DATE: 26-Sep-96

TO: EDNA LOUISE SAFFY

SUBJECT: WHITE HOUSE UPDATE FOR WOMEN – PLEASE SH

FROM: BETSY MYERS 456-7300
OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

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"Today, we say, loud and clear: If you stalk and harass, the law will follow you wherever you go. And if you are the victim of stalking and want to build a new life somewhere else, you will have the full protection of federal law." — President Clinton, signing the new Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act, September 23, 1996.

CRIME AND SAFETY
NEW LAW TO STOP STALKERS: On September 23, 1996, the President signed the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act (as part of the 1997 Defense Authorization Bill). This new law dramatically toughens federal law against stalkers who cross state lines to threaten, harass and instill fear in others, particularly women and girls.

Safety and security at home. The Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act makes it a federal crime for any stalker to cross state lines to pursue a victim. The Act makes it:

* A federal crime whether or not there is a protection order in effect. Before today, women who did not have protection orders were not protected by federal law. Today's legislation would provide protection to women who could not get a protection order.

* A federal crime before any act of violence has been committed. Victims pursued across state lines by a spouse or intimate no longer have to suffer an act of violence before they can be protected by federal resources.

* A federal crime even if the stalker is not someone you know: The 1994 Violence Against Women Act gave federal protection to women who were being stalked by spouses, boyfriends or former "intimates." With today's new law, the President has expanded that protection to people who are stalked by a stranger or someone they have not been intimate with — an acquaintance, for instance.

Building on our record. Today's legislation builds on a number of initiatives and laws that have been designed to end the fear and threat of being stalked.

* President Clinton's 1994 Crime Bill made it a federal crime
for stalkers to violate protection orders by travelling across state lines to pursue a victim and made it a federal crime for batterers to pursue their wives or girlfriends across state lines.

* President Clinton's Violence Against Women Act established a national registry of sex offenders, created a 24-hour toll-free domestic violence hotline, and made three strikes and you're out the law of the land.

* Megan's Law, which President Clinton fought for and signed into law, requires states to tell communities whenever a dangerous sexual predator is in their midst.

* The Brady Bill has kept 60,000 guns out of the hands of fugitives, felons and stalkers.

**KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDERS:** On August 26, the President announced that he would support legislation that would amend the 1968 federal firearms statute to bar any person convicted of any crime of domestic violence -- not just a felony -- from owning and possessing a firearm. The need for such legislation -- which is being sponsored in Congress by Senator Lautenberg and Representative Torricelli -- is supported by the statistics:

- In 1994, there were 88,500 incidents of domestic violence where a firearm was present.
- Responding to these calls is deadly business for law enforcement. From 1985 to 1994, there were 55 law enforcement officers killed when they responded to family quarrels and 9 out of 10 of those deaths resulted from firearms.

**Stopping All Abusers from Getting Guns:** Many spouse abusers are not covered by existing laws such as the Brady bill, which President Clinton signed in 1993 and the 1994 Clinton Crime Bill, which included the historic Violence Against Women Act. The Violence Against Women Act made it a crime for those under restraining orders to carry a gun. However, the overwhelming majority of domestic violence cases are misdemeanors, not felonies. The result is that these offenders are still free under federal law to possess a firearm. That is why President Clinton is calling on Congress to disarm domestic violence offenders this year. To help States in enforcing such a measure, President Clinton's 1994 Crime Bill is already providing funding for States to improve their criminal history record-keeping abilities and in 1996 the Clinton Administration specifically instituted a "National Stalker and Domestic Violence" record-keeping program.

**A NEW POLICE NUMBER FOR COMMUNITIES:** On June 23, President Clinton asked the Attorney General to work with the FCC, law enforcement leaders, and the telecommunications industry to develop a national community policing number for non-emergency
calls that will be as easy to use and remember as the overburdened 91 number system. This non-emergency number will create an easy way for residents who are not reporting crimes-in-progress or life-threatening situations to reach local police while keeping the 911 lines clear for true emergencies that require an immediate response.

**CELLULAR PHONES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:** On July 17, President Clinton and Vice President Gore announced that the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) has offered to provide 50,000 cellular phones and free air time to citizen patrols and community block watches throughout the country. There are an estimated 20,000 neighborhood block watches and citizen patrols throughout the country. Neighborhood watch has been proven to help prevent crime and promote cooperation between law enforcement and residents. The phones will be pre-programmed so that neighborhood watch volunteers will be connected directly to the local police. The announcement is a positive response to the challenge issued to local communities and the cellular phone industry by the President and Vice President last year and is part of President Clinton's ongoing efforts to combat crime, which has resulted in lower crime rates, and fewer serious crimes such as murder, robbery, and forcible rape.

Fewer serious crimes. According to preliminary figures released in May by the FBI, serious crimes reported to the nation's law enforcement agencies decreased a full two percent in 1995. It was the fourth consecutive yearly decrease in reported crime. Cities with over one million inhabitants saw crime fall by 8% last year.

**CRACKING DOWN ON GANGS:** On September 16, President Clinton proposed another new measure to combat gangs — by extending the statute of limitations for serious violent crimes such as kidnapping, rape and particularly serious drug crimes, as well as for gang-related prosecutions under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statute (RICO). Since 1990, the number of RICO prosecutions in gang-related cases has risen 58%. This year, 38% of the Department of Justice's RICO prosecutions have been gang-related. President Clinton also sent the Anti-gang and Youth Violence Control Act of 1996 to Congress to strengthen laws that will stop the rise of youth violence and gangs, including expanded use of drug and gun courts.

**KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE AND DRUG FREE:** On August 23, President Clinton announced new Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") regulations to protect children and teens from the dangers of tobacco use. The new regulations require children to prove their age with an ID to buy cigarettes, ban cigarette vending machines from places frequented by children and teens, and ban tobacco advertising near schools and playgrounds. Under the new
regulations, the FDA will soon take steps to require the FDA to educate our children about the real dangers of smoking. President Clinton's initiative to end teen tobacco use builds on several other prongs of the Clinton Administration's strategy to keep our kids safe including expanding the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act of 1994, encouraging states to adopt a "zero-tolerance" strategy on underage drinking, and supporting drug testing of high school athletes.

ECONOMIC AND HEALTH SECURITY

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

On Aug. 21, the President signed the bi-partisan Kassebaum-Kennedy health insurance reform bill, which will have profound effects on the lives of many of our citizens and increase access to health care. No longer will Americans live in fear of losing their coverage just because they have a pre-existing condition. No longer will Americans face the dilemma of hesitating to go to a new and better job for fear of losing their insurance coverage. And because of the bill's guarantee issue provisions, no longer will small businesses be denied access to insurance for their employees. As many as 25 million Americans will benefit from the important portability, guarantee renewal, and guarantee issue insurance reform provisions included in the Kassebaum-Kennedy legislation.

Although the insurance provisions are the core of this important legislation, numerous other measures that President Clinton has long advocated are also included:

* Eliminating the Discriminatory Health Care Tax Treatment of the Self-Employed. The new law assures that the self-employed are treated more like other employers purchasing insurance by phasing the self-employed tax deduction to 50%.

* Preventing Fraud and Abuse. By providing for permanent funding and greater penalties, this law permits better targeting and prosecution of "bad apple" health care providers who are bilking the system of billions of dollars from Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance.

* Making the Health Care System More Simple. By helping design a common electronic system for private insurers paying health care claims, the new law would modernize, streamline and cut costs of health insurance paperwork. This measure also takes steps toward establishing federal privacy protections to prohibit inappropriate disclosure of this information.

We need to do more. The fact that there are 40 million Americans without insurance in this nation attests to this fact. We must work vigilantly to assure that the quality of health care that Americans are receiving remains the best in the world. And, we must work to assure that no American is discriminated against on
the basis of a particular diagnosis.

INCREASED MINIMUM WAGE
On August 20, President Clinton signed into law an historic 90 cent increase in the minimum wage, helping more than ten million hard-working Americans. An estimated 10 million hourly workers who earn between $4.25 and $5.14 will benefit directly from the President's minimum wage victory. The increase in the minimum wage could also have a "ripple" effect on the over 3 million workers who earn within 60 cents of the new minimum wage. For full-time minimum wage workers, a 90-cent increase would raise their yearly income by $1,800 -- as much as the average family spends on groceries in over 7 months.

* A promise made and a promise kept. In Putting People First, Bill Clinton and Al Gore proposed to "increase the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation." The President specifically proposed a 90-cent increase 18 months ago in February 1995.

* Ensuring No Parent Has To Bring Up Their Kids In Poverty. President Clinton's dramatic extension of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) helped lift hundreds of thousands of working families out of poverty. With a 90-cent minimum wage increase and the expanded EITC, we can ensure that no parent who works full-time and plays by the rules will have to bring up their kids in poverty.

* Helping Adult Workers Trying To Support Their Families. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 69% of those workers who would benefit from an increase are adults, age 20 or over; three-fifths (59%) are women, many of whom are trying to raise the family on $4.25; and the average minimum wage worker brings home half of their family's earnings.

Making Adoption Easier
When President Clinton signed the minimum wage bill, he also signed an important adoption provision that takes steps to ease and encourage adoption for the tens of thousands of children who today are waiting for permanent homes. A $5,000 tax credit ($6,000 for family who adopt children with special needs) allows middle class families -- for whom adoption is often too expensive -- to adopt children to love and nurture. In addition, the bill prohibits states from denying or delaying adoption on the basis of race, color or national origin -- building on the President's longstanding goal to end the historical bias against interracial adoptions.

NEW PENSION PORTABILITY: On September 17, the President announced new actions by the Treasury Department to make pensions more portable and retirement more secure.

* Protecting Investment Opportunities. The Treasury actions will ensure that workers who choose to leave their
retirement savings with a former employer do not have all their good investment options taken away.

Helping people take their pensions with them when they change jobs. The President also announced that the Treasury Dept. has issued guidance and transmitted a proposed regulation to remove restrictions that prevent many businesses from taking employees' past savings into their own retirement plans. Before, employers could have their entire plans disqualified for accepting a new employee's savings from another account that were not qualified. Businesses rightly avoided this risk, but at a cost to America's workers. As a result of the announced actions, the new employer will not be liable, and workers will be able to take their pensions with them from job to job.

The President has already taken important steps to ensure the value of working Americans' pensions by preventing raids on workers' pensions. Last year, President Clinton vetoed the Republican budget, which would have given corporations a new opportunity to raid the pensions of nearly 4 million workers and retirees.

Pension Help from the Minimum Wage Bill: As part of the minimum wage bill, the President signed into law important components of his Retirement Savings and Security Act:

* Expanded Pension Coverage by Creating a New Small Business 401(k) Plan with no red tape and a simple one-page form to make it easier for small businesses to provide workers with pensions. The bill also simplifies pensions for businesses of all sizes.
* Increased Pension Portability by Taking Away the 1-year Wait to Save at a New Job. The law contains the President's proposals to increase portability, such as a provision to help workers who change jobs and want to keep saving in their new jobs by amending the law to encourage employers to let new employees begin saving without having to wait a year.
* Enhanced Pension Security by Protecting Government Employees' Savings from Orange-County Style Fiасcos by requiring that state and local government pension plans be held in trust so workers do not lose savings if that government declares bankruptcy.

Helping Women: As part of the Minimum Wage increase, the President has also signed into law significant women's pension provisions that put women's pension options into plain language so they will not inadvertently lose their pension rights due to divorce or death of a spouse. Specifically, the new law requires the Treasury Dept. to create a model form for spousal consent with respect to survivor annuities and a model Qualified Domestic
Relations Order to spell out the various options to be considered when a pension is being divided upon divorce. These new forms will replace the confusing forms in existence and provide spouses and pension administrators with clear, understandable language.

ENACTING WELFARE REFORM

On August 22, President Clinton signed into law "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," a comprehensive bipartisan welfare reform plan that will dramatically change the nation's welfare reform system. The bill contains work requirements, a performance bonus to reward states for moving welfare recipients into jobs, comprehensive child support enforcement, and supports for families moving from welfare to work — including increased funding for child care and guaranteed medical coverage.

Under the new law, states are required to move a large percent of their caseloads into work. The bill also limits recipients to a maximum lifetime stay of five years on the welfare rolls — although the bill President Clinton signed allows states to exempt 20% of their caseloads for "hardship" reasons. In addition, microenterprise programs are recognized as a work option under the Act to help recipients start their own small businesses.

To assist in this transition, the new welfare law provides $14 billion in child care funding — an increase of $4.5 billion over the current law — to help more mothers move into jobs. The new law also guarantees that women on welfare continue to receive health coverage for their families, including at least one year of transitional Medicaid when they leave welfare for work. The law also includes provisions affecting teen parents such as "live at home" and "stay in school" requirements for unmarried minor parents who must participate in educational and training activities in order to receive assistance.

Improvements From Previous Bills: The "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996" includes important improvements over the previous welfare reform bills submitted by Congress, which President Clinton refused to sign because they did too little to move people into jobs, and failed to provide the supports — like child care and health care — that families need to move from welfare to work. Several improvements over HR 4, the vetoed bill are:

*20% hardship exemption: Under the new law, states will be able to exempt 20 percent of their caseload from the five year limit for cash assistance under AFDC based on hardship. HR 4 included only a 15 percent exemption.
* **Guaranteed medical coverage:** The new law preserves the national guarantee of health care for poor children, the disabled, pregnant women, the elderly and people on welfare. Families receive one year of transitional Medicaid if a family leaves welfare because of increased earnings. H.R. 4 would have ended the guarantee of Medicaid coverage for cash assistance recipients.

* **Increased child care funding and mandatory child care maintenance of effort:** The new law provides $14 billion in child care funding -- an increase of $4.5 billion over 6 years -- allowing more mothers to leave welfare for work. States will receive an initial allotment each year from a fund of approximately $1.2 billion. To access additional funds, states must maintain their own spending at 100 percent of their FY 1994 or 1995 spending on child care (whichever is higher). By contrast, H.R. 4 increased child care funding by just $300 million over current law, and did not require states to meet child care maintenance of effort requirements to access additional federal child care funding, allowing states to lower their own spending.

* **Preservation of nutrition programs:** H.R. 4 would have given states the option of block granting food stamp benefits. The bill would have also capped federal food stamp program expenditures, limiting maximum benefit increases to 2 percent per year, regardless of growth in need for assistance. The new law maintains the national nutritional safety net by eliminating the block grant option as well as the food stamp cap.

* **Current law child protection and adoption:** Unlike H.R. 4, the new plan maintains current law on child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care, and adoption services. The new law also protects children by maintaining health and safety standards for day care. H.R. 4 would have eliminated health and safety protections.

* **Supplemental $2 billion contingency fund:** The Act establishes a $2 billion contingency fund that states could access on a participatory basis with the federal government. This would help states in the event of high unemployment or an increased food stamp caseload. H.R. 4 provided only a $1 billion contingency fund -- half of the funds provided in the new law.

* **Protection of disabled children:** H.R. 4 would have cut SSI by 25% for many disabled children. The new law eliminates this proposed two tier system.
Optional family cap. Under the new law, states have the option to implement a family cap. H.R. 4 required states to deny cash benefits to children born to welfare recipients unless the state legislature explicitly voted to provide benefits.

Areas To Be Fixed: Even with these substantial improvements, President Clinton has pledged to fix two provisions of the welfare bill:

* **Food Stamps:** According to President Clinton, the new law cuts deeper than it should in food stamps, mostly for working families who have high shelter costs.

* **Legal Immigrants:** The law includes provisions that would deny most forms of public assistance to most legal immigrants for five years or until they attain citizenship. The President has said that legal immigrants who fall on hard times or through no fault of their own and need help should get it, although their sponsors should take additional responsibility for them.

NEW JOB OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS: Since the passage of the Welfare Reform Act, President Clinton has acted on his commitment to ensure job opportunities for welfare recipients by proposing the Welfare-To-Work Jobs Challenge -- a three-pronged $3.4 billion initiative to create job opportunities for the hardest-to-employ welfare recipients. The components of the Welfare-To-Work Jobs Challenge are:

* **TARGETED WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDIT:** Building off the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) -- signed into law by President Clinton on August 20 -- the President proposed a targeted tax credit to create new job opportunities for long-term welfare recipients.

* **TAX INCENTIVES TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN DISTRESSED AREAS:** President Clinton has proposed a comprehensive strategy to increase investment in distressed communities, including the use of Community Development Banking, Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and Brownfields tax incentives. President Clinton has proposed to expand this strategy by a new tax credit to investors in qualified financial institutions and venture capital funds.

* **WELFARE-TO-WORK JOBS INITIATIVE:** President Clinton's Welfare-To-Work Jobs Initiative is designed to help communities move one million of the hardest-to-employ
welfare recipients into jobs by the year 2000, while giving states and communities maximum flexibility in developing job creation strategies.

HELPING WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS: Microenterprise programs are an option for states to offer as job training under the Welfare-To-Work Jobs Initiative. President Clinton has long been a strong advocate for community-based microenterprise programs, and the Labor Department, the Treasury Department and the Department of Health and Human Services have developed microenterprise programs. Surveys indicate that the majority of microentrepreneurs are women.

TAKING ON ILLEGAL SWEATSHOPS
On August 2, President Clinton announced a commitment by the leaders of the apparel and footwear industries that he hopes will lead to a system for assuring Americans that the clothes and shoes they buy are made under decent and humane working conditions. The President met with industry leaders and representatives from unions and non-governmental organizations who are in partnership to (1) ensure that American goods are made without the use of sweatshop labor and meet acceptable labor standards and (2) give consumers a visible sign (perhaps a label) that their products are made without exploitative labor.

The Administration is continuing its Three-Pronged "No Sweat" Strategy:
(1) Enforcement. The Department of Labor conducts surprise inspections of major garment centers and enforces the "hot goods" provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which prohibits the shipment of goods made by sweatshops or illegal labor practices.
(2) Recognition. Since December 1995, the Labor Department has issued lists of retailers and manufacturers with the best garment practices (especially by contractors).
(3) Education. The Labor Department also is spearheading a garment public service announcement initiative and an Internet Web site on how to combat sweatshops.

EDUCATION
TARGETING TAX CUTS FOR EDUCATION
In August, President Clinton announced to the nation his proposals for responsible tax reforms to encourage investment in education including:

* $1,500 HOPE Scholarship Tax Cut For College Tuition. $1,500 refundable tax credit for tuition in the first year of college and for the second year if the student earns at least a B average in the first year. This $1,500 tax credit will
make the average-priced community college free and provide a downpayment for more expensive schools for families with incomes up to $100,000.

* $10,000 Tuition Tax Deduction for Education and Training at Any Age. Families with incomes up to $100,000 could deduct up to $10,000 in tuition, providing a tax cut of up to $2,000 per family. This deduction could be taken for education and training at any time in order to encourage life-long learning.

* $500 Child Tax Credit for Children Under 13. Phased in $500 per child tax credit for families with incomes up to $75,000, providing tax relief to 19 million families with 37 million children.

* Expanded IRA for Education, Retirement, First-time Home ownership. Double the income limits for IRA to make 20 million more families eligible for tax-deductible IRA contributions, and allow penalty-free IRA withdrawals for education, first home purchases, and major medical expenses as well as retirement.

MAKING SURE EVERY CHILD CAN READ:
On August 27, the President announced the $2.75 billion "America Reads? Challenge to ensure that all children are reading independently by the end of the third grade. Parental and community responsibility are the backbone of the "America Reads" Challenge, which builds on the success of community tutoring programs and National Service programs like AmeriCorps and RSVP Senior volunteers in developing and coordinating effective tutoring programs.

I. Parents As First Teachers Challenge Grants. The President proposes a Parents as First Teachers Challenge Grant Fund that invests in success by supporting effective, proven efforts that provide assistance to parents who want to help their children become successful readers by the end of third grade. Approximately $300 million in grants will be available over 5 years (FY98 - FY2002) to national and regional groups as well as local communities and organizations.

II. America's Reading Corps: Individualized After-School and Summer Tutoring for More Than 3 Million Children in Grades K-3 Who Want and Need It. The President's proposal provides $2.45 billion to support tutoring efforts. $1.45 billion in net new investments over 5 years, in addition to $1 billion already specified in President Clinton's balanced budget for National Service participants, will be directed specifically to the "America Reads" Challenge. President Clinton's goal is to mobilize 1 million tutors -- in addition
to the 30,000 Reading Specialists and Volunteer Coordinators funded through the President's proposal — to provide individual attention to all young children who need reading assistance.

III. Providing 1 Million 3 and 4 year-olds with a Head Start. President Clinton's balanced budget includes a major expansion of Head Start so that it can reach 1 million pre-school children in 2002.

IV. Challenge to Private Sector. This national effort will only be successful if those in the private and non-profit sector return to the President's ?America Reads? challenge. This new ?America Reads? initiative builds on Clinton Administration efforts to work with the private sector in helping our children learn how to read, such as the ?Partnership for Family Involvement in Education? and ?Read*Write*Now.?

REBUILDING SCHOOLS
On July 11, the President introduced new funding to improve our nation's schools. Key elements of the President's initiative include:

* Up to 50% Interest Subsidy for New School Construction and Renovation to reduce interest costs on new school construction and renovation projects by up to 50%, with a sliding subsidy scale depending on need.

* $20 Billion in School Construction Spurred by $5 Billion in Federal Jump-Start Funding Over 4 Years. The interest reduction is equivalent to subsidizing $1 out of every $4 in construction and renovation spending. $5 billion in federal funding over 4 years — with most of the money administered by the States — would support $20 billion in construction and renovation.

* Goal of 25% Increase in School Construction Over 4 Years. National spending on school construction and renovation is currently about $10 billion a year or $40 billion over 4 years. By focusing on incremental or net additional construction projects, this initiative aims to ensure that at least half of the $20 billion supported by federal subsidies would not have otherwise occurred. This would increase school construction by at least $10 billion to a total of $50 billion over 4 years — increasing school construction by 25%.
IMPROVING TELEVISION FOR OUR CHILDREN

President Clinton announced on July 29 that the four major networks, the National Association of Broadcasters, and leading advocates for educational television will support a new proposal to require broadcasters to air three hours of quality educational programming each week. The President made the announcement during his meeting with leaders of the television networks and leaders in children's programming. On August 8, the proposal became a regulation after the Federal Communications Commission voted unanimously to approve the regulation. Earlier this year, the President required the installation of anti-violence screening (V-Chips) in all new televisions and announced a breakthrough agreement with the media industry to develop a television ratings system.

The UN Women's Conference One Year Later

On Saturday, September 28, 1996, the President's Interagency Council on Women will sponsor a nationwide teleconference with conferences in every state of the union to celebrate "UN Women's Conference - One Year Later". Americans will report on progress since the Women's Conference; share what's working in communities, and look ahead to develop a national action agenda. For more information, call 202-456-7350 or see the website at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/Women/IACW/html/IACWhome.html.