

January 3, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: Jennifer Klein and Debbie Fine

SUBJECT: Attached Document on the *file* Impact of the Republican Budget on Women

FYI, attached is a document that we put together for the Women's Office before December recess. It was distributed to appropriate groups on Friday, December 22.

Please let us know if you have any comments or questions. Thanks.

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Carol Rasco ✓
Alexis Herman
Jeremy Ben-Ami
Marilyn Yager
Melanne Verveer
Nancy Ann Min
Michael Waldman
Larry Haas
Ann Lewis

cc: Betsy Myers
Barbara Woolley
Judy Gold
Carrie Wofford
Gene Sperling
Pauline Abernathy

IMPACT OF THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET ON WOMEN

On Women's Health and Safety:

Cuts Medicare by an unprecedented \$203 billion. Women comprise over 20 million, or 57%, of the 37 million Medicare recipients. Nearly 5 million, or 23%, of women aged 65 or older depend solely on Medicare to help with their medical bills.

Increases costs for Medicare beneficiaries, by increasing premiums and allowing doctors to overcharge patients. These cost increases will be particularly difficult for older women, who have a median income of only \$8,600 a year.

Ends the guarantee of meaningful coverage under Medicaid, and replaces it with a block grant, cutting \$117 billion by 2002. 60% of all Medicaid beneficiaries are women. Today, Medicaid covers prenatal care, check ups for children, long-term care and other vital services. Under the block grant, states could eliminate any benefits except immunization and restricted family planning.

Jeopardizes long-term care at home and in nursing homes. The Republican budget takes away Medicaid's guarantee of nursing home coverage. Over 75% of nursing home residents are women.

- This does not include those who will be denied home and community-based services, an optional service that is currently covered in all states. Under the Republican budget, as states try to manage their Medicaid programs with fewer dollars, these services are more likely to be cut. **Older women living alone are the major users of paid home care services, and women are the primary care-givers for families cannot afford or want to forestall costly institutional care.**
- **Repeals federal enforcement of nursing home standards** that protect quality of care in nursing homes and institutions caring for people with mental retardation. Since 1987 when reforms establishing these standards were implemented, nursing home quality has improved dramatically: the use of physical restraints has declined 25%; dehydration has declined 50%; hospitalization rates have declined 31%.
- **Undermines protections against spousal impoverishment** by repealing the guarantee of nursing home coverage, as well as the right of individuals to enforce spousal impoverishment protections in federal court when they believe they have been wrongfully denied, making the protections unenforceable. **Most spouses protected by enforcement are women.**

Threatens women's health and safety, by attacking comprehensive family planning services and systematically chipping away at constitutionally guaranteed rights of women to make their own reproductive choices.

Reduces the effectiveness of the Violence Against Women Act. The House Republican plan provides \$22 million less than the President for domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, including zeroing out grants for women's shelters and grants to reduce sexual abuse of runaway and homeless youth.

On Economic Security and Jobs:

Raises income taxes on low and moderate income working families by \$30 billion through cuts to the Earned Income Tax Credit. Nearly half of all EITC recipients with children are female heads of households who choose to work rather than rely on welfare.

Cuts funding for enforcement of worker protections that so many women depend on, like Family and Medical Leave and the minimum wage, by 12%.

Provides too little child care for real welfare reform that would move people from welfare to work, meaning that thousands of women will need to stay at home with their children and on welfare instead of going to work.

Eliminates the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps low-income families with their home heating and cooling bills: No assistance may leave millions of families with an impossible choice between staying warm in the winter and having enough money to buy food. **Approximately 70% of families who receive LIHEAP assistance are female-headed households.**

Undermines the national nutritional safety net. The Republican budget excessively cutting food stamp benefits by about \$35 billion over 7 years, cutting benefits by 20% in 2002.

On Education and Training:

Slashes employment and training programs by \$1.6 billion overall. Specifically, it cuts funding to help dislocated workers find new jobs by \$379 million, denying 155,000 dislocated workers assistance. Current law allows states to provide services to displaced homemakers as part of the dislocated workers program. **With less money, states will be less likely to include displaced homemakers in employment and training programs.**

Cuts Safe and Drug Free Schools by 60%, reducing for up to 23 million students services that keep drugs and violence away from children, their schools, and their communities; **including violence prevention programs in schools that combat sexual harassment.**

Eliminates Women's Educational Equity Act Program, denying schools funding for research and training programs designed to promote education equity for women and girls.

On Public Health and The Environment:

Funds enforcement of public health and environmental safeguards 25% below the President, crippling efforts to enforce laws against polluters by taking the cop off the environmental beat.

Leaves Americans exposed to hazardous waste. The Republican budget slashes toxic waste cleanup. These cuts threaten efforts to protect the health of our nation's families, including pregnant women, living near the nation's worst hazardous waste sites.

Rolls back protection of drinking water, our first line of defense in protecting public health, by cutting funds to cities and towns for drinking water treatment facilities by 45% compared to the President's budget for 1996. This removes funds needed to ensure that local drinking water has been treated to eliminate contaminants that endanger our communities.