

File - Ideas generally

March 12, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: BRUCE REED
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SUBJECT: IDEAS

Health and Safety

1. Patients' Bill of Rights/Quality Commission: The counsel's office is almost done vetting our nominations for the Quality Commission, which will be charged with developing a Patients' Bill of Rights. Announcement of the Commission can be combined with the release of a HHS regulation that would guarantee an expedited appeal whenever a plan proposes to deny care that a Medicare patient believes is urgently needed.

2. Medicare fraud legislation: We have finalized and are ready to announce a new and very good package of Medicare fraud and abuse initiatives. We can unveil this package in Saturday's radio address -- or if it doesn't fit there, we can look for another opportunity to make the announcement. At the same time, we can underscore our recent successes in prosecuting fraudulent health care providers.

3. Medical records privacy: We are working with HHS to develop legislation to ensure appropriate privacy protections for medical records. The subject is complex, but we have the discussions on a fast track. We are aiming to have legislation ready within a month.

4. Business endorsement of kids' coverage: We are working on an event at which important representatives of the business community endorse our proposal to extend health care coverage for children. We think we can have this event ready sometime in April.

5. Executive order on unemployed workers: We are exploring whether we have legal authority to issue an executive order granting six months of health care coverage to unemployed federal workers (thus mirroring our budget proposal). We

should know within a week or so whether this action is doable.

6. Classified research with human subjects: In response to recommendations of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, we have prepared (1) an Executive Order strengthening protections for human subjects of secret research; and (2) legislation expanding compensation for Cold War-era uranium miners. We can announce these policies and release a summary report detailing the Administration's full response to the Committee's 18 recommendations. This is tentatively scheduled for release March 25, to provide news during the President's day off.

7. Tobacco Advertising: We are reviewing a proposal for the President to take action responding to tobacco companies' use of the internet and other fora to get around our tobacco regulation. We could use "Kick Butts" day to announce this proposal, but we should first get DOJ assurance that this proposal does not compromise our efforts to defend our tobacco regulation in court. We are also working on a response in case the federal judge in North Carolina rules against us. That ruling is expected in the next 5 weeks.

8. Seat Belt Study: The Department of Transportation will give the President a report in a week or so on ways to increase seat belt use. DOT's report is likely to include ideas for presidential challenges to states and business groups, as well as a proposal (consistent with our budget) to offer financial incentives to states to improve and enforce seat belt laws. We can release the report when the President meets with Big 3 auto executives. (It is possible that we could announce at the same event a bigger safety initiative: the addition of language to our NEXTEA proposal sanctioning states that don't have tough seatbelt laws. Secretary Slater is currently considering whether to support sending this language to Congress.)

9. Aggressive drivers/driver emergency number: DOT is working on a package of proposals to deal with aggressive drivers; we expect to get the package within 10 days. But DOT thinks the package will seem skimpy and that it may provoke safety advocates to say that the real problem is the speed limit. DOT has suggested as an alternative action creating a uniform emergency number for cellular phones. DOT thinks such an action can be ready by May.

10. Children's Health EO: The DPC, NEC, CEQ, and OSTP are working on an executive order designed to ensure that the federal government considers the special needs of children when taking regulatory action. The executive order requires every agency to determine whether a regulation may impose disproportionate risks on children and, if so, to evaluate the specific effects of the regulation on children. Several agencies have raised serious last-minute objections, but we are hoping that we can work these out in the next few weeks.

11. AIDS Vaccine / Emerging Infections / Wiping Out Polio Worldwide: Our scientists are confident there will be an AIDS vaccine, but are very reluctant to promise one by a time certain. (Margaret Heckler made such a promise in the early '80s, and was ridiculed for it.) We are meeting with them again this week to press the question one more time. We have asked them to recommend steps the President could take to advance the search for an AIDS vaccine. OMB offered to find them more money, but they said that wouldn't make much difference. We are also working with them on the possibility of an initiative to combat emerging infections like ebola and malaria around the world. No one knows it, but our budget includes \$20 million for the World Health Organization and other groups like Rotary International to wipe out smallpox worldwide.

Education

1. **Testing in military schools:** Announcement scheduled for tomorrow.
2. **School construction event.** Announcement scheduled for this Friday.
3. **State School Officer Endorsements:** The Chief State Schools Officers organization will endorse the President's testing proposal when he meets with them on Monday. We are also lining up endorsement letters from individual members.
4. **California Endorsement of Testing Plan:** California's superintendent, Delaine Eastin, is prepared to endorse our testing proposal, and a group of Silicon Valley high-tech executives are prepared to do so as well. This is scheduled for the President's visit March 24. California's endorsement is very important, since the state has 10-15% of the country's schoolchildren.
5. **Advisory Panel for Education Tests:** The Education Department is thinking about the appropriate structure and composition of a panel of teachers and other trusted educators to advise on the development of our 4th and 8th grade tests. (The Department may decide to use an existing, non-governmental group to perform this function.) We expect a decision in a few weeks.
6. **Teacher of the Year:** The President will meet with the Teacher of the Year and other outstanding teachers at the White House on April 18. He may be able to announce that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has selected additional master teachers.
7. **Roundtable/Town Hall on Standards:** The President could participate in a session with teachers, students, parents, and others to explain the standards associated with his 4th and 8th grade tests. The roundtable would demonstrate with concrete examples the kind of student work -- and the kind of teaching -- that

reflects high standards.

8. Agency sponsorship of charter schools: We can set a process in motion for federal agencies -- for example, NASA or the NSF -- to sponsor charter schools in partnership with teams of teachers. We should keep this project small at the start and focus it on DC. It will probably take us three or four months to be ready to announce the first sponsorship.

9. Incentives for engineering: We are currently exploring whether we can take executive action (or should propose legislation) providing monetary incentives for students to take engineering courses. We will know more within a week.

Welfare

1. Welfare-to-Work Transportation Plan: We announced today our Access to Jobs proposal, which would allocate \$600 million of NEXTEA funding to improve transportation systems so that welfare recipients and other low-income workers could get to work more easily. We are currently exploring whether we can take an executive action that would call further attention to these efforts. We should know in a week or two.

2. Child Support: We can announce new child support enforcement numbers, along with the submission of a new HHS report on child support enforcement and our submission of legislation (previously announced) to make it a felony to cross state lines to evade child support obligations. This is another possible radio address for this Saturday or the next.

3. Statutory Rape/Teen Pregnancy Prevention: DOJ should be ready sometime in April to release a report on statutory rape and its relation to teen pregnancy rates. We could do a radio address timed to coincide with the release of this report, discussing strategies to enforce statutory rape laws and decrease teen pregnancies.

4. Internet in welfare offices: We are currently exploring ways to increase the access of welfare offices around the country to internet, with its wide range of job databanks. Eli Segal's organization may play some role in this effort. Gingrich is also interested. We will have a proposal within a week or two.

5. Welfare business group announcement: Eli Segal is planning a formal announcement of his organization in early April, preferably in Milwaukee -- where he would line up the support of a few hundred businesses, Mayor Norquist, Governor Thompson, and Mitch Fromstein, head of Manpower. This is tentatively scheduled for April 7.

Crime and Drugs

- 1. Hard Liquor Advertising:** For years, the hard liquor industry has voluntarily agreed not to show liquor ads on TV. Some companies have now broken that agreement. In furtherance of his National Drug Control Strategy roll-out, the President could send a letter to the FCC requesting that they consider restrictions on hard liquor advertising on television during certain time periods.
- 2. Sex Offender Registry:** The President could visit the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Arlington, Virginia where he would take a tour of facility and announce that the interim National Sex Offender Registration system -- which he directed the Attorney General to develop in the June 21, 1996 Radio Address -- is now up and running. He also would announce that he is signing an Executive Order instructing the Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense to ensure that sex offenders released from Federal and Military prisons are listed in the national registry. This is ready to go.
- 3. National Anti-Drug Media Campaign:** The President's FY 98 Budget Submission includes \$175 million for a national anti-drug media campaign directed towards our youth. We will not be able to expend any funds on this initiative until we enact the appropriation bill, but ONDCP can expend discretionary funds in its FY 97 budget to begin producing anti-drug ads. At a Rose Garden event, the President could kick off his Administration's anti-drug media campaign with one of the celebrities who has committed to appear in an ad. The President could also release a letter that he is sending to every network issuing his challenge that they match our contribution and begin dedicating more air time to anti-drug ads. ONDCP is currently reaching out to celebrities and sports figures such as Michael Jordan, Grant Hill, and Tiger Woods to tape anti-drug ads. This event should be ready sometime in April, and could coincide with the Chicago Bulls visit April 3.
- 4. Anti-Gang Prosecutor Event:** The cornerstone of the President's Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Strategy is a \$200 million anti-gang prosecution grant program. The President could meet with prosecutors from across the country in the Oval Office where they would thank him for his strong support in fighting gangs. The prosecutors -- Republican and Democrat -- would urge Congress to move quickly to pass the President's bill. We recommend April for this event.
- 5. After-school initiative event:** To highlight his new after-schools initiatives in the Anti-Gang Bill, the President could visit a successful after-school program and meet with the kids helped by the program. That day, he also would announce that HHS is providing several million dollars in grants from its FY 97 appropriation for new after-school programs across the country. This event should occur after the anti-gang event described above.

6. Victims Constitutional Amendment: In June 1996, the President announced his support for a constitutional amendment for victims rights -- to guarantee victims the right to be notified, to receive restitution, receive reasonable protection measures, and to be heard at sentencing and parole hearings. At a White House event, the President could: (1) urge Congress to pass the Amendment quickly; (2) receive a report from the Attorney General -- in response to his June 25, 1996 Directive -- outlining measures taken by the Justice Department to increase and improve Federal services and protections for victims of crime; (3) announce the creation of a Federal victim notification system; and (4) announce additional funding from the Victims Crime Fund -- which is larger than ever before -- that will be provided to victims services and shelters throughout the country. This could be a radio address for April 19, the third anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing or during April 14-18, which is National Crime Victims Week.

7. Nanny checks: We could introduce legislation prepared by the Justice Department that would facilitate criminal checks for non-criminal purposes -- for example, a check on a potential nanny or schoolbus driver. But we oversold the Oprah bill a couple of years ago as a solution to this problem; if we do another big event, we will have to admit that our purported solution didn't do much of anything.

8. Ban on importation of gun clips: We are looking into the possibility of endorsing Sen. Feinstein's bill to close a loophole in the assault weapons ban by prohibiting the importation of 15-round magazines. We will have a recommendation later this week.

Family

1. Family leave executive order: We think we have legal authority to issue an executive order granting federal employees the additional family leave provided in our legislative proposal. We will have a final answer on this proposal within the week.

2. Child care centers: Ideas proposed to us last week on child care would be either ineffectual or prohibitively expensive. We are continuing to look for sensible policy initiatives.

Service Summit

1. Scholars' Program: We announced last year a \$1,000 scholarship for high school students who have performed outstanding service, with the federal government putting up \$500 and a community or service organization (e.g., Lions,

Elks, Kiwanis, Moose) putting up the rest. We can be ready any time to do an event inviting high schools that have obtained matching funds to submit names of candidates for the scholarship (perhaps in conjunction with a letter from the President to every high school principal).

2. Commitments/Adopt-a-School: We could announce "commitments" from the federal government to the service summit -- proposals for how the federal government can support service and voluntarism to help youth. We could be ready to make such announcements in 2-3 weeks if necessary. One possible commitment would involve agencies adopting schools -- offering literacy services, donating computers, doing career days, etc.

Environment

1. Brownfields: The EPA wants to roll out an expansion of the existing Brownfields pilot program in about two months. The Administration will also resubmit legislation creating a new tax incentive and grant program to encourage the redevelopment of Brownfields.

2. Right-to-know law: EPA should be ready in about two months to issue a rule extending disclosure obligations under the right-to-know law to a number of additional industries -- probably including mining, hazardous waste handlers, and utilities.

3. Safe water regulations: EPA will propose regulations to require water utilities to provide information to consumers about what is in tap water. The proposal will not be ready until September or so.