



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 23, NO. 6, SECTION 1

BOX 618, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002

JANUARY, 1990

Look Who's Lobbying For Federal Daycare

The alleged demand for the Federal Government to initiate a giant daycare apparatus, with all the trappings of new bureaucracy and regulation, is entirely a creation of the media who are pursuing a liberal agenda and of special-interest groups which seek to profit by a giant new federal spending project.

This became clear when the *Washington Post* reported (12-1-89) that some of the most prominent national media personalities attended a fundraising dinner for the Children's Defense Fund, the chief organization lobbying for the baby-sitting bills known as the Dodd ABC bill in the Senate and Hawkins-Downey in the House. If you wondered why those opposed to these liberal spending bills are never invited to appear on television segments about child care, just look at the roster of who attended.

The list of attendees included *Washington Post* chairman of the board Katharine Graham, CBS 60 Minutes co-host Ed Bradley, PBS MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour co-host Jim Lehrer, NBC Today Show co-host Jane Pauley and her husband Doonesbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau, CBS news host Charles Kuralt, and *U.S. News & World Report's* former editor Roger Rosenblatt. Now you know why ONLY those lobbying FOR federal baby-sitting bills have been interviewed in news segments on those programs, and why news events of those opposed to federal baby-sitting bills are NOT covered by those publications.

Now you know why CBS 60 Minutes gave a cushy puff interview to Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, with Ed Bradley pitching for the ABC bill, but never gave a minute of coverage to anybody opposed to federal baby-sitting. Now you know why MacNeil-Lehrer has repeatedly featured leading advocates of a federal takeover of preschool children, but has never given equal treatment to those who urge tax cuts as the way to help families with children.

Now you know why Public Broadcasting network "documentaries" on daycare featured such "authorities" as Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT), chief sponsor of federal baby-sitting, and Governor Michael Dukakis (remember him?), but never any of the sponsors of tax cuts to better enable parents to raise their own children without interference from federal busybodies.

Now you know why the network TV morning programs

manufacture "news" about child care in order to interview the likes of Betty Friedan and Congresswoman Pat Schroeder (D-CO), but censor out anyone who opposes daycare bills.

The conflict of interest is striking. These news people didn't attend the fundraiser as reporters but as contributors to a cause, namely the Children's Defense Fund, a lobbying and advocacy organization for institutional daycare of the type used in socialist Sweden. Roger Rosenblatt was quoted as saying at the dinner, "It's an opportunity to put our voices behind a good cause."

Yes, indeed, the guests do put their "voices" behind federal daycare. They put their money there, too; the November 30 dinner raked in \$400,000 for the Children's Defense Fund's lobbying coffers.

The obvious intent of the federal baby-sitting bills is so outrageous that even Congressman George Miller (D-CA) admitted that they are really about "creating a lot of state committees to lobby about child care." "A lot," indeed. The bills would create 38,000 local daycare commissions which would empower tax-salaried lobbyists to agitate for more taxpayer's funds.

Congressman Thomas J. Downey (D-NY) described the advocates of federal baby-sitting as people who are "waiting for Lyndon Johnson to come back and sign the bill" and who don't realize that "the era of the Great Society is over." The liberals who want to inflict us with federal baby-sitting are trying to take us back to the Lyndon Johnson era of bigger federal spending for targeted constituencies which, in this case, means the six percent of parents who choose secular, center-style daycare (while discriminating against the 94 percent of parents who choose other types of child care such as family care or religious care).

The Children's Defense Fund has an annual budget of \$6 million and 90 employees. Naturally, this outfit expects to cash in on the flow of federal money that would come out of the federal baby-sitting bills and their 38,000 local commissions.

Another advocacy organization attempting to create an illusion of public demand for federal baby-sitting is the National Education Association (NEA). At the height of the Congressional debate on daycare last fall, the NEA sent 200 of its notorious "swat teams" to lobby Congress on this issue (reported by *Education Week*, 10-25-89).

These SWAT teams are tax-salaried teachers from selected districts who are flown to Washington, D.C. at the NEA's expense in order to lobby their Congressman. The NEA 1989 budget includes \$7,834,161 for lobbying and political purposes, of which \$586,016 is designated for expenses to send two members per district to Washington, D.C. to lobby their own Congressmen. This is in addition to the NEA's \$2 million Political Action Committee, which contributes 96 percent of its funds to Democrats.

The whole world is moving away from socialism because it is a proven economic and political failure. The demand that Congress move toward government control and regulation of preschool children is coming solely from the liberal media and from the special-interest advocacy groups which are lining up for the gravy train of a new federal spending project.

Congress should come out of its cocoon and face the real world where Americans want tax relief instead of new spending proposals. The American people didn't want Catastrophic Care for seniors and they don't want Catastrophic Care for preschoolers. The real problem with the liberals in Congress is their lust for Catastrophic Liberalism, and Americans don't want it.

The Polls Are Biased, Too

Typical of the many public opinion polls that are used to make it appear that the American people want the Federal Government to take over baby-sitting was one conducted last year by Lou Harris and paid for by the Philip Morris Companies Inc. It is obvious that the survey questions were written and sequenced to elicit predetermined results.

The Harris/PM survey revealed one of the big problems with this entire issue: the fact that so much advocacy and advice is proffered by people who have no children and therefore have no first-hand knowledge of what it means to bear and care for preschool children. These unqualified, inexperienced promoters of federally-financed and federally-regulated baby-sitting range from the high-visibility Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and feminist Gloria Steinem to the hundreds of childless staffers on Capitol Hill.

The Harris/PM survey did its pseudo-scientific survey of 2,500 adults and discovered that only 19 percent of respondents had a preschool child. Then Harris surveyed another 1,534 parents of young children, leaving the survey still with a majority of respondents who did not have any preschool children.

The Harris/PM survey used the offensive semantics of "working" versus "non-working" mothers. The notion that fulltime mothers of preschool children don't "work" is the snide attitude of childless feminists who belittle the hard work and real value (to society as well as to the family) of caring for infants and small children.

The 24-page published survey was clearly skewed to promote the idea that the Federal Government should finance and regulate daycare for employed mothers. Buried in the survey, however, was the revealing figure that "53 percent say that children under 6 are cared for at home by their mother." That tallies almost perfectly with Census Bureau figures which report that 54 percent of preschool children are in fact cared for in their own homes by their own mothers.

The responsible, caring response to this figure would be to

explore ways to increase this percentage, NOT try to provide incentives to reduce this figure by subsidizing federally-regulated warehouses for children. When the Harris/PM survey asked what type of care families prefer for preschool children, 75 percent chose care by a child's relative and only 13 percent opted for "daycare groups," a non-precise term that could include neighborhood daycare mothers and religious daycare, both of which would be disallowed under the liberal baby-sitting bills.

The Harris/PM survey reported that 85 percent of Americans say that the Federal Government should establish daycare regulations. Respondents were not told that all 50 states now have daycare regulations and there is no substantial evidence that they are unsatisfactory.

The overwhelming majority of parents choose family child care in preference to licensed, center-based daycare, anyway, and for good reasons. Family and neighbor child care providers are usually personally known to the parents and provide environments far less subject to daycare diseases.

If you have the strength to read through to the end of this Harris/PM survey, you find that 97 percent of respondents believe that "parents must play an important part" in selecting child-care alternatives and that 96 percent believe that "parents should be able to choose among several options to decide which child-care program is best suited for their own children." The 3 and 4 percent, respectively, who want to deny parents these rights are probably the child developmentalists who are salivating at the thought of giving control of preschool children to the government.

Despite all the loaded questions, the survey still came out with more people favoring President Bush's child tax credit proposal than not favoring it.

This remarkable result surfaced even though respondents were NOT told that the tax credit proposal is the only federal approach that does not discriminate against mothers who care for their own children or against employed mothers who use daycare by relatives, friends, neighbors, or churches. If respondents had been told the truth about the tax credit plan, it is likely that all respondents would favor it except the liberal bureaucrats and social service professionals who want to increase their own turf and control at the expense of the family.

The Liberal Federal Baby-Sitting Bills

The liberal federal baby-sitting bills, which did not pass in 1988 or 1989, are on Congress's agenda for early 1990: S.5 known as the Dodd ABC bill passed by the Senate, and H.R.3 known as the Hawkins-Downey bill in the House. The centerpiece of both bills is the creation of a nationwide system of baby-sitting and child-rearing by the government in the style of socialist Sweden. They would create a giant daycare bureaucracy, including more than 38,000 separate daycare commissions and a federally controlled daycare system headquartered in the public schools.

Parents who do not want their children raised in government institutions would have to pay higher taxes for this new daycare system. Parents who receive assistance will have little choice over the type of care their children receive. Daycare options would be reduced, since many private and religious daycare centers would be driven out of business by the new

daycare network subsidized by the government. This bill is clearly designed to discourage informal child care by mothers, relatives and neighbors.

Here are the major provisions of the Hawkins-Downey bill, as reported by Robert Rector, Policy Analyst of the Heritage Foundation in Issue Bulletin No. 154. Titles I through VI of this liberal baby-sitting bill were written by the House Education and Labor Committee, of which Congressman Augustus Hawkins (D-CA) is chairman.

Title I not only vastly expands Head Start, but more importantly changes its nature from a half-day program for disadvantaged children to a full-day program offering daycare and child development services to the middle class. The family income ceiling for eligibility would be raised from \$11,000 to \$31,200. The bill authorizes an additional \$1.8 billion over four years for Head Start, with up to half going to higher-income children.

Title II authorizes \$1.75 billion over four years to create a federally controlled daycare and child development program for three- and four-year-old children inside the public schools. Children from families with incomes up to \$33,300 could receive subsidized care under the program, and higher income children could attend if their families pay the costs. Much evidence, such as that developed by David Elkind, author of *The Hurried Child*, warns that such programs can harm rather than help the long-term development of children. In addition, institutionalizing preschool children causes the problem of daycare diseases. The evidence shows that their disease rate is many times higher than for children reared in a home and they are 4.5 times more likely to be hospitalized.

Title III authorizes \$2.5 billion over four years in grants to state governments to be distributed to local governments operating daycare programs or to politically selected daycare centers. States must change their daycare regulations to meet the federal standards established by the bill. The bill establishes a national commission to create "model" federal daycare regulations, which would be advisory only for the time being but are obviously intended to be the first step toward comprehensive, mandatory federal regulations.

The bill imposes 183 new daycare regulations on state governments. States can make their regulations more stringent at any time but can never make them more lenient without federal approval, a rule which transfers control over daycare regulation from state governments to the federal bureaucracy.

The bill theoretically permits funds to go to grandmothers and neighbors, but it prohibits states from distributing funds as vouchers. A grandmother would have to enter into a "contract" with the state government to care for her own grandchildren. Thus, few if any grandmothers or neighbors would actually receive any funds.

Title IV authorizes \$1.1 billion over four years in grants to state government to assess daycare needs, establish daycare referral systems, enforce daycare regulations, train daycare workers, and increase salaries of daycare workers in government daycare programs. This title requires each state to create a massive new daycare bureaucracy.

The bill requires each state receiving federal funds to create a "child development council" for each local government, which would add up to 38,000 local child development councils. Each council would be required to submit reports to

the state government every four years, thus requiring 120,000 government reports on daycare by the year 2000. These councils would become a permanent nationwide lobbying system for increased federal spending on government regulated daycare.

Titles V and VI provide \$400 million over four years in grants to businesses that operate daycare programs, and grants to state governments to strengthen daycare regulations.

More Complicated Bureaucracy

The Ways and Means Committee added two other provisions sponsored by Congressman Thomas Downey (D-NY):

(a) The existing Social Service Block Grant program (SSBG) would be given an extra \$1.55 billion over five years for distribution to state governments to pay for daycare services, with up to 20 percent used for overhead and administration. This provision is duplicative of Title III, but would be under the jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee instead of the Education and Labor Committee.

The Social Service Block Grant section of Hawkins-Downey asserts that states are not required to "license" grandmothers, but the bill imposes a vast array of new regulations on grandparents. To receive any daycare funds, a grandmother caring for her own grandchild would have to comply with federally mandated regulations, including building standards in her home, safety standards, nutrition regulations, injury prevention and treatment regulations, child abuse prevention regulations, and health regulations. She would also have to submit to periodic inspection by the government to verify that she is complying with all this red tape.

A neighborhood daycare mother who cares for other people's children would have to submit to all that, and also be forced to take 15 hours of training every year. She would also be required to provide a written statement of her daycare "program goals" to the parent.

(b) Tax credits to parents would be given through an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a tax credit of up to 14 percent of earned income which is currently available to low income parents. It is non-discriminatory (available to both fulltime and employed mothers) and also is refundable, which means that if the value of the credit is greater than the taxpayer's tax liability, the parent receives the funds anyway. Under current law projected to 1991, the EITC would provide up to \$1,002 for families in the \$7,157-\$11,290 income bracket, declining to zero at the \$21,290 income level. The Downey amendment would increase the maximum EITC to at least \$1,216, and could be as much as \$2,218 for a family earning \$11,290 with 3 or more children at least one of whom is under 6 years old. The Downey credit would also reduce to zero at the \$21,290 income level.

Titles I, II, and III of Hawkins-Downey explicitly deny funds to daycare providers who include religious activities in their programs. In theory, such religious providers could receive Social Service Block Grant funds, but only if they submit to a wide array of secular state regulations mandated by the bill, including state controls on the selection of program administrators and daycare personnel. Since few if any religious daycare providers would submit to such regulation,

Hawkins-Downey effectively denies both Title III and Social Service Block Grant assistance to parents who prefer religious daycare.

Like the Dodd ABC bill which parents have been opposing for two years, Hawkins-Downey is massively discriminatory against traditional families in which one parent cares for children within the home. Counting all the provisions of the Hawkins-Downey bill, including the grants authorized under Titles I through VI, the SSBG grants, and the non-discriminatory EITC credits, the Hawkins-Downey bill allocates two and a half times as much taxpayer funding to families that use paid non-parental daycare as it does to traditional families in which the mother cares for her own children. The bill thus contains financial incentives to discourage parental care of children, as well as informal care by relatives and neighbors, despite the fact that this type of care is overwhelmingly preferred by parents and healthier for the children.

Can the Religious Daycare Issue Be "Fixed"?

Before the Senate passed its daycare bill, S.5, the Senate adopted the Durenberger/Ford amendment, which some Senators have told their constituents would allow taxpayer funding to go to religious daycare. Of course, the religious daycare would have to submit to regulation.

The House-passed Hawkins-Downey bill would prevent taxpayer funds from going to religious daycare unless it becomes wholly secular.

During the floor debate in the House, the House Leadership promised to "fix" the "religion issue" in committee to make it possible for taxpayer funding to go to religious daycare.

But, in order for the religious issue to be "fixed," the daycare bill would have to be amended to require that:

(1) All states must allow parents to get vouchers to buy the child care of their choice.

(2) Vouchers must be usable for religious daycare with religious activities (such as prayer). It is not acceptable to say that vouchers can be used at religious daycare and then require the religious daycare to be secularized.

(3) States must be allowed to exempt religious daycare from state regulations and still receive public funds.

(4) The acceptance of vouchers by religious daycare must not trigger any additional state or federal regulations.

(5) Religious daycare must be eligible for federal grant funds even if the facility displays religious symbols.

Anything less than acceptance of these five points is an attempt to deceive the voters by legislation implying that religious daycare will be eligible for federal money, while at the same time knowing that liberal groups will file lawsuits and get the courts to rule that giving federal funds or vouchers to religious daycare is unconstitutional.

The obvious and desirable alternative to all these complicated, expensive plans to regulate preschool children is to reduce taxes on families with children and let families spend their own money the way they want to spend it.

Write your Congressman today and tell him you demand the Pro-Family Alternative: tax reduction for families with children. We will consider it anti-family if a Congressman votes for any system of bureaucracies,

regulations, commissions, subsidies, or grants that will enrich the "system" instead of families with children. We will consider it anti-family if a Congressman votes for any law that discriminates against fulltime mothers by putting more taxpayers' money into a system of non-parental care than parental care. At the very least, we demand the \$1,000 per child tax reduction promised by George Bush during his presidential campaign.

NEA 1989-90 budget for designated lobbying and political purposes:	
Lobby members of Congress, their staffs, and key committees in support of NEA legislative goals.	\$1,175,740
Coordinate NEA activities with governmental agencies, state associations, and other national organizations, to achieve implementation of objectives of NEA.	\$831,758
Provide support for a grassroots NEA member lobby program of at least two Congressional Contact Team members per congressional district to achieve support for NEA's legislative program.	\$586,016
Communicate Government Relations reports to affiliates, members, Congressional Contact Team coordinators, and regional staff.	\$154,091
Administer the affairs of the NEA Political Action Committee, implement candidate endorsement process.	\$615,012
Maintain political data systems and services, including maintenance of Lobby-by-Mail system, that support all levels of the Association in efforts to elect friends of education and to insure positive outcomes of initiative/ballot issues and support federal and state legislative lobbying on issues.	\$888,314
Assist affiliates in organizing and training members for political activity within the Democratic and Republican Parties, in order to achieve the NEA's legislative program.	\$461,455
Secure membership support for NEA-PAC endorsed congressional candidates; gather survey information for potential candidate support; and support local and state membership programs for political action.	\$875,757
Participate in Democratic and Republican party meetings and activities to establish education as a significant platform issue and to secure national party support for the NEA legislative program.	\$38,205
Provide field support and coordination of NEA's national legislative and political action programs.	\$2,207,813
TOTAL	\$7,834,161

To educate your Congressmen and your community on the federal baby-sitting issue, Eagle Forum has the two best tools:

Who Will Rock the Cradle?, a 300-page book containing addresses by 18 authorities analyzing every aspect of child care as a public policy issue. This is the most authoritative source available on the child care issue and should be given to public officials, opinion makers, and mothers of young children. \$14.95 per copy.

Baby Flier, a 4-color flier designed for mass distribution to public officials, at meetings, in churches, to daycare centers, etc. It is the best single way to wake up your community to the stakes involved in the child care issue. 10 cents each in any quantity. \$10 per 100.

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The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by The Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002. Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois. Postmaster: Address Corrections should be sent to the Phyllis Schlafly Report, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Subscription Price: \$15 per year. Extra copies available: 50 cents each; 4 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.