kwan among others begs the Clinton Administration to not pass this portion of the welfare reform package. As she states, "without the support of SSI, I will become homeless." At the minimum, denying benefits to those who cannot vote or otherwise participate in the political process seems undemocratic. The Asian Pacific Islander community will bear our fair share of the inevitable cuts in social services. We will not, however, allow our community to bear a disproportionate burden.

Sincerely,

APALC






1010 South Flower Street, Suite 302
Los Angeles, California 90015-1428
(213) 748-2022 • Fax (213) 748-0679

March 25, 1994

Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center is a non profit, civil rights organization designed to protect the individual liberties of all.

We are concerned about the proposed welfare reform package which would deny Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for people who have yet to attain citizenship.

Denial of benefits to Asians and Pacific Islanders (APA) who are over 65 and are non-citizens would mean that a significant percentage of the APA community would not be able to maintain their ability to pay for housing, food, clothing, and minimal subsistence requirements. According to the 1990 Census, 450,000 or 7.3% of the APA community is 65 or over. 8.4% of APA elderly live below the federal poverty guidelines. In Los Angeles County alone there are approximately 72,000 APAs who are 65 or older and comprise over 10% of the community. In many instances, SSI is their sole source of support. While many APA elderly are parents of immigrant children who are able to support them for the first five years of their residency, these elderly parents switch over to SSI just as soon as they become eligible because their children are rarely able to care for their parents for the remainder of their lives. The working poor are forced to make a decision between reuniting with their parents and never being able to get out of poverty.

A recent letter from a Korean woman illustrates this point. Soo-Im Yang is an 82 year old Korean woman who immigrated here with her husband in 1987. She was sponsored by her daughter to come to the United States to reunite the family. Ms. Yang

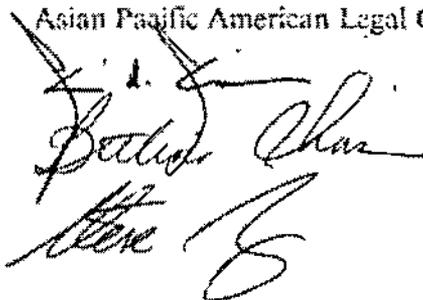
neither speaks nor writes English. In fact, she does not even write Korean. When asked why she could not learn English, she says "the thought of learning a new language when I do not even know my own seems impossible." Currently, Ms. Yang lives alone (her husband died a few years back) at the Angelus Plaza, a government subsidized housing for low-income seniors. She receives SSI assistance of about \$603 per month. Her daughter is struggling just to have food on her own table and raise her two children, thus unable to support Ms. Yang. Ms. Yang is "frightened to death" about the proposed welfare reform package and is worried about her ability to survive if the reform package takes her SSI benefits away.

Those who believe that people like Ms. Yang should just become citizens (and therefore qualify for the SSI benefits), need to look at the English language requirements for naturalization. In most cases, learning the necessary English skills to pass the naturalization test would be very difficult, if not impossible. Most elderly immigrants arrive to the United States with English skills well below the level necessary to pass the naturalization test. A lack of low-cost or free English-as-a-Second language classes, coupled with the fact that learning a new language gets progressively more difficult as we age, place considerable barriers if they were to learn the necessary English skills. Although a permanent resident may take the naturalization examination in their own language, many elderly immigrants in need of SSI aid do not qualify because they have not been here for the requisite 20 years.

We demand that this portion of the welfare reform package be eliminated. At the minimum, denying benefits to those who cannot vote or otherwise participate in the political process is undemocratic. The APA community is not adverse to bearing our share of the inevitable cuts which must be made in the area of social services. However, we will not allow our community to bear a disproportionate burden.

Sincerely,

Asian Pacific American Legal Center



Peter Chan

Central Partnership Office
300 West Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90012



PH 213-625-7705

FX 213-625-7625

April 5, 1994

Asian American Drug
Abuse Program

Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 90500

Asian Pacific Family
Center

Dear Mr. Reed:

Asian Youth Center

The East/West Community Partnership (E/WCP), a project federally funded through the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the Department of Health and Human Services, is aimed at strengthening our target community's ability to address factors contributing to alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems. We have targeted the "New Asian Corridor" to conduct needs assessments and improve community-based services and programs.

Chinatown Service
Center

We are concerned about the proposed welfare reform package which would deny Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for people who have yet to attain citizenship. Denial of benefits to Asians and Pacific Islanders (APA) who are over 65 and are non-citizens would mean that a significant percentage of the APA community would not be able to maintain their independent living because SSI is their sole source of support. To remove this safety network for them would result in the inability to pay for housing, food, clothing, and minimal subsistence requirements.

Indochinese Youth
Center

Korean Youth and
Community Center

Those who believe that "these people" should just become citizens (and therefore qualify for the SSI benefits), need to look at the English language requirements for naturalization. Most of the elderly cannot read and write at the 5th grade level. In order for a permanent resident to take the naturalization examination in their own language, they need to be here for 20 years.

Pacific Asian Alcohol
Program

Almost all of the immigrant elderly are not citizens because of the English language requirement. They are on SSI as their sole source of support. Those who worked the requisite number of years already get SSA (regular social security), but most of the elderly have not been here that long.

Little Tokyo Service
Center

We demand that this portion of the welfare reform package be eliminated. At the minimum, denying benefits to those who cannot vote or otherwise participate in the political process is undemocratic. The APA community is not adverse to bearing our share of the inevitable cuts which must be made in the area of social services. However, we will not allow our community to bear a disproportionate burden.

Pacific Asian Consortium
on Employment

Sincerely,

Search to Involve
Filipino Americans

Allison J. Tom
Project Director

A project of the Asian
American Drug
Abuse Program

CASE

Coalition of Agencies Serving the Elderly

April 7, 1994

Mr. Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

The Coalition of Agencies Serving the Elderly (CASE) is opposed to the elimination of non-citizens from the Older Americans Act programs, as proposed in HR 3500 and the elimination of non-citizens from the Supplemental Security Income program as proposed in HR 3500 and recommended by President Clinton's Welfare Reform Task Force.

CASE's members include 60 agencies serving the elderly in San Francisco. Our clients are Chinese, Hispanics, Russians, Koreans, Chinese-Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Filipinos, African-Americans and Caucasians. While the majority are citizens, many are lawfully admitted permanent residents who pay taxes, contribute to their communities and to our economy. Most of these permanent legal residents would like to become citizens, but cannot learn enough English to pass the citizenship test. (English classes in San Francisco Community College programs have waiting lists, but with budget cuts elderly students are not a priority.)

Many of our agencies contract to provide Older Americans Act programs under Title III, including nutrition and meals programs and supportive services. These programs are often lifelines for seniors, helping them stretch limited incomes, providing valuable nutrition and helping them continue to live independently. We are horrified to see Older Americans Act programs on the list of "Programs Which Aliens are Ineligible" in HR 3500.

Many of our clients are legal residents and SSI recipients. They are people with no financial resources who are not able to work because of their

Mailing Address: 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 750, San Francisco, California 94102

Telephone: (415) 626-1033

President: David Newcomer, Executive Director
San Francisco Senior Center
890 Beach Street, San Francisco, CA 94109
Tel: 415-775-1866 Fax: 415-775-4020

age, health, skills and/or inability to speak English. They desperately need these benefits in order to survive in minimal dignity and comfort.

We are deeply concerned that non-citizens elders will be ineligible for Medicaid (except for emergencies), Community Health Centers, the food stamp program, public housing, section 8 housing, low-income energy assistance and legal services. All of these exclusions increase the chances that these elders will live in dire poverty. And if these exclusions result in the elder becoming homeless, they are excluded from food and shelter grant programs of the McKinney Homeless program.

Though our expertise is in assisting the elderly, we are also concerned about the impact of these exclusions on younger Americans - children, families, young adults, the unemployed.

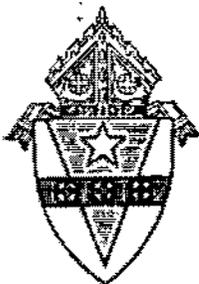
We urge you to oppose HR 3500. It is very short-sighted legislation which simply feeds the anti-immigrant attitudes sweeping our country. This is legislation that will cause severe problems for communities with large legal immigrant populations such as San Francisco. We urge you to oppose any provisions in the Welfare Reform Task Force's proposal which exclude non-citizens from benefits. It is inhuman to force the most vulnerable of our legal residents further into poverty and sickness.

Sincerely,



David Newcomer
CASE President

cc. Fernando Torres-Gil



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299 • (215) 587-5655

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RELATIONS

April 15, 1994

Mr. Bruce N. Reed
Deputy Assistant to the
President for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.E., Room 2/MW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

In their statement, *Immigrants and Refugees in the United States Today: A Call to Solidarity*, the Bishops' Committee on Migration reaffirmed that "any abdication of our tradition of welcoming those in need who have so much to contribute only reinforces negative sentiment and rejectionist actions here in our country and in other nations." Those coming to the United States do so primarily to escape persecution or to reunite with family members. Most of them become productive members of society who add their culture, labor, and personal and financial resources to the success of our nation. Therefore, immigrants and refugees should not be viewed as a burden for our nation but as a valuable resource.

The proposal to "deem" the assets of sponsors as those of the permanent residents appear to us to be a singularly unjust measure and unworthy of our country. To deny access to basic services -- food, medical care, assistance to the elderly, blind and disabled, and assistance to needy children -- should not be part of the policies of a country as great as ours.

We urge you to reject this proposed policy and instead work to ensure that immigrants and refugees be included in programs which respond to basic human needs.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Sister Marion Dillon
Sister Marion Dillon, M.S.B.T.
Director



April 12, 1994

Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 90500

Dear Mr. Reed:

As the Executive Director of the largest community based organization for Korean Americans, I am writing to protest the proposed welfare reform package which would deny Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for people who have yet to attain citizenship. Working daily with a largely immigrant population, the Korean Youth & Community Center attempts to understand the economical and emotional obstacles specific to the group and assist multiple aspects of their daily lives.

Denial of benefits to Asia and Pacific Islanders (API) who are over 65 and are non citizens would mean that a significant percentage of the API community would not be able to maintain their independent living because SSI is their sole source of support. To remove this safety network for them would result in the inability to pay for housing, food clothing, and minimal subsistence requirements.

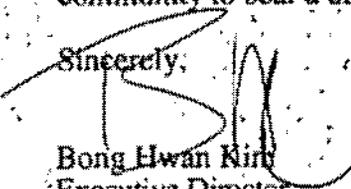
Those who believe that "these people" should just become citizens (and therefore qualify for the SSI benefits), need to look at the English language requirements for naturalization. Most of the elderly cannot read and write at the 5th grade level. In order for a permanent resident to take the naturalization examination in their own language, they need to be here for 20 years.

Almost all of the immigrant elderly are not citizens because of the English language requirement. Almost all of the immigrant elderly are on SSI as their sole source of support. Those who worked the requisite number of years already get CA (regular social security), but most of the elderly have not been here that long.

On a more human level, it would affect individuals like Esther Kwan, an elder whose limited English skills forces her to rely on SSI for sole support after her husband's recent death.

We demand that this portion of the welfare reform package be eliminated. At the minimum, denying benefits to those who cannot vote or otherwise participate in the political process is undemocratic. The APA community is not adverse to bearing our share of the inevitable cuts which must be made in the area of social services. However, we will not allow our community to bear a disproportionate burden.

Sincerely,



Bong Hwan Kim
Executive Director
Korean Youth & Community Center

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF DOMESTIC POLICY

CAROL H. RASCO

Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

To: Reed

Draft response for POTUS
and forward to CHR by: _____

Draft response for CHR by: _____

Please reply directly to the writer
copy to CHR by: _____

Please advise by: _____

Let's discuss: _____

For your information: _____

Reply using form code: _____

File: _____

Send copy to (original to CHR): _____

Schedule ? : Accept Pending Regret

Designee to attend: _____

Remarks: _____

Martin Pittioni
1220 Monument Blvd #B-14
Concord, CA 94520

April 11, 1994

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I am writing to you as a tax-paying immigrant and a supporter of your administration. I came to this country in 1984 initially for purposes of completing an undergraduate degree. However, I fell in love with this country, married my college sweetheart, and stayed.

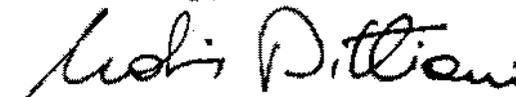
Mr. President, I could tell you that since I am on the verge of becoming a citizen, that I do not really care about the various proposals from Republicans, Democrats and your administration to restrict some or all forms of public assistance to non-citizens. However, I must tell you that I feel deeply concerned about these proposals.

During your campaign, I was elated that you vowed to practice the politics of inclusion, and chastised the Republicans for their politics of exclusion. It seems, however, that the principle of inclusion is threatened, to my dismay, by your own administration.

I realize that your proposal to cut non-citizen eligibility for SSI, AFDC, food-stamps and Medicaid to finance welfare reform is "moderate" compared to other shockingly extreme proposals pending before Congress. However, I strongly oppose on principle any form of benefits discrimination against immigrants. I pay just as much in taxes as my citizen neighbors, and therefore I feel entitled to the same amount of protection as they are. I oppose any attempt to create a class of "excluded" non-citizens, be it by your administration or Congress.

Mr. President, please do not proceed further down this divisive road. To me, your campaign was about an America for all of us, not for some of us. I deeply respect your enormous work and progress in your domestic policy agenda and hope that you will stay the course promised in your campaign.

Sincerely,


Martin Pittioni

✓ cc: Carol Rasco

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

April 15, 1994



The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

Washington
Office

On behalf of the religious organizations we serve, we are writing to express our views on the late February draft prepared by the Administration's Working Group on Welfare Reform. We are grateful to you for appointing a group of experienced and dedicated public servants to make recommendations on this issue, which is so crucial to millions of people in this nation. We also appreciate the opportunities we have had to meet with members of the Working Group to share views and concerns in candid discussions.

We share your belief that the welfare system is badly in need of reform; however, we believe that the only way to end welfare is to end poverty. As long as there is a grossly inequitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, there will be individuals and families who cannot support themselves, even with full-time jobs. The primary purpose of welfare reform should be to create a system that will allow those who cannot or should not work outside the home to live in dignity and decency, while also helping those who can work to become fully self-supporting.

We are concerned that the proposals contained in the issue paper lack specificity on the issue of financing welfare reform. In several meetings with Administration officials, indications have been made that cutting services to legal residents in the U.S. is under Administration consideration. We oppose paying for welfare reform by shifting funds to the welfare program from programs serving non-citizens or other poor and needy people. We oppose cutting programs that serve legal residents in the U.S., especially since these people and their U.S. citizen family members contribute to the economy and pay taxes.

Our comments fall into four general categories which are spelled out in detail in the attached document. The categories are:

1. **Employment:** We believe that the goal of genuine welfare reform can only be achieved through widespread job creation, with jobs that pay enough to support a family and that have the prospect of stable, long-term employment.
2. **Flexibility:** Each family's situation is different, and, to be successful at helping people become self-supporting, a welfare system will have to be flexible enough to allow them to meet their family needs.
3. **Family Support:** For the religious community the well-being of families and their children is of paramount importance. We believe that helping parents establish and maintain stable families in which to nurture their children should be a primary goal of welfare reform. We are convinced that welfare reform cannot be accomplished in the absence of health care reform.

4. The Welfare System: The current welfare system has, for many people, provided a "last resort" support system in times of crisis, and a helping hand out of poverty. For many others, it has been demeaning and humiliating. We believe that a reformed system must treat all participants humanely and that there must be enough well-trained workers to operate an effective case management system.

We are grateful for your commitment to improving the lives of people on welfare, and we look forward to engaging in this effort with you.

Sincerely yours,

American Ethical Union - Washington Ethical Action Office
Herbert Blinder, Director
6214 Crathie Ln.
Bethesda, MD 20816

Church of the Brethren - Washington Office
Tim McElwee, Director
110 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 201
Washington, DC 20002

Church Women United - Washington Office
Ms. Nancy Chupp, Director
110 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 108
Washington, DC 20002

Columban Fathers Justice and Peace Office
Rev. Mark Mengel, Director
P.O. Box 29151
Washington, DC 20017

Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
Rabbi David Saperstein, Co-Director
2027 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036

Interfaith IMPACT for Justice and Peace
Rev. James Bell, Director
110 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 509
Washington, DC 20002

Jesuit Conference - Office of Social Ministries
Peter J. Klink, S.J., Secretary for Social Ministries
1424 - 16th Street, NW - Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
John Fredriksson, Washington Representative
122 C Street, NW - Suite 300
Washington, DC 20001

Lutheran Office of Governmental Affairs -
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Dr. Kay S. Dowhower, Director
122 C Street, NW - Suite 300
Washington, DC 20001

Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office
Father Thomas O'Brien M.M., Director
P.O. Box 29132
Washington, DC 20017

National Council of Churches
James A. Hamilton, Deputy General Secretary
110 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 108
Washington, DC 20002

NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Kathy Thornton R.S.M., National Coordinator
806 Rhode Island Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20018

Presbyterian Church (USA) - Washington Office
Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director
110 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 104
Washington, DC 20002

Synagogue Council of America
Rabbi Irwin M. Blank, Washington Representative
4101 Cathedral Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016

United Church of Christ - Office for Church in Society
Rev. Dr. Jay Lintner, Director, Washington Office
110 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 2
Washington, DC 20002

United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Jane Hull Harvey, Assistant General Secretary
Ministry for God's Human Community
100 Maryland Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20002

United Methodist Church - Women's Division
Anna Rhee, Executive Secretary for Public Policy
100 Maryland Ave., NE - Suite 501
Washington, DC 20002

INTERRELIGIOUS CRITIQUE OF WELFARE REFORM PROPOSAL - April 1994

1. **Employment:** We believe that the goal of genuine welfare reform can only be achieved through widespread job creation, with jobs that pay enough to support a family and that have the prospect of stable, long-term employment.

- We are concerned about the use of the Job Training and Partnership Act as a vehicle for job creation. Although outcomes-based and performance-based evaluation is good, in some cases JPTA has in the past selected only the persons with the greatest potential in order to appear successful, while those needing the most training and support were left out. A mechanism to prevent this practice needs to be created.
- Under JTPA, women tend to be placed in traditional "female" employment. They should have the opportunity to train for and work in positions that are not traditionally associated with women. All people working in this program should receive wages that place them above the poverty line.
- We encourage support for persons seeking higher and non traditional education and training through the JOBS program, since these experiences will help them to stay off welfare.
- We are concerned about what happens to the requirement to work placed on the clients/recipients when the funding cap is reached for the JOBS program, or if states run out of funds and cannot meet the match. Would recipients continue to receive benefits, or be dropped from the program?
- We believe that part-time work should be encouraged for those for whom it is appropriate, because it provides valuable experience for people with few skills and those who have not been employed before.
- We support a phase in and the concept of a JOBS-Prep program.
- We would prefer that the resources of the WORK program be used to create long-term jobs rather than temporary jobs. We are concerned about the potential time limits for WORK, especially in areas of high unemployment, such as some counties of West Virginia and on most Indian reservations. We are pleased to see that persons reaching their limit would have the option to earn back time; however, this may not be adequate.
- We feel that the goal of any job program should be to enable families to escape poverty. Thus, the proposal to deny the earned income tax credit to persons participating in WORK seems particularly unfair in areas of high unemployment. We suggest that this proposal, if adopted at all, be waived in such areas.
- We believe that participants in WORK should not work off their benefits, but receive wages, which provide a greater sense of dignity. Sick leave must be provided. Deduction in wages should be made only with just cause, and protections are needed for persons who may be harassed on the job.
- We support providing people participating in the WORK program with the same protections in their jobs as others employed at their work site. Differences in the way workers are treated would isolate welfare recipients and further demean them.

- We oppose using the value of food stamps to subsidize the WORK program, which would be particularly onerous in low-benefit states. The status of WORK participants with regard to food stamps is unclear. Would they still be able to receive food stamps? If the proposal to subsidize WORK from the Food Stamp Program were adopted, a person in the WORK program would be less well off than his or her non-welfare colleague doing the same job for the same pay, because the non-welfare person could receive food stamps. Like-wise, an AFDC recipient not in WORK could receive food stamps. Benefits received by a person in the WORK program should not be of less value than those received by a similarly situated person on welfare but not in WORK. Hunger is increasing rapidly in this country. We would not want the welfare system to fuel that increase, and we feel the proposal to subsidize WORK with food stamp funds could have that effect.
- We do not perceive that there is any incentive for employers to hire WORK participants for the permanent workforce after they leave the WORK program. Utilizing the WORK program, businesses could have the government subsidize their labor force, simply accepting repeated WORK placements without hiring anyone for the long term.

2. Flexibility: Each family's situation is different, and, to be successful at helping people become self-supporting, a welfare system will have to be flexible enough to allow them to meet their family needs.

- We believe that part-time work should be considered sufficient to meet the work requirement if there are family needs that justify less than full-time work or if jobs are difficult to find in the area.
- We are concerned about the statement that those unable to work because of disability are expected to do "something," or make some sort of contribution. It is unclear to us what would count and who would decide. Would a mother on welfare caring for her son who needs constant care because he is on a respirator be counted as doing "something," even though she does it in her own home?
- We are concerned about the consequences of refusing a job. A person with skills who is offered a minimum wage job which demands no skills and which does not lead to long term employment or a decent wage should not be forced to take such a job. We are aware of some programs which work well because individuals are not mandated to take the first job that comes along, but are allowed to continue job search to find a job with a future that will support a family. Rather than sanctioning a person for refusing a specified number of jobs, we suggest setting a time limit within which a job must be found. This would give the individual flexibility to choose the most appropriate among options.
- We feel that transitional support may need to be continued long after employment. Incomes increase slowly in low-skill jobs, which often do not provide benefits. People working in this type of employment will probably need child care and medical benefits for an extensive period of time.
- We support Individual Economic Development. This concept is particularly important for persons living in high unemployment areas. Raising asset limits for eligibility for cash benefits is an important addition and implementing an Individual Development Account and providing access to micro loan funds are also movement in a positive direction.

- We know there will be some states that have a disproportionate number of persons who would qualify for the JOBS-Prep program. Limiting the percentage of caseload that states could place in JOBS-Prep to a national, fixed percentage would be unfair. The ratio of the numbers of persons qualifying to the total population of each state should be considered.

3. Family Support: For the religious community the well-being of families and their children is of paramount importance. We believe that helping parents establish and maintain stable families in which to nurture their children should be a primary goal of welfare reform. We are convinced that welfare reform cannot be accomplished in the absence of health care reform.

- We support health care reform that provides universal coverage and comprehensive benefits, and we believe that no family's access to health care should be jeopardized by leaving welfare. Passage and implementation of health care reform legislation is essential to welfare reform.
- We support the provision to end bias against two-parent families.
- We affirm that both parents have responsibility for their children and agree that change in child support enforcement law is necessary. However, we find that the paternity establishment provisions could be troublesome. We are concerned about what would constitute good cause exceptions for not establishing paternity, how that decision would be made and by whom, and what would happen if the father cannot be identified. We do not agree that benefits should be denied if paternity is not established, since this would punish children who have no voice in the matter.
- We support the child support assurance demonstrations programs.
- We support an effort to prevent teen pregnancy and oppose child exclusion/family caps.
- We believe that persons unable to work for reasons of physical or mental disability, whether they are disabled themselves or care for someone who is disabled, should receive support from a program such as SSI.
- We believe that the well-being of children requires that they have adequate time to be nurtured by their parents. Single parents who have pre-school children or children who are in school only part of the day should not be required to work full time in order to receive benefits. They should be allowed to work part-time and receive supplementary benefits.
- We oppose removing people from the system after a certain length of time in WORK. Allowing the system to give up on people and terminate their benefits after a specified time will not cause them to disappear. It will simply shift the burden of their care to another sector - perhaps over-burdened non-profit agencies or programs serving the homeless. If supportive services are provided adequately and if jobs are available, people will become employed. Poor parents with children should not bear the burden of high unemployment and inadequate services.

- We support the extension of the JOBS program to allow an individual to complete education or training. However, we are concerned about the expectation that a single parent caring for children and going to school must also work.
- We oppose reducing benefits for families in which parents fail to participate in JOBS, because the result would hurt children. There is no way to assure that sanctions punish only the parents, short of removing the children from the home.
- We are concerned about the availability of child care for minor parents who wish to return to school. Child care must be guaranteed for children whose parents are required to be away from home. Presently, funds for child care often run out in mid year making school and other training options impossible. For reforms to be effective, child care is a must. The welfare reform program should generate the needed number of slots and also ensure quality. Child care slots must not be taken from other working poor people to serve those who are on welfare. At the same time child care must be guaranteed if program requirements are to be met.
- We agree that investments should be made in child care quality and supply, and we support enabling welfare recipients to become child care providers and thus operators of small businesses. However, wage supplementation would be essential for child care workers because wages paid to them now are very low and normally cannot support a family.
- We support the proposed education and training opportunities for non-custodial parents, but custodial parents should be given priority.
- We support mentoring, case management and the exception from the requirement that minor parents live with their parents for those who are married or who are in danger in their parents' home.

4. The Welfare System: The current welfare system has, for many people, provided a "last resort" support system in times of crisis, and a helping hand out of poverty. For many others, it has been demeaning and humiliating. We believe that a reformed system must treat all participants humanely and that there must be enough well-trained workers to operate an effective case management system.

- We welcome the statement of intent to change the "culture of the welfare offices". Criticism often heard from clients/recipients relates to the lack of dignity and support given them as persons. We hope that this will change, and look forward to seeing proposals for how this would happen.
- We believe a strong case management approach that provides personal and consistent support is essential for all participants. Although there is a strong case management component for minor parents, little is said about case management services for other clients/recipients.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Kay Bengston, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (202)783-7507, or, Mary Anderson Cooper, National Council of Churches (202)544-2350.

Indo American Seniors
C/O Northside Community Center
488 North Seventh Street
San Jose CA95113

March 28, 1994

The Honorable Robert T. Matsui
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Matsui,

We, the undersigned are Indo American senior citizens residing in San Jose, California.

Do not support the elimination of government benefits for legal immigrants, such as SSI, Medicaid, AFDC or food stamps. Some of us were struggling to survive so we came to the United States to have a better life than we had in India. We love this country, but some of us came here late in life, so we had trouble learning enough English to pass a citizenship test. Some of us can not read or write or have disabilities that make it impossible for us to become naturalized. There is a great unmet need in California for ESL classes. We are struggling financially now and don't have enough money for classes. If you take away our benefits, some of us will become homeless.

Although we continue to face discrimination in employment, Indo American immigrants have worked hard and created jobs, obeyed the law, and like all immigrants, made many contributions to American society and helped to make America strong.

The internment of Japanese Americans happened in an environment of racist hysteria, the same hysteria which is now fueling the wild fire of anti-immigrant legislation. Immigrants do not drain America's resources -- we are America's greatest resource. We keep the American dream alive. Our children make it a reality.

Sincerely,

Manjiv (Sohan S. Sandhu)

Somnath Kapoor

Gresham Rucka

Kammar Kumbho

Ramlal Daud

Kawaljeet

Ancora S. Grewal,
Mehnga Pehal

HAZARA SINGH
DILJIT KAUR BUDWAL

AJIT SINGH SIDHU

M. M. Josephy
N SINGH

Dipanshu Kaur
DSMAND

Devi Singh Basra
ASLEHIL

M. Saad Ali

mitamban
Nihal Duhra
SO. GINI

Baldev Singh Mehra
Nehru Singh

Shriya

Ayaz Singh Haudra
Jagan Kaur Haudra
Gurpreet Singh Chahal

GURDIAL S. SANDHU
MAHARAJA

CHIAN KUR

PARKASH Kaur

Rasulal

Chanda 567

Harbhajan Singh Dhad

Hardev Singh Dhad

Jamant Singh Dhad

Darshan S. Hothi

Roop Singh Dhad

Bitam Singh

Harbans Singh

Dardram Singh

Hardev Singh Dhad

~~Hardev Singh~~

~~Hardev Singh~~

~~Hardev Singh~~

Mahant Singh Dhad

Sonehant

Hardev Singh Dhad

K.K. Lamba

cc:

Bruce Reed

Assistant to the President

White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.

Washington, D.C. 90500

David T. Ellwood

Asst. Secretary

Planning and Evaluation

HHS

200 Independence Ave. S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20201

Mary Jo Bane

Asst. Secretary

Administration for Children & Families

HHS

200 Independence Ave. S.W.

Washington, D.C. 90201

APR 14 1994

ARABIC TRANSLATION CENTER

مركز الترجمة العربية

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World Trade Center, Suite 250-5

San Francisco, CA 94111

Tel. (415) 421-3448 FAX (415) 421-3244

April 13, 1994

Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Rasco,

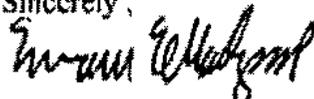
This is to express my urgent and emphatic opposition to the Clinton Administration's consideration of a proposal to disqualify permanent residents, refugees and other persons lawfully residing in the United States from SSI, AFDC, food stamps and Medicaid as a mechanism for funding national welfare reform. I understand that the President has met with the Cabinet to finalize the recommendations for the Administration's welfare reform proposal. I urge you to vigorously oppose this unconscionable proposal.

It is unacceptable to take away benefits from the most vulnerable in our society: the poor, the aged, the disabled. Welfare reform must not be financed by imposing greater burdens on one segment of the poor and needy. Each person who will lose benefits under this proposal will either have paid taxes themselves, or had family members who have contributed federal taxes for their support. The proposal also will undermine the core policy of our immigration laws, which is the reunification of families. Even the Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner, Doris Meissner, has called the proposal "inappropriate."

Finally, such a proposal fuels the anti-immigrant hysteria and immigrant scapegoating sweeping the country, by implying that the receipt of any welfare benefits by any immigrant, legal or illegal, is a problem. If the Clinton's Administration adopts this proposal, it will have aligned itself with the extremist members of Congress who have introduced H.R. 3500 and other proposals to deny public benefits to immigrants.

I recognize the welfare reform is an ambitious and difficult undertaking, but I urge that alternative financing mechanisms be identified that will not have such divisive and devastating consequences.

Sincerely,



Essam Elmahgoob
(Director)

APR 11 REC'D

Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights & Services

A VOICE FOR IMMIGRANTS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

NIRRS OFFICERS

Richard Konda, Chairman
Richard Hobbs, President
Teresa Magana, Secretary
Jorge Gonzalez, Treasurer

April 11, 1994

Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President

NIRRS MEMBERS

Agrib, Inc.
Amalgamated Transit Union #265
Asian Law Alliance
Catholic Charities Immigration Program
Center for Employment Training
Cleaning Up Silicon Valley
Executive Board
Comite Eleccion Para Refugiados
Confederacion (CERCA)
Estate Project
Santa Clara University
Family Health Services
Gardner Children's Center
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Irish Task Force
Jewish Federation of Greater San Jose
Korean Resource Center Inc.
Labor Council for Latin American
Advancement
Latino Peace Officers Association
Legal Advocates for Children & Youth
Mexican American Community Services
Agency (MACSA)
Office Information Systems
Public Interest Law Firm
Raza III
Santa Clara County
Office of Human Relations
Service Employees Int'l Union #1877
Sisters of Notre Dame
South Bay NOW
St. Andrew Armenian Church
Suzanne's Community Services

Dear Ms. Rasco,

We are aware that the Administration is currently considering cutting the availability of SSI, AFDC, food stamps and medicaid to immigrants legally in the United States in order to finance its welfare reform initiatives. We strongly oppose this proposal.

- Do not draw lines between lawful immigrants and citizens.
- The proposal will keep families apart.
- It is not an answer to ask the elderly to naturalize.

Genuine welfare reform which will reduce poverty in the United States should not be funded by creating and exacerbating poverty in major U.S. ethnic communities.

The Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services (NIRRS) is a coalition of organizations in Santa Clara County concern with the rights of immigrants and refugees.

Sincerely,

Richard Hobbs

Richard Hobbs
President NIRRS



APR 11 1994

Asian Law Alliance184 East Jackson Street • San Jose, California 95112-5153
(408) 287-9710

April 11, 1994

Carol Rasco
Assistant to the President

Dear Ms. Rasco,

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Genuine welfare reform which will reduce poverty in the United States should not be funded by creating and exacerbating poverty in major U.S. ethnic communities.

Asian Law Alliance (ALA) is a community law office in San Jose, California.

Sincerely,



Richard Konda
Attorney at Law

LAWRENCE A. JOSEPH

135 CAMERON GLEN DRIVE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30328

USA

Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500

April 28, 1994

RE: Welfare Reform and Benefits to Permanent Legal Residents

Dear Mr. Reed:

I am writing to express my concern and the concern of the Atlanta Jewish community over legislative proposals to cut the availability of SSI, public assistance, Medicaid and food stamps to legal immigrants in order to finance welfare reform.

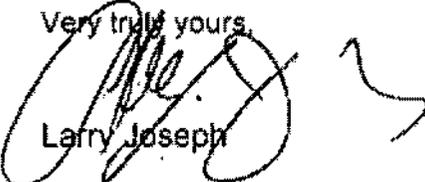
It is our understanding that the Administration's task force of welfare reform and many members of both Houses are considering legislation similar to H.R. 3500, the Republican Welfare Reform bill, which would finance welfare reform by denying these benefits to legal immigrants.

Proposals to cut essential benefits to elderly, blind, and disabled immigrants will put many families in the untenable position of having to choose between family reunification and poverty. These policies threaten the health and well being of the most vulnerable members of our communities, particularly the elderly, blind and disabled immigrant family members of American citizens. Such choices offend the basic values of this country and the broad array of ethnic communities which make it strong.

Our nation's immigration policy is predicated upon the concept of family reunification. Studies conducted by a wide range of academic institutions as well as by the U.S. Department of Labor show that immigrants pay more in taxes than they use in benefits. The nation enriches itself economically and culturally by reuniting immigrant families.

We are very concerned that many of our leaders are perpetuating an atmosphere that can only be interpreted by our communities as a threat to legal immigrants and Americans alike. We urge you to reject any proposal that would finance welfare reform by cutting benefits to legal immigrants.

Very truly yours,


Larry Joseph



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Jewish Community Federation of Richmond

5403 Monument Avenue • P.O. Box 17128 • Richmond, Virginia 23226 • FAX (804) 282-7507 • Phone (804) 288-0045

April 27, 1994

The Honorable John W. Warner
United States Senator
225 Russell senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

We urge you to accept no provisions which pay for welfare reform on the backs of immigrants or other low income groups as is being presented by the Mainstream Forum. These provisions could eliminate benefits for legal immigrants who are not yet citizens.

The elimination of provisions for basic needs for immigrants will result in the curtailment of legal immigration into this country. America was founded on the traditions of compassion and commitment to safeguard the rights of persons escaping political and religious persecutions and those seeking reunification with family members. We believe the perception of America as a safe haven will change under proposed standards.

We encourage you to consider the following facts about legal immigrants:

- Family reunification has always been the cornerstone of U.S. immigration policy.
- Legal immigrants are screened prior to entry in order to assure that they will not rely on public benefits.
- Immigrants contribute vastly to the U.S. economy.
- Immigrants use public benefits less than U.S. natives.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We urge your consideration of our concerns upon your deliberations.

Sincerely,


Tommy Baer, Chairman
Community Relations Committee


Bernard Kaplan, Co-Chairman
Community Relations Committee

President: Dorothy P. Bloch • President-Elect: Catherine S. Plotkin • Vice President: Mark B. Siskis
Vice President: Malcolm Kalman • Vice President: Neil S. Kessler • Secretary: Richard D. Gary
Treasurer: Stuart C. Siegel • Assistant Treasurer: Richard J. November
Executive Director: David A. Nussbaum



United Jewish Appeal





FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Jewish Community Federation of Richmond

5403 Monument Avenue • P.O. Box 17128 • Richmond, Virginia 23226 • FAX (804) 282-7507 • Phone (804) 288-0015

April 27, 1994

The Honorable Charles S. Robb
United States Senator
493 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Robb:

We urge you to accept no provisions which pay for welfare reform on the backs of immigrants or other low income groups as is being presented by the Mainstream Forum. These provisions could eliminate benefits for legal immigrants who are not yet citizens.

The elimination of provisions for basic needs for immigrants will result in the curtailment of legal immigration into this country. America was founded on the traditions of compassion and commitment to safeguard the rights of persons escaping political and religious persecutions and those seeking reunification with family members. We believe the perception of America as a safe haven will change under proposed standards.

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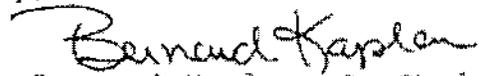
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United Jewish Appeal

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OF YOUR INFORMATION

Jewish Community Federation of Richmond

5403 Monument Avenue • P.O. Box 17128 • Richmond, Virginia 23226 • FAX (804) 282-7507 • Phone (804) 288-0045

April 27, 1994

The Honorable Thomas J. Bliley, Jr.
United States Representative
2241 Rayburn Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bliley:

We urge you to accept no provisions which pay for welfare reform on the backs of immigrants or other low income groups as is being presented by the Mainstream Forum. These provisions could eliminate benefits for legal immigrants who are not yet citizens.

The elimination of provisions for basic needs for immigrants will result in the curtailment of legal immigration into this country. America was founded on the traditions of compassion and commitment to safeguard the rights of persons escaping political and religious persecutions and those seeking reunification with family members. We believe the perception of America as a safe haven will change under proposed standards.

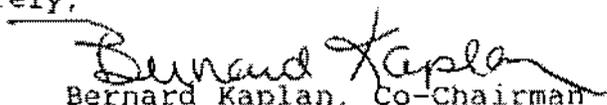
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Treasurer: Stuart C. Siegel • Assistant Treasurer: Richard I. November
Executive Director: David A. Nussbaum



United Jewish Appeal





Office of the President

3211 Fourth Street NE Washington DC 20017-1194 (202) 541-3100 FAX (202) 541-3166 TELEX 7400424

Most Reverend William H. Keeler, D.D.

Archbishop of Baltimore
President

March 28, 1994

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference, I wish to express my strong opposition to financing welfare reform by restricting benefits to immigrants coming to the United States to join close family members. While we applaud your leadership in seeking reform of the welfare system, we believe that such efforts would be severely undermined if financing reform jeopardizes the well-being of thousands of legal immigrants and their families who have sacrificed to sponsor them.

We understand that serious consideration is being given to financing the Administration's welfare reform proposal by severely restricting lawful residents' access to such federal social service benefits as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicaid and Food Stamps. Under current law, the income of sponsoring relatives is already counted in determining a lawful resident's eligibility for various federal programs. This counting, known as "deeming," is currently applicable to lawful permanent residents for their first three to five years in the United States. We understand that the proposal that is being considered by the Administration would extend this deeming period until such time as the resident obtains citizenship.

We believe that the potential financial impact that families would incur if forced to assume expenses for elderly, infirm, or disabled relatives whom they sponsor would literally force many families to choose family reunification at the cost of severe financial hardship. In addition, such policies would further discriminate between lawful immigrants and citizens in how their needy family members would be treated. If we as a nation support the reunion of close family members, it is then unfair to deny essential services for increasingly longer periods to sponsored relatives who have the same compelling needs as other elderly, blind, or disabled relatives who happen to be citizens. Most significantly, we object to a funding strategy which forces competition for resources among various at-risk populations.

While recognizing that welfare reform is an imperative for your administration and the nation, we trust that the means by which it is financed will not occur at the expense of sponsors and their immigrant family members who can contribute so significantly to the social and economic fabric of our nation. We urge you to devise a fairer and more humane means of financing welfare reform.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend William H. Keeler
Archbishop of Baltimore
President



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

8725 West Higgins Road • Chicago, Illinois 60631 • 312-380-2700
Cable: ELCA IL • Tele: +900009321ELC • Fax: 1-312-380-1465

COPY

Office of
the Bishop

April 20, 1994

The Honorable Dan Rostenkowski
U.S. House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Rostenkowski:

Enclosed is a copy of the "Working Principles for Welfare Reform" that is guiding the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as we assess the various proposals now being circulated to transform our public welfare system.

As you consider the variety of options being introduced and debated, I commend these principles to you. Lutherans across the country have been engaged in human services for many years. The network of social ministry organizations affiliated with our church was recently rated financially the largest non-profit human service delivery system in the United States. We have many years of experience in serving low income persons, the aged, persons with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and other people in need.

I am disturbed by the many proposals from both Republicans and Democrats, the Congress and the Administration, that would cut or limit services to a variety of poor and needy groups to finance welfare reform. Of particular concern is the targeting of legal residents in the U.S. until they become U.S. citizens. I cannot support this method of targeting one specific poor sector of our society to finance expanded job services for other poor people. I urge you to oppose such proposals that fuel the unfortunate anti-immigrant/anti-refugee sentiment that is sweeping our land.

As Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I find deep meaning in these words from the Old Testament: *"When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34).* While these words applied specifically to a small nation centuries ago, the call to justice continues to resonate. Indeed, for the vast majority of us living in the U.S., were not our forebears sojourners in this land--immigrants seeking a new life? Remembering our roots, can we not seek just and equal treatment for all those who reside legally in this country?

We stand ready to work with you in this important reform of the welfare system. We cannot, however, support a package that targets any vulnerable group of people (i.e., the aged, the blind, the disabled, legal immigrants, and families and children in poverty) to pay for services for other vulnerable people.

Sincerely,


Herbert W. Chilstrom
Bishop

/f
Enc.

For more information, contact Kay Bengtson, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, 202/783-7507, and John Fredriksson, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, 202/783-7509

WORKING PRINCIPLES FOR WELFARE REFORM

These principles, based on ELCA related social statements, were affirmed by the Board of the Division for Church in Society, as the current basis for ELCA public policy advocacy related to welfare reform and for the purpose of ongoing deliberation in the ELCA.

March 11, 1994

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (E.L.C.A.)
DIVISION FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY
DEPARTMENT FOR STUDIES
8765 W. HIGGINS RD.
CHICAGO, IL 60631-4190
800/638-3522, EXT. 2710

The current public welfare system is in need of significant reform. *The purpose of these working principles is to clarify the bases for ELCA public policy advocacy regarding legislative proposals for reforming the welfare system, especially the federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Many of the principles are also applicable to welfare-related proposals at the state level.*

Poverty is the underlying problem welfare programs seek to alleviate. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (with its predecessor churches) has a long and extensive history of involvement in this area. The ELCA-affiliated network of social ministry organizations is financially the largest such non-profit network in the country. Many of these organizations have long histories of serving people in situations of poverty (presently serving over 300,000), including significant work in the area of refugee resettlement. The women's organization of the ELCA has taken initiatives to respond to women living in poverty. Many of the 11,000 ELCA congregations are reaching out to people living in poverty in their communities through social service efforts (such as food programs and shelters), through pastoral care, and through advocacy and organizing efforts.

These principles presume and build upon the biblical, theological, and ethical understandings articulated in the social statements of the ELCA and its predecessors, as indicated in the endnotes. In these social statements, the ELCA has, among other things, committed itself to "defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, and to advocate justice."¹ The economic sector, families, and voluntary associations play important roles in this. However, the focus in these principles is on the role of government.

In 1986-87, a "More than Charity" campaign (of the church bodies that formed the ELCA) held hearings on poverty and welfare reform throughout this country. Out of this process came "Guiding Principles in Social Welfare Reform," which have informed the development of the following principles. In 1993 the ELCA adopted a many-faceted strategy on "Women and Children in Poverty," as a priority emphasis for the rest of this decade. That strategy recognizes that, in addition to the many kinds of church-based assistance, policy and practices that create and sustain poverty need to be challenged and changed.

The following format sets forth:

Some basic theological affirmations, grounded in Scripture, the confessions, and the social statements of the ELCA.

Some ethical interpretations and implications of these theological affirmations for the discussion of welfare reform today.

Some specific public policy positions that can be deduced from the above.

In moving from broad affirmations to specific positions, ELCA members are likely to have significant differences and to give different weight to the various principles. As a church we encourage ongoing deliberation as to what policies will best serve God's intentions for persons in community. Although the positions cited here are intended to serve as a current basis for ELCA public policy advocacy, they are subject to change in the future, especially through the study and deliberative processes that will occur as part of the development of an ELCA economic social statement.

THE OBLIGATION OF GOVERNMENT: The government's obligation under God includes establishing justice, protecting and advancing human rights, and promoting the general welfare of all persons.¹

Government has the responsibility to help meet the needs and uphold the rights of those who are at the margins of the economic system.²

Government is responsible to establish just welfare policy. This includes determining who receives welfare and raising necessary revenues.

REFORM OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT-PROVIDED WELFARE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF SOME BASIC AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS...

DEPENDENT ON GOD: As human beings we are dependent on God for all we have and are.⁴

None of us are truly "self-sufficient," "deserving," or autonomous. These distinctions are only relative and should not be used to separate some people (i.e., those on welfare) from others, as if they were somehow of less value.

Welfare policies that make distinctions between persons who are "deserving" and those who are "undeserving" need to be questioned.

"Self-sufficiency," although an important goal in welfare reform, should not necessarily be seen as the only or highest goal in all cases.

INTERDEPENDENT WITH MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Human beings are intended by God to live in interdependent relationships with one another. It is in the basic human relationships of domestic, political, and economic life that persons share in their common humanity.⁵ A society and the persons in it have mutual responsibilities toward one another.

In the public realm, this interdependence is reflected in income-support programs that transfer funds from taxpayers to a designated group of persons within a society. Most citizens, at some time during their lifetime, are both payers and receivers of public transfer payments, some of which are means-tested (e.g., welfare programs), others of which are not (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, veteran benefits, unemployment compensation).⁶

Welfare reform should be motivated not primarily by the cost to taxpayers but by a sense of interdependence and responsibility toward all people.

Government is especially obligated toward those who are the most vulnerable. Structures and supports are required to undergird the development of skills and capabilities needed for persons to function in society and thus live out their obligation to contribute toward the social good.

Welfare reform should seek to enable persons to rise out of poverty, affirm their human dignity, and empower them through education, training, and services to achieve long-term economic sufficiency.

Long-term economic sufficiency cannot occur apart from adequate social, structural, and relational support, including stable families, safe communities, adequate schools, preparation for, access to, and opportunities for jobs.

When persons cannot generate an income adequate to live in a decent, humane way, a safety net must continue to be available to meet their basic needs.

Persons fulfill their obligation to society not only by becoming economically self-sufficient, but also by contributing to the common good of a society in other ways (e.g., caring for children).

HUMAN DIGNITY AND BASIC NEEDS - All human beings are entitled to the basic necessities of a dignified, humane existence and/or to the means of securing such. A right is what justice requires in response to particular human needs.⁷

Human dignity should not be violated through provisions of a welfare policy that view human beings primarily in terms of their cost to the wider society, their job skill value, or the income they are able to generate.

Public policies should assure persons of their fundamental rights of adequate income, decent housing, health care, nutrition, and education.⁸

In order to bring those in need closer to a sustainable income, the benefit level for the federal Aid for Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC) should reflect regional differences and cost-of-living increases.

In addition to income support:

- ◆ *nutrition programs should be made more available through improved access and education;*
- ◆ *the number of safe, affordable housing units needs to be expanded;*
- ◆ *universal health care coverage, key in reducing the need to stay on welfare, should be in place;⁹*
- ◆ *educational systems, key in preparing people for changing employment opportunities, need to be revitalized.*

FREEDOM AND INITIATIVE: Human beings have been created with moral agency and freedom, with a power to act responsibly in light of their particular circumstances, accountable to God, self, and others.¹⁰ God has given human beings the capacity and initiative to define the problems of material existence in community and to effect positive change.

A society is healthier when its members are encouraged to participate responsibly in determining their own lives rather than being only the passive consumer of goods and services.¹¹ No person or community should relinquish the initiative or capacity to affect the conditions of their life, and social and political institutions should encourage such initiative.¹²

Welfare policies should nurture the power to act responsibly, with possible incentives and rewards for accomplishing planned goals. Coercive or punitive measures should not be used to compel human action.

Inadequate grant levels force most recipients of welfare to seek unreported income if they are to survive, and thereby encourage lying and cheating.

Grant levels either must be increased so they are adequate for the basic necessities of life, and/or the present earned income "disregard formula" must be adjusted to allow families to keep a greater portion of the income they earn and to save for the future. Grants, loans, or scholarships for education and training should not be factored into income.

HUMAN WORK: Through work, human beings are privileged and obligated to reflect the Creator whose work they are. The exclusion of persons from the community of work is a denial of the opportunity of realizing God's intention for humanity. Work is important for human well-being, but not as an end in itself. Work is thus meant for persons in community, not persons for work.¹³

Making it possible for people to move from welfare to work is important because employment is a means by which people become contributing participants in society. However, this is hindered in a labor market increasingly dominated by low-wage, part-time or temporary jobs that cannot support a family.

Effective job training (on the job, technical, and non-traditional) and educational programs (vocational, secondary, and higher) must be expanded so that participants can acquire the skills necessary for stable employment.

Stable jobs with living wages and adequate benefits should be the goal. Provision of these jobs should be done in ways that do not have the direct effect of displacing other workers.

Welfare-recipients should not be forced into jobs that will make them worse off, that is, low-paying jobs without basic benefits they receive under welfare (e.g., health care, child care, food stamps, transportation). Such benefits should carry over temporarily and be phased out only as the employment income and benefits increase.

"Workfare" (requiring work in exchange for welfare) may not actually increase people's long-term employability, but may contribute toward a permanent working underclass, eroding both wages and employment standards for other workers. Short-term structured work experience, however, may have a positive effect on some persons who have never been employed outside the home.

For all workers, the minimum wage should be increased and indexed according to the rate of inflation. In addition, an expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is important because, in effect, it subsidizes low-paying jobs through the tax system.

INVESTMENT IN FAMILIES: Families are the basic communities in which personhood is fostered, and from which members move out to participate in society.¹⁴ Families are entitled to protection from forces that would tear them apart.¹⁵

Men and women should not become parents until they are able to nurture and support their children. Public policies should support responsible family life.

Appropriate forms of sexuality education in the schools, community pregnancy prevention programs, and parenting preparation classes are to be supported.¹⁶ Programs to enhance self-esteem and life options are important deterrents to teenage pregnancies.

Welfare policies should encourage continuing parental or other adult support and guidance for minor parents, for example, through mentors and living in a household with a responsible adult (when appropriate). Minor parents should never be required to return to an abusive home in order to qualify for government assistance.

Policies that require or encourage parents to remain unmarried or to separate in order to qualify for welfare programs must be changed.

NURTURE AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN: All children have the right to parental care and affection.¹⁷ Caring for and providing for the manifold needs of children is an important way in which people contribute to the common good of society.

In each set of circumstances, there must be a realistic assessment of what is necessary to bear, nurture, and provide for children over the long-term, and what resources are available or need to be provided for this purpose.¹⁸

Single parents of young children should not be required to seek employment outside the home if they decide that the good of their children, and thus the social good, is best served in their circumstances through the work of nurturing their family, rather than through efforts to become economically self-sufficient.

Quality, affordable child care should be made available to parents who are employed outside the home, or who participate in education, training, and job search programs.

Strong child support and/or assurance programs are needed.

The law must hold both parents responsible for the financial support of their children.¹⁹

Programs such as job training, education, and/or substance abuse treatment can help some custodial as well as non-custodial parents to meet their child support obligations. Custodial parents should generally be given priority.

Families with children should be helped to move out of poverty, rather than penalized.

Sanctions should not be imposed if additional children are conceived by parents already receiving AFDC.

A refundable children's credit, in place of a tax deduction, can help provide greater tax equity and assist low-income families to rise out of poverty.

CARING FOR THE STRANGER: "You shall not oppress a resident alien...for you were aliens..."(Ex. 23:9). Regardless of their citizenship, all human beings are equally entitled to what they need to live in meaningful relation to God and neighbor.²⁸

A society's health can be measured by how it treats those in its midst who are most impoverished, who often are refugees and non-citizens.

Refugees have distinctive needs, which should continue to be addressed under a separate program and not subsumed into the AFDC program.

After an initial period of residency, welfare benefits should not be denied to legal immigrants, who typically contribute to the economy and pay taxes.

Supporting welfare reform by taking from other disadvantaged groups is unacceptable.

EACH IS UNIQUE: As creations of God, each human being and the circumstances of his/her life are unique.

A welfare policy must have flexibility in the kinds and length of assistance and supportive services that are provided.

Individual plans should be developed that respond wholistically and directly to a family's particular needs and challenges. In addition to an income grant, some combination of job training, education, job counselling and placement, personal management skills, parenting skills, and substance abuse treatment may be needed. Child care and transportation must be available to those who need it.

Time limits on the receipt of benefits should not be arbitrary. They should take into account individual circumstances, the needs of dependent children, and the failure of the economy to generate enough jobs with adequate income and benefits.

Some persons may not be employable or should not be expected to work, such as those caring for disabled persons or children. Some requiring assistance may have been traumatized by physical or sexual abuse, permanently damaged by substance abuse, or have experienced another type of trauma or disability. An expansion of the SSI program may be necessary to assist persons in these situations.

A case manager approach should be more fully utilized. Trained with skills and culturally-specific sensitivities, such a case manager works with a client in a spirit of respect. The task is to develop a plan, monitor it, and provide the ongoing personal support that enables a client to carry out the plan. The two work together, with mutual responsibility and accountability. If the assisting agency does not provide the services designated in the plan, clients should not be obligated to fulfill their commitments, and any mandated sanctions should not be imposed.

While innovative demonstration projects should be encouraged, they must not impose punitive behavioral requirements or result in further deprivation of recipients.

The listed principles should be considered in the negotiating and budgeting processes for welfare reform. Given limited revenues, programs consistent with these principles that begin on a small-scale are preferable over large-scale programs that are inadequately funded and less likely to be effective.

For further information contact the Lutheran public policy office in your state, or the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, 122 C. St., NW, Suite 125, Washington, D.C. 20001; (202) 783-7501.

Endnotes

Most of the following are social statements of the ELCA which are available from the Department for Studies. If you would like to order a single copy of a social statement, please call 800/638-3522, extension 2719.

¹ "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" (ELCA, 1991).

² "The Nature of the Church and Its Relationship with Government" (ALC/AELC/LCA, 1984).

³ See for example, "The Church and Social Welfare" (LCA, 1968) and "Towards Fairness in Public Taxing and Spending" (ALC, 1982).

⁴ See the explanation of the first article of the Creed in Luther's Small Catechism.

⁵ "Economic Justice" (LCA, 1980).

⁶ "Toward Fairness in Public Taxing and Spending" (ALC, 1982).

⁷ "Human Rights" (LCA, 1978).

⁸ "Human Rights" implementing resolution; "Abortion" (ELCA, 1991).

⁹ See the Working Principles for Health Care Reform (ELCA Division for Church in Society, 1993).

¹⁰ "Abortion" (ELCA, 1991).

¹¹ "Economic Justice" (LCA, 1980).

¹² "Human Rights" (LCA, 1978).

¹³ "Economic Justice" (LCA, 1980).

¹⁴ "Sex, Marriage, and Family" (LCA, 1970).

¹⁵ "Human Rights" (LCA, 1978).

¹⁶ "Abortion" (ELCA, 1991).

¹⁷ "Human Rights" (LCA, 1978).

¹⁸ "Abortion" (ELCA, 1991).

¹⁹ "Abortion" (ELCA, 1991).

²⁰ "Human Rights" (LCA, 1978).

BRUCE,

IF THIS IS OKAY --- WE'LL GO WITH IT

April 11, 1994

→ SEND THE NEW
HISP. CONCERN LETTER
TO INTAKE +
ASK THEM TO
ADAPT IT
BR

2*

Dear I*:

Thank you for taking the time to write the Administration concerning welfare reform. Your comments regarding the options for financing welfare reform are greatly appreciated.

The Administration is committed to designing a welfare reform plan that will be deficit neutral. This means that essential new investments in child care, jobs, skills, and training must be offset primarily with savings elsewhere in the budget.

A number of options are under consideration, and no decisions have been made. Such choices are very difficult, and in considering alternatives we are keeping in mind the basic values that underlie our welfare reform efforts: work, family, opportunity, and responsibility.

In a recent televised news conference, the President rejected the financing provisions of the House Republican welfare reform bill, H.R. 3500, which would terminate all means-tested benefits for all non-citizens. Such an extreme, across-the-board measure would unfairly deny basic health coverage to thousands of families, and shift an enormous burden to the states. The Administration will work actively to oppose the financing provisions in H.R. 3500.

We appreciate your sharing your concerns with us. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy

Bruce,

Here's a draft finance letter drawn from the one the WRWG has drafted.

Should we use this finance letter to answer the incoming SSI letters?

YES

Should we also provide it to Presidential correspondence for their use?

YES

Should we use the same sort of letter to answer the letters on the gambling tax?

NO

HHS
BH

2- 1-
3-
4-
5-
6-
7-, 8- 9-

Dear 10-:

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Working Group on Welfare Reform, Family Support and Independence. Your comments regarding the options for financing welfare reform are greatly appreciated.

The Administration is committed to designing a welfare reform plan that will be deficit neutral. This means that new investments in child care, jobs, and education and training to help AFDC recipients become self-sufficient must be offset.

A number of changes are under consideration. Preliminary options include both programmatic reforms that would reduce spending and measures that would raise revenue. Such choices are very difficult, and in considering alternatives we are keeping in mind the basic values that underlie our welfare reform efforts: work, family, community and responsibility.

We appreciate your sharing your concerns with us, and we will keep you informed of the progress of the Working Group.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sosa

Director of Public Outreach
Working Group on Welfare Reform,
Family Support and Independence

WORKING GROUP ON WELFARE REFORM, FAMILY SUPPORT AND INDEPENDENCE

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

Aerospace Building
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Seventh Floor
Washington, D.C. 20447
Fax: (202) 205-9688

Cover + 1 Page(s)

Date _____

To: <u> KATHY MANS </u>	From: <u> Abbie Gottesman </u>
Phone: _____	Phone: <u> 205-3600 </u>
Fax: <u> 456-7431 </u>	Fax: <u> 205-9688 </u>

Message: Avis the financing letter
 you requested from Emily

Dear :

Thank you for taking the time to write the Administration concerning welfare reform. Your comments regarding the options for financing welfare reform are greatly appreciated.

The Administration is committed to designing a welfare reform plan that will be deficit neutral. This means that ^{skills} new investments in child care, jobs, ^{essential} and education and training ~~to help AFDC recipients become self-sufficient~~ must be offset.

A number of ^{options} changes are under consideration, ^{and no decisions have been made} Preliminary ~~options include both programmatic reforms that would reduce spending and measures that would raise revenue.~~ Such choices are very difficult, and in considering alternatives we are keeping in mind the basic values that underlie our welfare reform efforts: work, family, ~~community~~ ^{opportunity} and responsibility.

We appreciate your sharing your concerns with us. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Bruce Reed

priority with savings
~~in the program~~
elsewhere in the budget.

~~The President stated~~ In a recent televised news conference, ~~that the House Republican welfare reform bill, H.R. 3500, goes too far~~ the President rejected the financing provisions of the House Republican welfare reform bill, H.R. 3500, which would terminate ~~all~~ ^{all} means-tested benefits for all non-citizens. Such an extreme, across-the-board measure would ~~unfairly~~ ^{unfairly} deny ^{basic} health coverage to thousands of families, and shift an enormous burden to the states. The Administration will work actively to oppose the ~~Republican proposal~~ financing provisions in H.R. 3500.