Extent

84 folders, approximately 7,818 pages

Summary

This collection consists of material pertaining to Cecilia Rouse. She served on the National Economic Council (NEC) under President Clinton from 1998-1999. Her particular area of expertise was obtaining H-1B visas (temporary work permits) for immigrants at a time when the United States experienced a high-tech boom. The collection contains emails, memoranda, drafts of bills, correspondence, lists, charts, and graphs. Extensive handwritten comments by Rouse can be found throughout these records.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in 2015-1112-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related material. Cecilia Rouse, an economist, held prominent positions in both the Clinton and Obama administrations. Educated at Harvard, she received her A.B. in economics, magna cum laude in 1986, followed by her Ph.D. in the same subject in 1992. Rouse served on the National Economic Council (NEC) under Clinton from 1998-1999 and on the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) under Obama from 2009- 2011. Working on a relatively small nucleus of issues in the 1990s, Rouse dealt with H-1B visas, adult literacy, and job training. She concentrated most of her efforts on temporary work permits for immigrants at a time when the United States found itself in the midst of a high-tech boom needing high skilled workers. Rouse arrived in Washington, as she said, just when “H-1B visas became a policy issue.” By working on that particular issue, the number of workers receiving such visas rose from 65,000 to 115,000. Another topic Rouse worked on concerned community colleges. In the end, her research proved to be pivotal in convincing President Clinton to provide additional funding for postsecondary institutions in the FY 2000 budget. She

discovered that a majority of community college students did not finish their first year of study. Accordingly, Rouse lobbied Clinton to set aside funds focusing on completion over access with respect to institutions of higher learning. The records of Cecilia Rouse take the form of emails, memoranda, talking points, publications, graphs, charts, handwritten notes, drafts of bills, notes, faxes, correspondence, and lists. They cover a whole host of subjects that include H-1B visas and negotiations, H-2A legislation, job training, poverty, equal pay, reemployment zones, High Hopes for College for America's Youth (an initiative announced by President Clinton), and even more in the way of new programs in areas like busing, magnet schools, health and child care, civil rights, and family and medical leave. But a topic of special expertise in the case of Rouse appeared to be visas for immigrant workers. Rouse apparently wanted to address skill shortages in the U.S. work force by allowing additional immigrants possessing technical savvy to enter the country. The catch here would be for this to go into effect only after every opportunity had been given American employees to fill the positions requiring specialized skill sets. Regulations defined what was viewed as a "specialty occupation" to encompass but not be limited to "biotechnology, chemistry, architecture, engineering, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences, medicine and health, education law, accounting, business specialties, theology, and the arts." One way to meet these perceived needs focused on utilizing regional skills alliances (RSAs) involving partnerships with industry-led training. These RSAs were to be financed by fees from employers taking part in the H-1B program, although disagreement with the decision continued at higher levels of authority for a long time. Rouse went through the path of alliances to increase the number of immigrants obtaining visas to get into the U.S. and work in skilled professions. There is much back and forth banter between Rouse and her colleagues over the exact wording of bills (H.R. 3736 – Workforce Improvement and Protection Act of 1998 and S. 1723 – American Competitiveness Act) to achieve their stated goal of giving American workers precedence vis-à-vis immigrants coming into the country in the case of jobs mandating a degree of technical expertise. Extensive written comments appear on bill drafts, emails argue for precise wording, and the deliberations of meetings get recorded in detail. The H-2A visa program makes it possible for foreign nationals to enter the United States to obtain temporary or seasonal agricultural work. Although, Rouse did not play a major role in the implementation of rules and regulations in this case. Two significant pieces of legislation emerged during the Clinton administration that dealt with the issue of immigrants coming into the country each year and laboring for four or five months

picking produce and other similar jobs. H.R. 3410 – Temporary Agricultural Worker Act of 1998 and S. 1563 – Temporary Agricultural Worker Act of 1997 both established a pilot program providing for a 24-month waiting period allowing immigrants to gain admission into the United States and become employed as seasonal agricultural workers subject to a labor condition attestation, or expert witness testimony, from an employer or association. In essence, these laws permitted farmers to handle their labor shortages in a timely manner while, at the same time, domestic workers continued to receive protection. There is information regarding the case of Vidalia Harvesting, Inc. in Vidalia, Georgia as it related to the H-2A applications. An information paper outlined the basics of the case, which occurred in February 1998 and involved raids by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). In addition to the core record, the package consists of a paper describing an H-2A reform proposal and order forms for onions and other assorted items. There are six folders of material dealing with High Hopes for College for America's Youth, an educational initiative announced by President Clinton in February 1998. The basic core of the program, beginning with $140 million in the FY 99 budget, revolved around promoting partnerships between colleges and middle or junior high schools located in low-income communities. The foundation of the program was the creation of a support network for children in the sixth or seventh grades that they could rely on for some sort of stability all the way through high school graduation. In an effort to gain the backing of college presidents for the proposition, the administration sent out a form from coast to coast that read High Hopes is the kind of program that has the potential to make a very real difference in raising the aspirations and the achievements of young people in low-income communities. Please add me to the list of college presidents who are endorsing the concept. The standard language came with the note, "Please act quickly – time is limited." Contact information was solicited and given and approximately 250 institutions replied positively with close to 60 organizations endorsing High Hopes.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that were responsive to this FOIA request were found in this collection area—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files. Staff and Office files are maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and document all levels of administration activity. Staff and Office files are processed at the folder level, that is individual documents are not selected and removed from a folder for processing. While this method maintains folder integrity, it frequently results in the incidental processing of documents that are not wholly responsive to the subject area.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act.

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2016. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2017-05-30

Container List

The following is a list of folders processed in response to 2015-1112-F:
Box 1
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
National Economic Council
Rouse, Cecilia
Admin. [Administration] H-1B Letters and SAPs [Statements of Administration Policy]/
Comments [OA/ID 13559]
Admin. [Administration] Positions/Drafts H-1B [OA/ID 13559]
Anne Lewis – Training [OA/ID 13560]
Bipartisan Working Group (H-2A) [OA/ID 13560]
Ceci [Cecilia] Graphs [OA/ID 13560]
Closing the Skills Gap – 1/28 [OA/ID 13561]
CNMI [Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands] [OA/ID 13561]
Computer Programmers [OA/ID 13560]
CPI [Consumer Price Index] Revision [OA/ID 13560]
Disability Task Force [OA/ID 13561]
District of Columbia [OA/ID 13561]
Education Research [OA/ID 13561]
Box 2
[Endorsements of High Hopes] [1] [OA/ID 13561]
[Endorsements of High Hopes] [2] [OA/ID 13561]
[Endorsements of High Hopes] [3] [OA/ID 13561]
[Endorsements of High Hopes] [4] [OA/ID 13561]
[Endorsements of High Hopes] [5] [OA/ID 13561]
[Endorsements of High Hopes] [6] [OA/ID 13561]
Equal Pay [1] [OA/ID 13560]

Box 3
Equal Pay [2] [OA/ID 13560]
Equal Pay [3] [OA/ID 13560]
Ford Foundation/Gear Up [OA/ID 13560]
Gear Up Implementation [OA/ID 13560]
GM [General Motors] Strike [1] [OA/ID 13560]
GM [General Motors] Strike [2] [OA/ID 13560]
GI Bill Previous Pres. [President] ‘91 [1] [OA/ID 13560]
Box 4
GI Bill Previous Pres. [President] ’91 [2] [OA/ID 13560]
GI Bill/Workforce Development [1] [OA/ID 13560]
GI Bill/Workforce Development [2] [OA/ID 13560]
[H-1B Cap – IT [Information Technology] Industry] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B “Horror” Stories [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Legislation [1] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Legislation [2] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Legislation [3] [OA/ID 13559]
Box 5
H-1B Misc. [Miscellaneous] [1] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Misc. [Miscellaneous] [2] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Negotiations [1] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Negotiations [2] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Notes [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Press/Letters [1] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Press/Letters [2] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Press/Letters [3] [OA/ID 13559]
Box 6
H-1B/Smith Record [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Training/Education [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Testimony/OIG [Office of Inspector General] Report [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Visas/Memos [1] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Visas/Memos [2] [OA/ID 13559]
H-1B Visas/Memos [3] [OA/ID 13559]
H-2A Data, etc. [OA/ID 13560]
H-2A Data/Wages Issues [OA/ID 13560]
Box 7
H-2A Legislation [OA/ID 13560]

H-2A Memos [OA/ID 13560]
H-2A/Notes [OA/ID 13560]
[H-2A Opposition] [binder] [OA/ID 13561]
H-2A Press/Letters [OA/ID 13560]
Higher Ed [Education] Info Campaign [OA/ID 13561]
Higher Ed [Education] – Persistence [1] [OA/ID 13561]
Higher Ed [Education] – Persistence [2] [OA/ID 13561]
Job Training Group [1] [OA/ID 13561]
Job Training Group [2] [OA/ID 13561]
Junior ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] [OA/ID 13561]
Box 8
MI [Michigan] and Privatization [OA/ID 13560]
New Ideas [1] [OA/ID 13561]
New Ideas [2] [OA/ID 13561]
New Ideas [3] [OA/ID 13561]
Not on List [OA/ID 13561]
Older Americans Act [OA/ID 13561]
Others' Positions – H-2A [OA/ID 13560]
Poverty Line [1] [OA/ID 13560]
Poverty Line [2] [OA/ID 13560]
Box 9
Poverty Line [3] [OA/ID 13560]
Race Initiative – Ideas [OA/ID 13561]
Reemployment Zones [OA/ID 13560]
Regional Alliances – Job Training [H-1B] [OA/ID 13559]
School Construction [OA/ID 13561]
School to Work [OA/ID 13561]
Skill Shortages [1] [OA/ID 13559]
Skill Shortages [2] [OA/ID 13559]
Streamlining/H-2A [OA/ID 13560]
Supportive Services [OA/ID 13561]
Box 10
21st Century Jobs Initiative [OA/ID 13561]
VP [Vice President] Summit [OA/ID 13561]
WIA [Workforce Investment Act] – Ashcroft Amendment [1] [OA/ID 13560]
WIA [Workforce Investment Act] – Ashcroft Amendment [2] [OA/ID 13560]