

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 24, 1995

Mr. Frank Warner
Co-Director
Liberals Are For Two-Parent Families
565 Kline Avenue
Pottstown, PA. 19465

Dear Mr. Warner:

Thank you for your letter suggesting that the federal government sponsor an educational campaign to highlight the benefits of a stable family. I share your deep concern for the state of America's families.

With increasing incidence of teen pregnancy and divorce rates, it is critical that organizations like yours encourage adolescent and parental responsibility. As President Clinton has stated, "We can't renew our country until we realize that governments don't raise children, parents do."

I have forwarded your recommendations to my staff for further review. Thank you for writing, and I commend your organization's efforts to promote a new generation of healthy American families and friendships.

Sincerely,



Carol H. Rasco
Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy

cc: Bruce Reed

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF DOMESTIC POLICY

CAROL H. RASCO
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

To: JB-A
In a case like this
Draft response for POTUS and forward to CHR by: where LEP refers
Draft response for CHR by: to us I think a
Please reply directly to the writer (copy to CHR) by: staff member
Please advise by: who covers topic
Let's discuss: should do a
For your information: note acknow.
Reply using form code: we got it, are
File: studying, etc.
Send copy to (original to CHR): Accept Pending Rejected
Schedule?: Accept Pending Rejected
Designee to attend: _____
Remarks: _____

ANY NEED TO ANSWER?
I will share w/ BEUCE.
RETURN TO SBA

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Please review
material.
on i: Zparf

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MAY

April 18, 1995

Mr. Frank Warner
Co-Director
Liberals Are For Two-Parent Families
565 Kline Avenue
Pottstown, Pennsylvania 19465

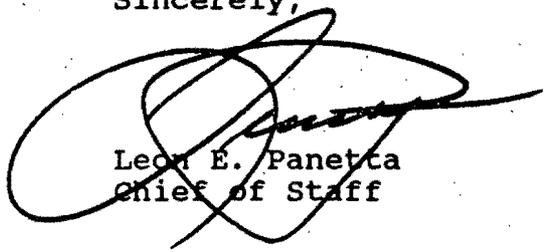
Dear Mr. Warner:

Thank you for your letter suggesting that the federal government sponsor a campaign to highlight the benefits of a stable family. I appreciate your contacting my office with your ideas and suggestions.

To give your recommendation the proper attention, I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to the Domestic Policy Council for review. You can be assured that your ideas will receive the appropriate consideration.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Leon E. Panetta
Chief of Staff

cc: Domestic Policy Council

LEP/tab

LIBERALS ARE FOR TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

565 Kline Avenue
Pottstown, Pa. 19465
(610) 326-8472

FEB 13 1995

February 6, 1995

Leon Panetta
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

MISC

Dear Mr. Panetta,

Liberals Are for Two-Parent Families is a research and education group, founded in August 1993 and dedicated to applying the liberal concepts of generosity, responsibility and intelligence to promote a new generation of healthy American families.

Today we are recommending that the federal government undertake a massive and permanent campaign, in televised messages every day, to educate adolescents about what builds a friendship, what makes a nurturing parent, and how individuals and society benefit when mothers and fathers raise their children together.

We recommend that the campaign on friendship and families each year broadcast \$1 billion worth of public service announcements.

We suggest that this effort use as a model the Baltimore-based Campaign for Our Children (120 West Fayette Street, Suite 1200, Baltimore, MD 21201-3741, Phone 410-576-9015). Campaign for Our Children has a well-balanced, liberal approach, in television and other media, to encourage adolescent and parental responsibility.

The founders of Liberals Are for Two-Parent Families are Mike Contos, an adoptive father and Philadelphia assistant public defender; Toni Wade, a mother and former Newspaper Guild union organizer; and I, a Big Brother and former Washington, D.C.-based researcher for Ralph Nader.

Liberals are for the little guy, and the little girl, too. Liberals are for giving children the best chance for growth and happiness. Liberals are for two-parent families.

Sincerely,



Frank Warner
Co-director

From a report of

CAMPAIGN FOR OUR CHILDREN
120 West Fayette Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 576 9015

Campaign For Our Children was initiated in 1987 to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy in Maryland by promoting the continuation of sexual abstinence among pre-sexually active children.

To accomplish that goal, a comprehensive, five-year multi-dimensional "pilot" program was developed to integrate the efforts of a mass media advertising and public relations campaign with school programs and counseling to influence and change attitudes about sex among 9- to 14-year-old children.

A first-of-its-kind program, Campaign for Our Children is a joint effort of Maryland's public and private sectors with funding coming from both. Established as a private, non-profit corporation, it has grown through the cooperative efforts of Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer and the Maryland Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Juvenile Services, Human Resources, Education, and the Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy.

Campaign For Our Children works because it is a cooperative effort of the public and private sectors ... so our messages are everywhere. We utilize mass media advertising, aggressive media relations, active in-school programs and public health outlets to get our abstinence message through to kids who are not yet sexually active. The materials we use are focused on reaching four key target groups:

To children the theme is "You can go farther when you don't go all the way." This is the underlying message on all our materials, which focus on goal setting, self-esteem and relationship building.

A different, yet just as effective, approach to reach males is "You play. You pay." The responsibility of fatherhood is made painfully obvious in the materials developed for this audience.

Just as important as reaching the children is the need to educate parents and adults. The theme of the messages to this group is "kids can go farther if they don't go all the way." We encourage parents to talk to their kids about sex.

The final message is targeted at community leaders. Unfortunately, teen pregnancy as a social issue is often given a low priority. Our campaign promotes the message "It all starts here."

We have worked hard to develop good relationships with the media in Maryland with terrific results. Our highly intrusive and sometimes controversial television and radio commercials really

have an impact on both teens and adults. And the support of outdoor and transit advertisers, billboards and bus signs make our messages that much stronger and more visible.

With the support of the Board of Education, School Superintendents, the PTA, School Principals and Health Educators, Campaign For Our Children has developed lesson plans, educational videos and posters targeted for the middle schools. A recent survey shows that our posters can be found in virtually every middle school in Maryland and the majority of the counties utilize our lesson plans.

Public health outlets are the other focus for the distribution of our materials. We make our posters and other materials available to all health professionals, counselors, in-school clinics, teen clinics and other programs geared toward healthy teens.

In 1989, the Department of Health conducted research among middle school students and teachers. The results showed 94% were aware of Campaign For Our Children's materials and could repeat some of the messages and slogans verbatim. More importantly, 75% of the students reported that CFC helped them talk with their parents on topics of sex, family life, and other related issues. The national average for such discussions within that age group is only 20%.

1990 brought the first news of actual drops in births to teens in the State of Maryland. Lemmel Middle School in Baltimore City, a pilot school for Campaign For Our Children programs, reported a 75% drop in teen pregnancies. No pregnancies were reported among sixth and seventh graders and only two in the eight grade became pregnant, compared to the previous year when eight pregnancies were reported.

By the end of 1991, the Maryland Department of Health released data on pregnancies and birth rates for 1989 and 1990. These statistics showed a 10.6% drop in births to teen mothers in Baltimore City and an overall drop in the entire state of Maryland ... impressive percentages especially when compared to a national increase in sexual activity among the nation's teenage girls during the same time period.

Campaign For Our Children is a proven, successful program. The research and statistics show that we have so far helped reduce the burden of teen pregnancy on Maryland taxpayers by at least \$46 million in State and Federal programs.

Since the program began, requests for information have been received from every U.S. State plus Bermuda, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and several Canadian Provinces. The program has been adopted in part in the States of Arkansas, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Kentucky, Tennessee and Illinois.

Liberals Are for Two-Parent Families

February 1995

Freedom is born of families, of children, liberalism and love. When the American family is healthy and strong, our democracy is at its best. When the American family weakens, our nation's freedom falters and hope fades for a democratic future.

Almost every American boy and girl today has two living parents, and yet for the first time in American memory the average newborn in this nation is unlikely to spend a full childhood with both a father and a mother. Many of our children hurt. For rising numbers of our daughters and sons, childhood is no longer the foundation of life and liberty in this land; it is an ordeal.

No war, no famine, no disease brought on this sorrow. Our families fractured and fragmented after decades of disregard for the liberal virtues of generosity, responsibility and intelligence.

Today, the truth is, only liberals can rescue our families. With liberal leadership, America can begin building a new generation of healthy families, liberal families in which fathers and mothers work together to make good homes for their children.

As liberals, we can call on single parents, married parents and all other Americans in the common cause of bettering the lives of today's children and fostering the conditions that give the next American generation the best chance in the world to grow up in the loving care of their fathers and mothers.

Conservatives can't do it. When conservatives talk about families, they too often poison the debate with narrow religious beliefs that many Americans don't share, or with such issues as abortion that divide and distract, or with rigid rules that leave no room to be human.

Conservatism tends to belittle single parents, as if they are bad parents, as if they hurt children, as if they aren't working hard, when in fact the vast majority of single parents do only good for their children.

Conservatism ultimately rests on a false individualism that owes nothing to anyone but the self and has little to offer the weak or the helpless.

Conservatism tends to organize resources around the Wall Street ideal of short-term profit, rather than to plan thoughtfully for future generations.

Conservatism tends to see the raising of children as a woman's work, and the father's work as somewhere outside the home.

Conservatism tends to oppose any serious study of human sexual behavior for fear it might reveal that some Americans actually have sex outside marriage.

Conservatism tends to ignore the root causes of violence, but chooses instead to wait until violence occurs and then to punish the violence with more violence.

Conservatism implies by its precepts that marriages are so sacred that each partner must live with even a violent spouse.

careful ?

Conservatives fear talking with adolescents about sexuality. So when conservatives theorize about just saying no to premature sex, they don't ever deliver their message to teenagers. They just say nothing.

Liberalism has a better way. Liberalism bases family choices on the facts of life. And the first fact is that each mother and father is important.

There is something good about a mother. She dreams about what she can give a child and commits to a lifetime of giving. With love and care, she nurtures her daughters and sons, and spends lots of time with them. She provides for their emotional and physical needs. She teaches them the value of honesty, learning, hard work and sharing. She limits their risky behavior and assures them there is no limit to their creative potential. For her daughters and sons, she is a special model of womanhood, a powerful example of kindness, strength and love in action.

There is something good about a father. He dreams about what he can give a child and commits to a lifetime of giving. With love and care, he nurtures his daughters and sons, and spends lots of time with them. He provides for their emotional and physical needs. He teaches them the value of honesty, learning, hard work and sharing. He limits their risky behavior and assures them there is no limit to their creative potential. He is equal to the mother in importance to his children. For his sons and daughters, he is a special model of manhood, a powerful example of kindness, strength and love in action.

When a father and mother work together as parents in love, their children have the best chance to grow up healthy, educated and prepared for the challenges of adulthood.

Children face significantly increased risks when they grow up absent one parent or the other, and especially high risks when they have never had two parents. Yet, through extraordinary effort, many single parents steer clear of the risks to their children. These parents are modern-day heroes, beating the odds for their daughters and sons. In their wisdom and experience lies the hope for millions of American children.

Better than any of us, single parents know that the single-parent workload is unwieldy for most adults, and overwhelming for most adolescents. Single parents also know that, in general, it's more difficult for one parent to raise a family than for two cooperating partners. Virtually no single parent hopes a child will grow up to find a partner who would abandon the next generation. And virtually every single parent has good ideas to make families better.

That's why single parents must be involved in a loving transition to the new American family. Single parents know something about what works and what doesn't. Mothers and fathers in two-parent families know raising children isn't easy. Single parents know the struggle twice as well.

Our families need help. No society can thrive, no nation can long survive, where year after year the lives of children depend on parents making superhuman efforts. In too many families, extraordinary burdens are unmanageable. Harm is done. Lives are lost. A nation needs families, healthy two-parent families, in which relatively ordinary effort succeeds for children. And it needs liberals forever making that case.

Liberals embrace single parents as the strength of many American families. At the same time, we recognize, with straightforward facts, that children with two parents generally have lower risks in

their lives. Whether it is the unique interplay of a father and mother, or the simple mathematics that two is more than one, or a combination of complex factors, a two-parent family has real advantages.

No family is perfect, and even the best planned family has troubles. Some parents separate out of necessity. Some die before their children know them. All children have challenges. But in a society based on friendship and peace, every child can at least start life with a father and mother united in committed love.

We liberals want a society of friendship and peace, and we know it begins with strong families. Families have irreplaceable parts to play for the social good.

The family is the first school, and parents are the first teachers. Children whose parents actively nurture the joy of discovery are likely to apply their energies to learning. Parents are in the best position to transform a child's natural curiosity into a healthy spirit of inquiry and invention.

America's schools need to do better for our children, but teachers can't do the job alone. Teachers would work so many more miracles if all children came to school each day primed and prepared to learn. Learning flourishes when parents read to their children, set aside time for their children's homework, talk with their children's teachers and remind their children of the good they can do with knowledge.

In the education of children, two loving parents have an advantage over one. Almost everywhere, the parent-pupil ratio is more significant than the teacher-pupil ratio in determining a child's academic success. Children from two-parent families are less likely to drop out of school and more likely to do well at their studies. Children benefit from the educational coalition of a father and a mother.

The family is the primary protector. It defends children from harm, and instructs them on the importance of maintaining a healthy body and mind. It is a mediator, a buffer, a defense against abuses by government, corporations and institutions.

The family teaches children how to avoid crime, and it instills in them the principles of honesty, decency and respect for the rights of others.

Keeping children out of crime is a challenge for any family, but it is generally less difficult for two parents than for one. Children in two-parent families are significantly less likely than others to have emotional and behavioral problems, or to find themselves in institutions for juvenile offenders.

As two-parent families became scarcer in America from 1965 to 1990, juvenile violence soared. Our nation saw a quadrupling in the rate of murders committed by children 10 to 17 years old. Many of these children had no parents to speak of, and many were killing other children. For boys and girls, America became one of the most dangerous places on Earth.

The family is the best crime fighter; the best peacekeeper. With healthy families, we can start closing prisons and opening minds.

The family is the first economy. In the family, children learn how resources are divided, how important saving is, how investment has its risks and rewards. The family teaches the connections between hard work and progress, between education and a fulfilling vocation. Families also drive the economy of the nation.

Many single parents have great success in bringing up their children free from want. Nevertheless, a mother and father together are likely to have more time and resources than one parent. A child in a single-parent family is several times more likely than a child in a two-parent family to live a childhood in poverty.

For their nurturing of children's minds, strong families are vital to the nation's economic progress. More than half of all new jobs in the twenty-first century will require at least some education beyond high school. Our children will need more family support than ever to reach the higher learning levels of the information age.

Money will never buy happiness, and no rational economy will ever encourage consumption for the sake of consumption. But if Americans are to be in a position to fight poverty at home and abroad, our nation needs healthy families to keep us economically strong.

The family is the foundation of individualism. Deprived of family, a child is deprived of individuality. Without a family, a child cannot develop the confidence, the trust and the independence of a full individual. Without a family, a child is more likely to view the world with fear and distrust, more likely to feel dependent on the approval of others.

A child without a family is a desperate follower, too ready to accept anyone's suggestion for a substitute to love, too eager to cling to aimless, violent gangs, too timid to stand up, alone if necessary, for personal principle.

Only a family can accept fully the precious uniqueness of each of its members. Only a strong family can enable a person to be brilliantly different from everyone else. Healthy families celebrate each child's special role in making a better world. Healthy families free children to be themselves.

The family is the foundation of democracy. In the most direct way, happy childhoods prepare children for good citizenship. Americans brought up in love and learning are more likely to debate issues confidently, to cast votes intelligently and to respect inalienable rights naturally.

On the strength of their families, citizens can accept harmless differences among people with trust and cheer rather than hostility and fear. On the strength of their families, citizens can speak the voice of reason at town halls, at capitols, in jury rooms, in courtrooms, on the streets and on the information highways.

A free society depends on the optimism, enlightenment and involvement of all its people. In a democracy, every American needs the emotional and intellectual tools that strong families provide.

With all they offer, healthy families are the liberal cause of the 1990s and the twenty-first century. This is a movement for pioneers, so forget tradition. Liberals will not call for a return to a family of the past, when children were first, but women were last, or when adults were first and children incidental. In family life, there is too much tradition to push aside, too much progress to be made.

The traditional family has become one in which one parent chronically puts selfish self-interest above the interests of children or the other parent. Conservatives might fight to conserve that traditional family. We liberals won't.

It's a right-wing, laissez-faire attitude that invites everyone to do anything at all, even if it hurts the weak or defenseless. Conservatives might embrace that attitude for families. We liberals don't. The liberal family puts children first and demands parental responsibility. Conservatives might celebrate shortsightedness. In the liberal family, actions are taken not simply for their benefit today, but also for their contribution to ten thousand tomorrows and more.

The liberal family puts fathers and mothers on an equal basis in deciding their roles. Liberals understand more clearly than ever that women will never see real equality in the workplace and public life until the average father spends about as much time raising children as the average mother.

Until fathers and mothers share in the daily work of bringing up children, employers will resist adapting their work rules to the realities of parenthood. Until then, millions of mothers will have careers closed to them. And until then, millions of fathers will miss the fullness of fatherhood.

The new liberal family also sets aside the traditional silence on sexuality. Communication is key.

Sex has meaning, power and consequences that need to be approached with honesty and responsibility. In the liberal family, sexuality is much more than sex. Sexuality is the expression, realized over a lifetime, of our love and commitment as partners and parents. It is founded on friendship and completed in love.

Sexual liberation is the unleashing of those natural forces that bring lovers closer together. In man-woman relationships, one of the best measures of a society's sexual liberation is the proportion of men and women who want to live their lives together. By that measure, America is one of the most sexually repressed societies on Earth.

If a couple has not built a relationship with loving care and honest communication, sex can be an empty and impersonal act, a troubling and even traumatic experience. Sex is abused when it produces emotional or physical pain, or when it results in neglected babies. When sex is abused, it drives people apart.

We liberals talk to adolescents about sexuality because adolescents face the fastest growing risks in our society, and because an understanding of sexuality places adolescents in the best position to reduce the risks to themselves and the next generation.

As liberals, we inform adolescents that abstaining from sex is their most responsible and least risky course emotionally and physically. We also advise that if teenagers do become sexually active, they need to use effective methods to prevent pregnancy. That said, we then tell teens that if they are to eliminate the chance of pregnancy, abstinence is the only sure policy.

Adolescent boys in particular need to understand that, in the absence of perfectly effective contraception, deciding to have sex is deciding to accept all the responsibility of parenthood. That means financial support and much more. It means emotional support. It means being there with your child, through pregnancy, through childhood, and beyond. Anyone who doesn't intend to raise his children and give them a healthy home ought to stay away from the baby-making business. Girls need to hear this message, too.

Teenagers can handle the message of responsibility when it is delivered with facts that recognize human realities. Adolescents want to know what risks they face, what risks their society

faces, what they need to say no to. Teens also want to know what they can hope for, what they can build toward, what they can say yes to.

Friendship is the easiest thing to say yes to. In friendship, dreams are developed, successes celebrated, crises cushioned. In friendship, love begins. Friendship can be particularly confusing to adolescents, but it need not be so mysterious. With information, teenagers can learn and refine the skills involved in making friends, in being friends and in recognizing a true friend.

Friendships rise out of common pursuits and shared understandings. They grow with honesty, unselfishness and a willingness to resolve occasional conflicts. With time and effort, friends can build a healthy, intelligent and durable relationship. With love, friends can reach sublimely delicate balances. Two people can respect each other's privacy, yet discover the closest intimacy. Two people can honor each other's individuality, yet thrive on the closest teamwork.

Along friendship's way, adults can assist adolescents with good example and loving words. Adults can demonstrate the power of kindness by being friends themselves, by helping others, by making cooperation and generosity central parts of their lives.

In nurturing friendships, America needs to turn away from violence. Parents can show that violence is unacceptable by tackling problems without hitting, and by correcting the behavior of their children creatively, patiently, without hurting. Any parent who practices violence needs to be separated from family members who might be hurt. No child needs two parents if one of them is a terror.

Because boys have been much more prone to violence than girls, fathers have a special role in curbing violence. Boys look to their fathers to tell them there is nothing manly about fighting or any other abusive behavior, and fathers need to deliver that message.

Many families draw on their private philosophies and religious faiths to promote peace and reject violence. Liberals encourage families to find strength in their beliefs and in their spirituality. As long as none of us demands that everyone accept one faith, American families have only to gain from freedom of worship.

At the government level, Americans can insist that legislators take steps against violence. We can ban handguns. We can end capital punishment and revalue life. And we can stop building prisons. Prisons will never have enough room for our criminals if we fail to build strong families.

We also can argue against proposals to treat juvenile offenders as adults. Troubled youngsters need discipline, but they are in fact children, and many have never known a family's love. It would be the harshest injustice of all to treat children as adults when they've never been treated as children.

Before anything else, America needs to help end the trauma suffered by children of neglectful parents. Children can learn from adversity, but they surely would do better without it. American children have wasted too much energy escaping threats they should never have seen. Our nation has heard plenty of heroic stories of children overcoming their childhoods. It needs more news of nurtured minds discovering cures to ignorance, injustice, bigotry, poverty, pollution, hunger and disease. We've heard too much of Americans surviving their childhoods. We need to see Americans springing from their childhoods with constructive energy and hope.

America surely is divided between haves and have-nots, and the most devastating divide is the one between those who have strong families and those who have not. If all children are to enjoy real equality of opportunity in this land, all must have the love and care of a strong family.

As we approach a new era for families, policy makers have an historic challenge. They need to help structure social systems, around human nature and modern technology in a free country, that continuously and comfortably encourage fathers and mothers to raise their children together. This is a critical task. Its success would transform the United States into the modern model of liberty. More importantly, it would let more people pursue happier lives in peace and love.

For our next generations, we need new institutions that foster the understanding, long before people become parents, that fathers and mothers have a duty to raise their children.

For loving couples who want children but view marriage as an empty formality, we need a new set of promises -- stronger even than wedding vows -- that partners will make regular efforts to strengthen their love for each other, that they will keep themselves as mentally and physically healthy as possible, and that they will love and care for their children.

For couples whose love struggles, we need a system that asks mothers and fathers, before they consider separation or divorce, to think twice and again about the emotional and economic futures of their children.

To strengthen families, we need to be open to new economic approaches. We must be careful, however, to avoid hurting children with reckless changes to our public welfare system. Contrary to the right-wing rhetoric, welfare mothers almost never have additional children simply to collect additional welfare payments. Economic policy ought not focus on the second and third child of an unwed welfare mother. It needs to focus on boys and girls long before they have any children.

Social scientists have a unique opportunity to be helpful. Never before in history have there been more facts available on what works for families or a nation hungrier for the information. Social scientists have an obligation to broaden their research and put more of the facts together in ways useful to rational decision-making in our lives.

The facts of life will help us, but only if we talk about them. We need more free speech on families, especially among adolescents. Therefore, we liberals propose a first step toward building healthier American families.

WE PROPOSE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKE A MASSIVE AND PERMANENT CAMPAIGN, IN TELEVISED MESSAGES EVERY DAY, TO EDUCATE ADOLESCENTS ABOUT WHAT BUILDS A FRIENDSHIP, WHAT MAKES A NURTURING PARENT, AND HOW INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY BENEFIT WHEN MOTHERS AND FATHERS RAISE THEIR CHILDREN TOGETHER.

The campaign would broadcast one billion dollars worth of public service announcements each year on television programs known to attract large adolescent audiences. The messages would present, as factually as possible, information on friendships and families. To help make important points, the messages could use drama, music and humor.

With the messages televised, parents would have no doubt about what their children were learning daily about personal and family responsibilities. The information would be there for all to see.

Whenever they saw the need, parents could talk with their daughters and sons as soon as the messages appeared.

The campaign would lighten the burden on school teachers, who too often are asked to be our children's lone instructors on family life. With the televised campaign, teachers would have new support for the principle of freedom with responsibility. They also might find more time to teach the other academic skills their students will need to make the most of their potential.

On television programs that appeal to adolescents, the messages regularly would deliver facts to the people who need them most. Adults might learn something, too.

If our nation can live with three billion dollars worth of television advertising on cars and one billion dollars worth of commercials on cosmetics each year, it certainly can live better with one billion dollars worth of messages on friendship and families. Fill the airwaves with hope for children. Fill the air with respect for adolescents, whose intelligent choices will shape healthier families and a freer society.

Education can heal a nation. When we lift up our hearts and minds, free speech can save our children.

In preparing for the new American family, we liberals don't have to act alone. Though they have had little success by themselves, conservatives can assist us. In America, liberals and conservatives generally agree that learning is better than ignorance, that progress is better than poverty, that tranquility is better than violence, that self-rule is better than tyranny, that life is better than death. Sticking to the facts, we can show all Americans how healthy two-parent families support every one of those commonly held principles far better than any other arrangement. Add to the effort those distinctly liberal virtues of compassion and inclusiveness, and we will have one mighty powerful campaign of hope.

Modern American liberalism began early in the twentieth century with the building of institutional defenses against big business. The movement eventually took up the struggles for women's rights, civil rights, environmental protection, decent housing, safe consumer products, decent workplaces and safe streets. In all liberalism, the common thread is that each of us has a personal obligation to defend the defenseless and shelter the disadvantaged against the dangerous and damaging acts of the powerful.

Today, healthy two-parent families are the highest liberal cause, for without progress on families, there will be no progress on anything. When families are healthy in America, liberty will flourish in peace.

Families are more important than any social program, more powerful than any economic tool. Families are what we live and die for. They're the chicken and the egg, the beginning and the end of everything we do. Of course we have to make them better.

Liberals are for the little guy, and the little girl, too. Liberals are for giving children the best chance for growth and happiness. Liberals are for two-parent families.

LIBERALS ARE FOR TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

Liberals are for the little guy, and the little girl, too.

FACT SHEET

1. Children and American Family Trends.

America has 65 million children -- people under 18 years old. Almost all have two living parents. (National Commission on Children, 1993, "Just the Facts," p.45)

Of 4 million American children born each year, more than 1 million start their lives in homes without a father. ("Just the Facts," p.6)

In 1960, just 5.3 percent of American babies were born to unwed women. In 1990, fully 28 percent of the nation's births -- 1.16 million babies -- were to unwed women. In 1992, out-of-wedlock births accounted for 30.1 percent of all births.

In 1960, 78 percent of all American children lived with both of their biological parents (with later marriages, 88 percent had two-parent homes). In 1990, just 58.3 percent lived with both biological parents (with later marriages, 73 percent had two-parent homes). (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-23)

Today, 50 to 60 percent of American children are expected to spend at least part of their childhoods absent at least one parent.

2. Children and Single Parents' Status.

The average single-parent family has a hero, and that is the single parent. Sixteen million American children count on single parents for the strength and ingenuity that builds loving, nurturing homes under difficult circumstances.

Thoughtless discussion too often has implied that single parents themselves somehow are a threat or a problem. Liberals won't make that mistake. Single parent families have significant risks to deal with, but in general, the single parent is what's right with single-parent families. The average single parent is the strength, not the weakness, of the single-parent family. The single parent's participation will be essential in building a new generation of stronger, healthier American families.

3. Children and Equal Rights for Men and Women.

The 1950s put children first, women last. Children need to be first in families, but with mothers and fathers on an equal basis in determining their roles. Women will never see real equality in the workplace and public life until the average father spends about as much time raising children as the average mother.

4. Children, Emotions and Behavior.

Children of single-parent families are two to three times more likely to display emotional or behavioral problems. ("Developmental, Learning and Emotional Problems," 1988 survey, National Center for Health Statistics, 1990)

Children of single-parent families are 100 percent more likely to have problems with their peers. (1988 survey, National Center for Health Statistics)

In 1988, an estimated 577,800 children had run away from home or had been told to leave home or had been deserted. ("Just the Facts," p.149) About 450,700 were runaways. Of the 127,100 who had been thrown out, more than twice as many had been thrown out of single-parent homes as had been forced to leave two-parent homes. ("Just the Facts," p.152)

General Trends of Juvenile Stress: Teen suicide rate, ages 15 to 19, was 3.6 per 100,000 in 1960. 8.5 per 100,000 in 1980. 11.3 per 100,000 in 1988. (Progressive Policy Institute, "Mandate for Change," 1993, p.156)

Suicide is a top cause of death among all adolescents, third only to accidents and murders. ("Just the Facts," p.68)

There were 2.7 million reported cases of child abuse and neglect in 1991, and 1 million substantiated cases. Case workers reported child abuse on the rise. ("Just the Facts," pp.149-152)

Risky juvenile behavior: Dropping out of school, becoming sexually active at 17 or younger, using drugs or alcohol, committing crimes. ("Just the Facts," p.103, p.106)

5. Children and Education

Parent-Pupil Ratio. "America's Small School: The Family," a 1992 study by Paul Barton, found a strong correlation between two-parent homes and high academic achievement among eighth graders. (Cited in "Defining Deviancy Down," Daniel Patrick Moynihan, American Scholar 1993)

North Dakota, high (2nd) among the 50 states and District of Columbia in percentage of two-parent families, also was high (1st) in eighth graders' achievement in mathematics.

The District of Columbia, low (50th) in percentage of two-parent families, also was low (49th) in eighth graders' achievement in mathematics.

Children of single-parent families are nearly twice as likely to drop out of high school. ("Just the Facts," p.90)

Thirty-three percent of elementary school pupils from two-parent families are ranked as high achievers. Just 17 percent of pupils from single-parent homes are ranked high achievers. (National Association of Elementary School Principals, cited in "Dan Quayle Was Right," Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Atlantic Monthly, April 1993, p.66)

"Children in single-parent families tend to score lower on standardized tests and to receive lower grades in school." ("Just the Facts," p.90)

General U.S. Education Trends. Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. In 1960, the SAT average of mathematics and verbal combined was 975. In 1990, the average had dropped to 900; in 1991, to 898. ("Mandate for Change," p.156)

Standardized tests given in 1991 to 13-year-olds in 15 countries found that American children placed 13th of the 15 countries in mathematics and science. ("Just the Facts," p.83)

One eighth of young American adults are high school dropouts. ("Just the Facts," p.85) In their lifetimes, each year's dropouts end up costing the American economy \$250 billion in lost wages and taxes. ("Just the Facts," p.86, p.107)

Increasing numbers of our high school graduates lack basic skills in reading or mathematics. ("Just the Facts," p. 87) More than half of all new jobs in the 21st century will require at least some post-high school education. ("Just the Facts," p.87)

6. Children and Economics.

Children of single-parent families are six times more likely to live in poverty. ("Just the Facts," p.128)

Children living with their mothers but no fathers commonly live in poverty for seven or more years. In two-parent families, sustained poverty is rare. ("Just the Facts," p.44)

Ninety percent of married fathers contributed \$5,000 or more to their families in 1989. Less than 10 percent of absent fathers who owed support that year contributed \$5,000 or more. One fourth of single mothers with a child support award receive no support. ("Just the Facts," p.45)

General Economic Trends for Families. From 1973 to 1991, the poorest one-fifth of families saw a 9 percent decline in their incomes. The richest one-fifth of families saw an 18 percent increase. ("Just the Facts," p.8)

The child poverty rate was 14 percent in 1969, but rose to 22 percent in 1991. Children replaced the elderly as the poorest group in America in 1974, and children remain the poorest Americans. ("Just the Facts," p.40)

About half the increase in American child poverty in the 1980s was attributable to changes in family structure. Child poverty rates probably would be a third less if family structure had not changed since 1960. (Pennsylvania State University study, cited in "Mandate for Change," p.159, Whitehead, p.77)

Shrinking Numbers of Juveniles. The proportion of adolescents in America is the smallest since 1900. Just 12.3 percent of the population was in the 10- to 19-year-old range in 1991, compared to 17.8 percent of the population in 1970. ("Just the Facts," p.104)

In 1950, there were 16 workers contributing to the Social Security system for every retiree drawing a pension. The ratio was 5 to 1 in 1960. By 1990, only three workers were contributing for every Social Security recipient. ("Just the Facts," p.87)

7. Children and Crime.

About 70 percent of the 25,000 juveniles in state reform institutions in 1987 did not live with both parents when they were growing up. About 54 percent lived primarily in a single-parent family. Of the 62.8 million children not in prison in 1986, 73.9 percent lived with both parents. (Survey of Youth in Custody, 1987, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Justice Department, pp.1-2)

General U.S. Crime Trends. In 1960, America reported 9,000 murders. In 1990, 23,440 people were murdered in the United States. The murder rate rose from 5 per 100,000 people to 9.4 per 100,000 people, an increase of 88 percent. ("Crime in the United States 1990," Federal Bureau of Investigation, pp.8-9)

From the late 1950s to mid 1970s, America had an almost constant 200,000 people in its prisons. In the late 1970s, the prison population began to rise sharply. By 1990, America had 1,180,000 people in prisons and jails - 1,098,000 of them men. ("Correctional Populations in the United States 1990," Bureau of Justice Statistics, p.8, pp.78-80)

New York City, 1939: 3 percent births outside of marriage; city population: about 7,455,000.
Total murders: 241.

New York City, 1992: 45 percent births outside of marriage; city population: about 7,350,000.
Total murders: 2,007.

JAPAN: 1.1 percent births outside of marriage in 1991 (U.S. Centers for Disease Control);
0.98 murders per 100,000 people in 1991, one-ninth of U.S. murder rate.
(White Paper on Police in Japan 1992)

GERMANY: 9.4 percent births outside of marriage in 1985 (CDC);
1.5 murders per 100,000 people in 1992, one-sixth of U.S. murder rate.
(Report on Criminality in the Federal Republic of Germany 1992)

U.S.A.: 28 percent births outside of marriage in 1990;
9.4 murders per 100,000 people in 1990.

Throughout the United States, juvenile arrests for violent crimes increased 27 percent in the last decade. ("Just the Facts," p.69) The murder arrest rate for juveniles 10 to 17 quadrupled from 1965 to 1990, from 3 per 100,000 to 12 per 100,000. The juvenile arrest rate for rape increased almost 40 percent (from 16 to 22 per 100,000) from 1980 to 1990. ("Just the Facts," p.114)

From 1965 to 1991, murders of Americans under 19 more than tripled. In 1991, 3,777 Americans under 19 were murdered. Teen-age boys now are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural causes put together. ("Just the Facts," p.68, p.103, p.113)

8. Children and Out-of-Wedlock Teen Mothers.

In 1970, 30 percent of teen mothers were unmarried. In 1989, the proportion of teen mothers who were unmarried had more than doubled, to 67 percent. Currently, 350,000 babies a year are born to teens, about two-thirds of them unmarried. ("Just the Facts," p.110)

Premarital sex among adolescents has been increasing for the last two decades. ("Just the Facts," p.108) About 1 of every 10 girls under age 20 becomes pregnant each year. ("Just the Facts," p.109)

Daughters of single mothers are 164 percent more likely to have a premarital birth. (Princeton sociologist Sara McLanahan, reviewing studies in the 1970s and 1980s, cited by Whitehead, p.62)

Fewer than 10 percent of unwed teen mothers offer their babies up for adoption. (Allan Guttmacher Institute, cited in Pennsylvania State Data Center's PSDC News, May 1992)

9. Children and Divorce.

The divorce rate in the United States more than doubled in the 1960s and 1970s, to the highest divorce rate in the world. The divorce rate leveled off in the 1980s. About half of all American marriages end in divorce. ("Just the Facts," p.5)

1960: 9 divorces a year per 1,000 married women
1991: 21 divorces a year per 1,000 married women (Whitehead, p.50)

Each year, more than 1 million American children go through their parents' divorce or separation. ("Just the Facts," p.5) One quarter of American children today are expected to enter a stepfamily. Of the children in stepfamilies, nearly half can expect parents to divorce again before their late teens. (Whitehead, p.50)

After divorce, mothers and children experience an average 30 percent decline in income. (Whitehead, p.62) After divorce, nearly half of the children have no contact at all with their fathers. ("National Survey of Children and Parents," National Commission on Children, 1991, pp.22-23)

Daughters of single mothers are 92 percent more likely to dissolve their own marriages. (McLanahan, Princeton, cited by Whitehead, p.62)

10. Children and the Absent Parent.

Seven out of eight absent parents are boys or men. ("Just the Facts," p.44) The behavior of absent and irresponsible parents adds significantly to the risks children face on the path to adulthood. ("Beyond Rhetoric," National Commission on Children, 1991, p.18)

11. Children and the Influence of Television.

Children 6 to 12 years old watch 3 to 4 hours of television a day. ("Just the Facts," p.26) Many teenagers watch as much. Nielsen Media Research found the average household tuned into 5:06 hours of TV per day in 1960, and 7:04 hours of TV in 1992.

U.S. Ad Spending on Network and Spot TV by Category, 1990

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Automotive | \$1.790 billion (Network) and \$1.665 billion (Spot). |
| 2. Food | \$1.664 billion and \$1.025 billion. |
| 3. Toiletries & Cosmetics | \$1.034 billion and \$280 million. |
| 4. Entertainment | \$875 million and \$1.171 billion. |
| 5. Drugs & Remedies | \$787 million and \$320 million. |

*** PROPOSAL ***

That the federal government undertake a massive and permanent campaign, in televised messages every day, to educate adolescents about what builds a friendship, what makes a nurturing parent, and how individuals and society benefit when mothers and fathers raise their children together.

American families: What's been said

President Lyndon B. Johnson

Howard University commencement address, June 4, 1965

"The family is the cornerstone of our society. More than any other force it shapes the attitude, the hopes, the ambitions, and the values of the child. When the family collapses it is the children that are usually damaged. When it happens on a massive scale the community itself is crippled.

"So, unless we work together to strengthen the family, to create conditions under which most parents will stay together -- all the rest: schools and playgrounds, public assistance and private concern, will never be enough to cut completely the circle of despair and deprivation."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor

December 12, 1965 (Interview with New York Times)

"Anybody who thinks family policy is for squares should spend a Sunday afternoon in the nearest children's home. The children of our slums are being savagely cheated by society, which thinks it is too sophisticated to care about whether children have fathers and mothers have husbands.

"America is the only industrial democracy in the world that does not recognize the welfare and stability of family life as a principal object of social policy. The idea is not very radical and I suppose not very interesting. But the result of ignoring the subject as we have done can be hideous.

"In his speech at Howard University President Johnson spoke from the heart about the problem. It can be solved and it will be if the rest of us show as much courage in facing up to it as he did."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

U.S. Senator

Family and Nation, 1986

"The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself. Witness the civil rights legislation of the 1960s that conservatives so opposed."

"A commonplace of political rhetoric has it that the quality of a civilization may be measured by how it cares for its elderly. Just as surely, the future of a society may be forecast by how it cares for its young."

David Popenoe

Professor of Sociology, Rutgers University

Council on Families in America

"Fostering the New Familism, A Goal for America," 1992

"In the national task of rebuilding the nest, there is one goal that the new familism movement should not pursue -- the goal of trying to reconstruct the traditional family of the 1950s. That family had two characteristics a growing number of younger Americans today -- both men and women -- are no longer willing to accept: the lingering male dominance, a legacy of centuries; and the lifelong removal of

women from the labor force, a legacy of the past 150 years. The goal should be to foster a new form of the nuclear family in which there is a 50-50 division of power and decision-making between wife and husband, and a firm understanding that both women and men will share a common (though not necessarily identical) commitment to the work force over the course of their lives.

"Two key characteristics of the traditional nuclear family should be restored or preserved at all costs, however: an enduring sense of family obligation, and the desire to put children first. Without these two qualities, the nuclear family becomes a hollow shell."

Mandate for Change, 1993

Progressive Policy Institute of the Democratic Leadership Council

"A Progressive Family Policy for the 1990s"

Elaine Ciulla Kamarck and William A. Galston

"Even after correcting for variables such as family income, parental education, and prior family history, children from single-parent families tend on average to fare less well economically, educationally, and emotionally, and to encounter more difficulties on the road to becoming self-sustaining adults. Regardless of the academic discussion about the direction of causality, an honest accounting of these problems is critical.

"The economic consequences of a parent's absence (almost always the father's) are often accompanied by psychological consequences, which include higher than average levels of youth suicide, low intellectual and educational performance, and higher than average rates of mental illness, violence and drug use. The data also suggest that the daughters of teenage mothers are more likely to become teenage mothers themselves and are at higher risk of long-term welfare dependency. Equally suggestive is the anecdotal evidence of the difficulties many young single mothers experience in raising their sons. The absence of fathers as models and codisciplinarians is thought to contribute to the low self-esteem, anger, violence, and peer-bonding through gang membership of many fatherless boys.

"Nowhere is this more evident than in the long-standing and strong relationship between crime and one-parent families."

Mary Frances Berry

The Politics of Parenthood: Child Care, Women's Rights, and the Myth of the Good Mother, 1993

"There was a time in our country's history when fathers took responsibility for the care of their offspring.... We need to insist on fathers and mothers sharing the care of their offspring as well as the opportunity to enjoy the fulfillment of individual rights. Whatever else we do, we must understand that advocating women's rights and greater opportunity for women in the workplace and in every avenue of public life is inconsistent with an insistence on mother taking care of children and housework.

"To demand mother care and women's employment while professing a dedication to equality of rights for women is not only illogical but wishful thinking. Without such understanding, the conflicts that arise from the belief that women must handle both job and child care effectively to be considered successful will continue. Defining child care primarily as women's sphere reinforces the devaluing of women and prevents their equal access to power. Until these concepts are generally accepted, those who seek to advance the cause of women's rights will remain embattled."

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead
Researcher, liberal, Institute for American Values
"Dan Quayle Was Right"
The Atlantic Monthly, April 1993

"We assume that most people in America will be able to work, care for themselves and their families, think for themselves, and inculcate the same traits of independence and initiative in their children. We depend on families to teach people to do these things. The erosion of the two-parent family undermines the capacity of families to impart this knowledge; children of long-term welfare-dependent single parents are far more likely than others to be dependent themselves. Similarly, the children in disrupted families have a hard time forging bonds of trust with others and giving and getting help across the generations. This, too, may lead to greater dependency on the resources of the state.

"Over the past two and a half decades Americans have been conducting what is tantamount to a vast natural experiment in family life. Many would argue that this experiment was necessary, worthwhile, and long overdue. The results of the experiment are coming in, and they are clear. Adults have benefited from the changes in family life in important ways, but the same cannot be said for children. Indeed, this is the first generation in the nation's history to do worse psychologically, socially, and economically than its parents. Most poignantly, in survey after survey the children of broken families confess deep longings for an intact family."

Providence (R.I.) Journal Bulletin

Mark Patinkin

April 14, 1993, Interview with David Blankenhorn, Institute for American Values

"He told me studies have...found that fatherlessness is far more likely to lead boys to crime than such factors as poverty, race and neighborhood. Kids from one-parent households, he said, are also more likely to drop out, get pregnant as teens and have emotional problems.

"I asked why. In short, said Blankenhorn, boys traditionally learn to be men from fathers. Fathers, he explained, have the credibility to say 'yes' when boys start subtly asking, 'Am I a real man?' Without fathers, boys are more prone to exaggerate masculinity -- swaggering, ditching school, fighting, joining gangs. And without a marriage relationship as a model, they're more prone to get girls pregnant without marrying them.

"Then there are girls. 'Who's the first man in every girl's life?' asked Blankenhorn. 'Usually a father -- a man who will love them and take care of them. Girls' self-esteem tends to be strongly related to a paternal relationship. If you have no relationship with a father, your latter relationships with males tend to be characterized by anxiety and lack of self-esteem.' Such girls, he said, often turn to premature sex for comfort. Since they have a model of single motherhood, they're also more prone toward out-of-wedlock childbearing."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

"Defining Deviancy Down"

The American Scholar, 1993

"For a period there was some speculation that, if family structure got bad enough, this mode of deviancy would have less punishing effects on children. In 1991 Deborah A. Dawson, of the National Institutes of Health, examined the thesis that 'the psychological effects of divorce and single

parenthood on children were strongly influenced by a sense of shame in being 'different' from the norm.' If this were so, the effect should have fallen off in the 1980s, when being from a single-parent home became much more common. It did not. 'The problems associated with task overload among single parents are more constant in nature,' Dawson wrote, adding that since the adverse effects had not diminished, they were 'not based on stigmatization but rather on inherent problems in alternative family structures' -- alternative here meaning other than two-parent families.

"We should take note of such candor. Writing in *The Journal of Marriage and the Family* in 1989, Sara McLanahan and Karen Booth noted: 'Whereas a decade ago the prevailing view was that single motherhood had no harmful effects on children, recent research is less optimistic.' "

National Commission on Children

U.S. Sen Jay Rockefeller, Chairman, 1993

"Children do best when they have the personal involvement and material support of a father and a mother and when both parents fulfill their responsibility to be loving providers.

"There can be little doubt that having both parents living and working together in a stable marriage can shield children from a variety of risks. Rising rates of divorce, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and absent parents are not just manifestations of alternative lifestyles, they are patterns of adult behavior that increase children's risk of negative consequences. Although in some cases divorce is the least harmful outcome of a troubled marriage, today's high rate of family breakdown is troubling.

"Unfortunately, many children do not have two loving parents. Many single parents would not have chosen to raise their children alone. While the nation should strive to create a social and economic context in which strong, two-parent families can form and stay together, it must never fail to reach out and protect single-parent families as well. Many single parents make extraordinary efforts to raise children under difficult circumstances. Their success is a tribute to their commitment and hard work and to the loving attention they give their children. As parents, they deserve society's full support."

President Bill Clinton

State of the Union Address, January 25, 1994

"We can't renew our country when within a decade more than half of the children will be born into families where there has been no marriage....

"We can't renew our country when children are having children and the fathers walk away as if the kids don't amount to anything....

"We can't renew our country until we realize that governments don't raise children, parents do. Parents who know their children's teachers and turn off the television and help with the homework and teach the kids right from wrong. Those kind of parents can make all the difference. I know. I had one."

LIBERALS ARE FOR TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

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