



The **Phyllis Schlafly Report**

VOL. 21, NO. 8, SECTION 1

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MARCH, 1988

What's Wrong With Federal Baby-Sitting?

A hundred thirty-one Democratic Congressmen spent a January weekend at the plush Greenbrier resort hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia discussing politics and how to win in 1988. They devised a game plan to use "kids' issues" to help the Democrats reclaim constituencies that they have lost to Republicans who have made "family values" their rallying cry over the last several years.

Stanley B. Greenberg of The Analysis Group, Inc., presented an issue paper called "Kids as Politics: A Proposed Campaign Strategy for Democratic Candidates in 1988." Its theme was that engaging in political rhetoric about "kids" will provide the Democrats with "an enormous opportunity to shape the political discourse, after years of responding to a public debate controlled by the Republicans."

The cold and calculating discussion of children as a technique to get votes is apparent: "kids are an umbrella ... kids are a common currency ... kids are a common coinage." The paper urges that "Democrats must get voters to focus on their anxieties about the future and make those feelings real and effective. Kids are the best vehicle."

Liberals seeking support for their politicking about children are relying on backup from a conference on kiddy care held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York on March 17-18, 1988. The two-day program is staged by the radical feminists who want the federal taxpayers to go full-scale into the baby-sitting business.

Some idea of the quality of expertise on child care offered at this gab session can be seen by the names of the speakers. The best known are Senator Chris Dodd and Gloria Steinem, neither of whom has any children, and the exciting highlight of the conference is breakfast with Phil Donahue.

The board of directors of the Child Care Action Campaign, the conference sponsor, includes the former head of the National Organization for Women, Eleanor Smeal, and the current heads of other radical feminist organizations, the N.O.W. Legal Defense & Education Fund, the National Women's Political Caucus, and *Ms.* magazine.

The Child Care Action Campaign publishes a newsletter that provides advice on child care from such "experts" as Dr. Ruth. The NBC Today Show boarded the publicity train for federal baby-sitting by giving friendly feature interviews to

both Patricia Schroeder and Betty Friedan, and newspapers have joined the chorus by printing manufactured "news" about an alleged "crisis" in child care.

This orchestrated media campaign is designed to build support for the Dodd-Kildee kiddy care bill, which would appropriate \$2.5 billion for federally-financed and federally-regulated day care. That's just the first year's price tag; the ultimate goal is \$100 billion annually. Most of the money would go to build a bureaucracy under a federal administrator of kiddy care in the Department of Health and Human Services, instead of to relieve the financial burden on families with children.

The Dodd-Kildee baby-sitting bill is a thoroughly unjust bill because it is (1) outrageously discriminatory against mothers who care for their own children, (2) outrageously discriminatory against families who choose alternate child care by relatives, friends or neighbors without regard to whether they are government licensed, (3) outrageously discriminatory against families who choose religiously-affiliated day care, (4) outrageously discriminatory against excellent day care arrangements that would be made more costly or driven out of business by an influx of federal money going only to those institutions that submit to busybody government regulations, (5) bureaucracy-building instead of benefit-giving, and (6) fraudulent because its regulations will simply increase the cost and reduce availability of day care without preventing the hiring of child caretakers who may have records of crime, drugs, or disease.

The most cost-efficient way for the Federal Government to help families pay the costs of child care is to give them a tax credit on their income tax, including a refundable tax credit for employed families at the low tax-paying levels. Under that method, 100% of the available funds would go directly to families.

That's exactly why the liberals don't like the tax credit method. Their real purpose is to build a bureaucracy giving jobs to their friends and vote-buying programs to liberal Democratic Congressmen.

In this campaign year of 1988, all voters should be on guard to identify the strategy, tactics, and objectives of politicians who play the "politics of kids." There is a lot more to it than just kissing babies.

What's Wrong With the Dodd-Kildee Baby-Sitting Bill?

The left-hand columns of these pages contain excerpts from the 62-page Dodd-Kildee Bill which are discriminatory against mothers who care for their own children, discriminatory against families' freedom to choose the child care they want without government interference, or bureaucracy-building instead of benefit-giving.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

(a) This Act may be cited as the "Act for Better Child Care Services of 1987."

SEC. 2 FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) Congress finds that—

(1) the number of children living in homes where both parents work, or living in homes with a single parent who works, has increased dramatically over the last decade;

(2) the availability of quality child care is critical to the self-sufficiency and independence of millions of American families, including the growing number of mothers with young children who work out of economic necessity;

(3) high quality child care programs can strengthen our society by providing young children with the foundation on which to learn the basic skills necessary to be productive workers;

(4) the years from birth to age 6 are critical years in the development of a young child;

(5) high quality early childhood development programs provided during the period referred to in paragraph (4) are cost effective because such programs can reduce the chances of juvenile delinquency, adolescent pregnancy and improve the likelihood that children will finish high school and become employed;

(6) the number of quality child care arrangements falls far short of the number required for children in need of child care services;

(7) the rapid growth of participation in the labor force by mothers of children under the age of 1 has resulted in a critical shortage of quality child care arrangements for infants and toddlers;

(8) the lack of available child care services results in many preschool and school-age children being left without adequate supervision for significant parts of the day;

(9) many working parents are unable to afford adequate child care services, and do not receive adequate financial assistance for such services from employers or public sources;

(10) a large number of parents are not able to work or to seek the training or education they need to become self sufficient because of the lack of affordable child care;

(11) making adequate child care services available for parents who are employed, seeking employment, or seeking to develop employment skills promotes and strengthens the well-being of families and the national economy;

(12) the exceptionally low salaries paid to child care workers contributes to an inordinately high rate of staff turnover in the child care field, makes it difficult to retain qualified staff, and adversely affects the quality of child care;

The right-hand columns of these pages give suggested language showing how the Dodd-Kildee Bill could be amended to make it non-discriminatory, and to give 100 percent of the available funding directly to families instead of most of it to building a bureaucracy that would control and dictate family decisions.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

(a) This Act may be cited as the "1988 Act for Family Child Care."

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) Congress finds that—

(1) the number of children living in homes without a fulltime mother, or without any father at all, has increased dramatically over the last decade;

(2) the availability of mother care is critical to the self-sufficiency and independence of millions of American families, and mothers should not be forced into the labor force out of economic necessity;

(3) high quality mother care can strengthen our society by providing young children with the foundation on which to learn the basic skills necessary to be productive workers;

(4) mother care is especially needed in the critical years in the development of a young child, from birth to age 6;

(5) high quality mother care during the period referred to in paragraph (4) is cost effective because fulltime mothers provide children with object constancy and personal care above and beyond what an employee would give; and such constant supervision can reduce the chances of juvenile delinquency, adolescent pregnancy and improve the likelihood that children will finish high school and become employed;

(6) experience shows that the overwhelming majority of mothers prefer to provide their children with mother care, and, if that is not possible, prefer care within the family unit or with a known neighbor in a nearby home, and only 12 percent of mothers place their children in day care that could be described as a "facility," an "institution," or a "center";

(7) the rapid growth of participation in the labor force by mothers of children under the age of 1 has resulted in a critical reduction in mother care needed by infants and toddlers;

(8) the economic crunch on mothers of small children results in many preschool and school-age children being left without adequate supervision for significant parts of the day;

(9) many mothers have been forced to seek employment in the labor force because taxes take such a large percentage of their family income, and because the current \$2,000 tax exemption for dependents should be \$6,000 if a child were to have the same relative value in the income tax code as did a child three decades ago;

(10) a large number of parents are not able to give their children fulltime mother care because of the heavier taxes they are forced to pay to finance the Child Care Tax Credit, a provision of the income tax law which discriminates against fulltime mothers but in favor of employed mothers, and against the less affluent but in favor of the more affluent.

Dodd-Kildee Bill Text (continued)

(b) PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this Act to —

(1) provide assistance to States to improve the quality of, and coordination among, child care programs, and to provide additional resources for child care services;

(2) promote the availability and diversity of quality child care services for all children and families who need such services;

(3) provide assistance to families whose financial resources are not sufficient enough to enable such families to pay the full costs of necessary child care services;

(4) strengthen the functioning of the family unit by seeking to ensure that parents are not forced by lack of available programs or financial resources to place a child in an unsafe or unhealthy child care facility or arrangement;

(5) increase the opportunities for attracting and retaining qualified staff in the field of child care to provide high quality child care to children;

(6) strengthen the competitiveness of the United States by providing young children with a sound early childhood development experience;

(7) lessen the chances that children will be left to fend for themselves for significant parts of the day; and

(8) improve the productivity of parents in the labor force by lessening the stresses related to the absence of adequate child care.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

(1) The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of Child Care as established in section 15(a).

(2) The term "child care certificate" means a certificate issued by the State that parents may use only as payment for child care services that meet the Federal, State, and local standards set forth in this Act...

(5) The term "eligible child" means—

(A) a child age 15 or under;

(B) whose family income does not exceed 115 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size; and

(C) who resides with a parent or parents who are working, seeking employment, or enrolled in a job training or other educational program; ...

(6) The term "eligible provider" means a child care center, family day care provider, group care provider, or other facility which meets the Federal, State and local standards set forth in this Act. ...

SEC. 18. NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHILD CARE STANDARDS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) In order to improve the quality of child care the Secretary shall establish a National Advisory Committee on Child Care standards, the members of which shall be representatives of—

(A) different types of child care programs;

(B) resource and referral programs;

(C) child care and early childhood development specialists;

(D) early childhood education specialists;

(E) pediatric health care and related fields;

Suggested Language (continued)

(11) easing the economic strain on mothers so they can care for their own children promotes and strengthens the well-being of families and the national economy;

(12) the inordinately high rate of staff turnover in the institutional environment increases stranger anxiety and adversely affects the quality of child care, making it more urgent that mother care be encouraged so that children can enjoy object constancy of the mother as their primary caretaker.

(b) PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this Act to —

(1) provide assistance to families in order to make mother care of children economically feasible;

(2) make sure that Federal child care policy does not discriminate against mother care of children or in favor of commercial child care facilities at the expense of family care;

(3) provide assistance to families whose financial resources are not sufficient enough to enable such families to give fulltime care to their children;

(4) strengthen the functioning of the family unit by seeking to ensure that parents are not forced by lack of available financial resources to place children in the care of strangers rather than with their mother or other family members;

(5) increase the opportunities for attracting and encouraging mothers to provide high quality care to their own children;

(6) strengthen the competitiveness of the United States by providing young children with a sound early childhood development experience, which all research shows is best achieved in a loving home where the child enjoys object constancy with his mother;

(7) lessen the chances that children will be permanently impaired by having to suffer the stress and anxiety of maternal deprivation; and

(8) improve the capability of parents to give personal quality care to the children they have brought into this world.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

(1) There shall be no "Administrator of Child Care" or "Administrator of Baby Sitting" authorized in this Act.

(2) The term "child care certificate" means a certificate issued by the State to parents to use in their sole discretion for the care and nurturing of their own children. In no event shall any Federal, State or local regulations presume to tell parents how they shall care for their own children, or restrict parents to using such certificates only with agencies that are government licensed or with persons who are government certified.

(5) The term "eligible child" means—

(A) a child 15 or under;

(B) whose family income does not exceed 115 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size;

(C) who resides with a parent or parents, regardless of their employment status.

(6) The term "eligible provider" means a parent or guardian.

Dodd-Kildee Bill Text (continued)

(F) organizations representing child care employees;
(G) individuals who are experienced with regulating child care programs; and

(H) parents who have been actively involved in community child care programs. ...

(c) **FUNCTIONS.** The National Advisory Committee shall—

(1) review Federal policies with respect to child care services and such other data as the Committee may deem appropriate;

(2) not later than six months after the date of implementation of such policies, submit to the Secretary proposed minimum standards for child care programs (setting forth separate recommended provisions for center-based programs and for family day care programs and taking into account the different needs of infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age children); ...

(d) **MINIMUM CHILD CARE STANDARDS.** The proposed minimum child care standards developed pursuant to subsection (c)(1) shall include—

(1) standards applicable to center-based programs including—

(A) group size limits in terms of the number of teachers and the number and ages of children;

(B) the maximum appropriate staff-child ratios;

(C) qualifications, training, and background of child care personnel, including ongoing training requirements for such personnel (to supplement the provisions in section 14);

(D) health and safety requirements for children and caregivers; and

(E) parental involvement in and access to child care and development programs funded under this Act; and

(2) standards applicable to family day care including—

(A) the maximum number of children which define family day care;

(B) the total number of infants permitted in care;

(C) the minimum age for caregivers; and

(D) health and safety requirements for children and caregivers. ...

SEC. 19. PROHIBITION ON EXPENDITURE FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.

(a) SECTARIAN PURPOSES OR ACTIVITIES.

(1) **GENERAL RULE.** No funds authorized by this Act shall be expended for sectarian purposes or activities.

(2) **DEFINITION.** For purposes of this subsection, the term “sectarian purposes or activities” means—

(A) any program or activity that has the purpose or effect of advancing or promoting a particular religion or religion generally; or

(B) with respect to child care services performed on the premises of a pervasively sectarian institution—

(i) any such services performed in any classroom or other immediate space in which child care is provided unless all religious symbols and artifacts are covered or have been removed from such classroom or space; or

(ii) any such services performed by persons who are otherwise employed as teachers or teachers’ aides in a sectarian school of such an institution which provides full-time educational services.

Suggested Language (continued)

SEC. 18. NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHILD CARE STANDARDS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.** In order to improve the quality of child care, the President shall appoint a National Advisory Committee on Child Care, the majority of whose members shall be parents whose children are grown. Other members of the Committee shall include representatives of specialists in preschool child development and persons who have had experience in church-based and different kinds of non-church-based child care facilities.

(c) **FUNCTIONS.** The National Advisory Committee shall—

(1) review Federal policies with respect to equity of treatment of mothers, ascertaining how fulltime mothers are treated under current federal law as compared with employed mothers, especially in regard to—

(A) the Child Care Tax Credit;

(B) the Individual Retirement Accounts; and

(C) day care that is financed in whole or part by Federal funds;

(2) investigate how millions of fulltime mothers in low-income families manage to give full care to their children, and make this information available to the general public so that others can profit from this information and example.

(d) **CHILD CARE STANDARDS.** — Neither the National Advisory Committee nor any other Federal agency shall have any power under this law to establish, promulgate, or enforce standards of child care on parents or on any child care providers selected by parents except as follows—

(1) to mandate severe penalties for any rape or attempted rape of a child (ranging up to the death penalty if the rape results in a death), or for any sexual exploitation of a child, in any day care facility;

(2) to require day care facilities to ascertain that their workers do not have a criminal record and have not been involved in any previous child abuse;

(3) to require that day care workers be tested for communicable diseases, especially AIDS and CMV (which is a particular danger to pregnant women and their unborn babies).

SEC. 19. EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.

(1) Funds authorized by this Act shall be expended by parents for the care of their children as the parents, in their sole discretion, deem right and proper. Funds authorized by this Act may not be restricted from use by or for—

(A) the mother herself;

(B) any family member whom the parent engages for child care;

(C) any other person whom the parent engages for child care, regardless of whether or not such person has received certain hours of government training;

(D) any religious-based institution, or facility that promotes a particular religion or religion generally, which the parent chooses for child care;

(E) any child care facility which establishes different practices or activities for girls and for boys.