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**WHITE HOUSE EDUCATION NEWS CONFERENCE**

**PARTICIPANTS: PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, FIRST LADY HILLARY CLINTON VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE EDUCATION SECRETARY RICHARD RILEY BILL WHITE, PRESIDENT, C.S. MOTT FOUNDATION  
ROOSEVELT ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON, DC  
10:17 A.M. EST MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 1998**

**MRS. CLINTON: (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you and good morning. Please be seated.**

**Welcome to the White House. It is a pleasure to have all of you join the president and the vice president and Secretary Riley, Bill White (sp) of the Mott (sp) Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. Bass (sp). And I'm especially pleased to see in the audience so many people who care so much about education and child care.**

**This morning we come together to hear about the president's plans to strengthen education, to discuss his historic child care initiative, and particularly to talk about how he has made quality after-school programs a national priority.**

**I'd like to start by talking about the child care initiative itself because it is the single largest investment in child care in our nation's history, and it will go a long way toward helping our nation's working parents find the care they can afford and trust.**

**This initiative will make care more affordable and it will also double the number of children receiving subsidies and increased tax credits for child care. It will help local communities and it will promote early learning and health child development opportunities. It will ensure higher standards for child care by stepping up enforcement. But we all know that high-quality child care needs don't disappear when children start school. It's estimated that up to 5 million school-age children spend time as latchkey kids without adult supervision.**

**That's why, as part of this initiative, the president is making a significant investment in after-school care.**

**This is so important for so many working families. We want more of America's children to say no to drugs and alcohol and crime, and yes to reading and soccer and computers. And with this expanded investment in after-school care, combined with public-private partnerships in communities, we will be able to give our children those opportunities.**

**This morning the president will announce how one such partner, the C.S. Mott Foundation, is providing critical support to strengthen and improve after-school programs.**

This afternoon I will be visiting a model program in Harlem, at the Harriet Tubman School, to underscore once again how important these programs are for all of our children.

Now it is my great privilege to introduce someone who has been so committed to our children, and that is the secretary of education, Dick Riley. (Applause.)

SEC. RILEY: Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause continues.) Good morning. Thank you so much, and good morning to all of you.

You know, today over 52 million will sit in our nation's classrooms, and the quality of education that they will get during the school day will determine really the future of this country.

But what goes on after the school day ends is very important also. After-school programs can be an important part of a child's education.

They can give children more time to learn. They can offer young people safe and drug-free havens and keep kids out of trouble. They can give children the chance to enhance their lives through the arts and through music and through community service. And they can reassure working parents that their kids are in the right place and doing the right thing.

Unfortunately, there are not enough quality after-school or before-school programs in our schools and communities right now. And that's why President Clinton and Vice President Gore and Mrs. Clinton are making a major commitment to the after-school effort.

The administration's 1998 budget included a down payment of \$40 million for after-school programs, but now we really want to step on the gas. We will ask Congress for \$1 billion over the next five years to serve 500,000 students in 4,000 programs. We are going to call them the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. And in order for communities and schools to get the best information possible on how to start after-school programs, we and the Mott Foundation are sponsoring 11 regional workshops starting in February.

We are honored so much today to have with us a conscientious American citizen, Bill White, the president of the C.S. Mott Foundation; a person, along with his board -- and several members are here -- are concerned deeply about children, about their families, about their safety and about their education. And Bill will make a very important and significant statement about the foundation's participation in this effort.

And thank you, Bill, very much for being with us. (Applause.)

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I only wish that C.S. Mott, who died in 1973, was here today. He loved kids, and this is about kids. Frankly, this historic partnership between the Department of Education and the Mott Foundation is a symbol of the full spectrum of public and private partnerships that we can expect to spring to life as this initiative is embraced by communities all over the United States.

The Mott Foundation has made this commitment, in part, because there are certain things which we can fund, which federal funds won't cover. And so that's what we're about, is looking at the long-term sustainability of these programs, the leadership of these programs, and those types of activities.

Mr. Vice President, I want to thank you for your deep understanding and personal commitment and articulation and support for these programs. And Mr. President, I believe this initiative will go down among the most important initiatives because it's about the future of our country. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Mrs. Clinton, in 1939, another first lady who cared deeply about children, and it was Mrs. Roosevelt, came to Flint to tour programs funded by the Mott Foundation. They were early child care and after-school programs.

I believe that these programs have been proven by the test of time, and they're as important today -- perhaps more so -- than they were 60 years ago.

And finally, I'd love to talk about these programs; I've seen many of them. But I probably have the best job here today, and it is my privilege -- and, if I may say, high honor -- to introduce two parents who have kids in such programs, and they are Rand and Deborah (sp) Bass from Arlington.

Mr. and Mrs. Bass. (Applause.)

RAND BASS: Thank you, Mr. White.

We want to thank the president, the first lady, and Vice President and Mrs. Gore for this opportunity today to tell you a little bit about our positive experience with the extended day program at our children's school.

Deborah (sp) and I have two children: Mitchell, who is 8, and Susie (sp), who is 6. They attend Barcroft Elementary School in Arlington, an ethnically diverse public school with a strong focus on the arts and a wonderful extended day program.

We did a lot of research on both public and private schools before we decided to send Mitchell and Susie to Barcroft. There were many factors to consider, of course, but the availability of after-

school care on the premises was an important one. We both firmly believe we made the right choice for our children three years ago. We know the children are safe, well cared-for, and among friends.

The program is quite structured, with a wide range of activities available, from dodge ball in the gym to crafts, reading aloud, library visits, board games, and other -- card games. There's even a special quiet, supervised homework room for those students who want to get a head start on their homework.

Our children are very happy in extended day, and that makes all the difference for us as parents.

We hope that by the time Mitchell and Susie are in middle school, we will have similar options for high-quality after-school care for them.

On behalf of all the working parents in America, we want to thank the administration's leadership for their efforts to create more after-school programs. We know that with the leadership from the president, the first lady, and vice president and Mrs. Gore, that all the children in our country will have a better future.

And now it's our great pleasure to introduce someone whose long-standing commitment to children, education and after-school programs is much appreciated by all parents. Ladies and gentlemen, we are honored to introduce a hard-working parent himself, the vice president of the United States, Al Gore.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: (Applause) Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

And on behalf of the president and first lady, I want to acknowledge the presence of Senator Dianne Feinstein of California. Thank you, Dianne, for your hard work in this area. (Applause.) And also Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut. We appreciate your presence here, Chris. And I know that Senator Barbara Boxer, I think, is in back there. And there are members of a lot of education groups and child care groups, community groups, parent-teacher groups, school boards association. I'm not going to try to acknowledge everyone who should by rights be singled out here. But thank you for your participation and presence and hard work over the years on these issues.

I want to thank Rand and Deborah (sp) Bass for introducing me and for giving that wonderful statement. I know of Barcroft Elementary. Tipper and I lived in Arlington for quite a long time.

And I also want to express my deep appreciation to Bill White, the president and CEO of the Mott Foundation. And I want to thank the board of directors and other representatives of the Mott Foundation, who are also present with us here today. Bill, it's a wonderful

commitment that you're making, and it's going to make a huge difference in the lives of so many children and families across this country.

And of course, Secretary Riley has offered such tremendous leadership and vision and steadfastness of all these topics. We are really grateful to you, Mr. Secretary.

We're here today, of course, to hear the president announce important new details of his commitment to education and his plan to give all of the children in this country the tools needed to succeed in the 21st century. But first of all, I'd like to say something that everybody knows. These landmark investments would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work and achievement of our first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton. I want to acknowledge her leadership and her great advocacy for all of these programs.

(Applause.)

For 25 years, she has worked to put children and families at the top of our national agenda. She deserves the admiration and gratitude of every parent in America, and she certainly has mine. And in fact, the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and then the one on child care both helped to set the stage for the national dialogue that we're now having.

And I thank to Bill White and his Board of Directors for this generous commitment, but the president will describe that in just a moment and you will see just what a historic commitment it is. And the president will speak more broadly about his overall education agenda because this morning's announcement should be seen in the context of how we prepare the people of our country, and especially children and families, for the challenges of the 21st century.

Before presenting the president, I want to say just a few words about an area that's of special importance to me. It's been mentioned already -- after-school care. As Rand and Deborah (sp) Bass know very well, when children start school, it becomes especially hard for parents to balance the needs of home and work and raise strong families. That is why the president and first lady's commitment to child care is so significant, and that is why our commitment to after-school care is such a critical part of our child care plan.

The need for quality after-school care has often been raised at the annual family conferences that Tipper and I have in Nashville every year. We've had them for the last six years. And, especially at last year's conference, which was on families and education and parents' involvement in their children's education, we learned how serious it -- the challenge is, and how needed these after-school programs are.

There are 5 million children, as the first lady said, who leave school before their parents get home. This period of time between the school bell and the factory whistle is the most vulnerable time for children. These are the hours when children are more likely to engage in at-risk behavior and are more vulnerable to the dangers that still exist in too many neighborhoods and communities.

That puts some parents in a gut-wrenching dilemma: Do they stay at home and forego the family income that they need, or do they stay on the job and worry that their children will be in danger while they're away?

Parents need help balancing those competing priorities. That is why the president announced that he will increase by an unprecedented 400 percent the 21st Century Community Learning Center grants that can be used to start, expand, and improve local after-school care. And I want to formally acknowledge Senator Barbara Boxer, who has worked her way through the media, through the crowd here. (Applause.) Thank you.

Of course, this whole child-care program and the education agenda and after-school care represent just some of the ways that President Clinton is investing in the future of our children and giving parents more of the tools they need to raise strong families.

So now I am very pleased to introduce America's true education president and the greatest champion of working parents and working families that the United States of America has ever known: President Bill Clinton. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you -- (inaudible). Thank you. (Applause continues.) Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. (Applause continues.) Thank you. Thank you very much.

First, let me thank all of you who are here. Many of us have been working together now for 20 years on a lot of these issues, and this is a very happy day for us.

I thank the first lady for all she has done on this issue for as long as I've known her.

I thank the vice president and Mrs. Gore for their family conference and the light it has shed on the announcement we are here to emphasize today.

I thank you, Secretary Riley, for the community learning centers. And I'm very proud of what we've done there.

Thank you, Bill White. I'll talk more about your contribution in a moment, but it is truly remarkable. And I thank Rand and Deborah (sp)

Bass for giving us a living breathing example of the best of America, parents who are working hard to do their jobs, but also determined to do their most important job very well with their children. I thank Senator Feinstein, Senator Dodd and Senator Boxer for being here. Tomorrow, in the State of the Union address, I will spell out what we seek to do on behalf of our children to prepare them for the 21st century, but I want to talk a little bit about education today and about this announcement in that context.

Education must be our nation's highest priority. Last year, in the State of the Union address, I set out a 10-point plan to move us forward and urged the American people to make sure that politics stops at the schoolhouse door.

Well, we've made a lot of progress on that 10-point plan; a remarkable -- a remarkable array of initiatives to open the doors of college to every American who is willing to work for it; strong progress toward high national standards in the basics, the America Reads challenge to teach every 8-year-old to read, continued progress in the vice president's program to hook up all of our classrooms and libraries to the Internet by the year 2000.

This has been the most important year in a generation for education reform. Tomorrow I set out the next steps on our continuing road:

First, I will propose the first-ever national effort to reduce class size in the early grades. (Applause.) Hillary and I worked very hard, 15 years ago now, to have very strict class sizes, at home, in the early grades. And it was quite controversial and, I think, enormously beneficial when we did it.

Our balanced budget will help to hire a hundred thousand teachers, who must pass state competency tests but who will be able to reduce class size in the first, second and third grades, to an average of 18, nationwide. (Applause.)

Second, since there are more students and there will be more teachers, there must be more classrooms, so I will propose a school-construction tax cut to help communities modernize and build new schools.

Third, I will promote a national effort to help schools that follow the lead of the Chicago system in ending social promotion but helping students with summer school and other programs to give them the tools they need to get ahead.

All these steps will help our children get the future they deserve. And that's why what we're announcing here is so important as well. Every child needs someplace to go after school. With after-school programs, we can not only keep our kids healthy and happy and

safe; we can help to teach them to say no to drugs, alcohol and crime, yes to reading, sports and computers.

My balanced budget plan includes a national initiative to spark private-sector and local community efforts to provide after-school care, as the secretary of Education said, to half-a-million more children.

Now let me say in addition to all the positive benefits, I think it's important to point out that the hours between 3:00 and 7:00 at night are the most vulnerable hours for young people to get in trouble for juvenile crime.

There is this -- this sort of assumption that everybody that gets in trouble when they're young has just already been abandoned. That's not true. Most of the kids who get in trouble get in trouble after school closes and before their parents get home from work. So there -- in the adolescent years and later years, it's profoundly important to try to give kids something to say yes to and something positive to do.

But we can't do it alone.

As I said, our plan involves a public-private partnership. So, it's -- fallen to me to announce that our distinguished guests from the Mott Foundation of Flint, Michigan, has pledged up to \$55 million to help ensure that after-school programs supported by federal funds are of the highest quality. That is an astonishing (gift ?). (Applause.)

Thank you, Bill White. Thank you. (Applause.)

We are determined to help Americans succeed in the workplace, to raise well-educated, healthy kids, and to help Americans succeed at the toughest job of all, that of being a parent. And the Mott Foundation has gone a long way toward helping us, and I thank them.

Now I have to go back to work on my State of the Union speech, and I worked on it till pretty late last night. But I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time. Never. These allegations are false. And I need to go back to work for the American people.

Thank you.

(Applause.)