

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Chemical Weapons Convention

August 13, 1992

The President announced today strong United States support for the Chemical Weapons Convention completed at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, August 7. He said the United States is committed to signing the treaty as soon as it is open for signature, and he called on all other nations to make a similar pledge.

The treaty, concluded after years of intensive negotiations, calls for the total banning of chemical weapons worldwide. The United States has been committed to that goal since the beginning of the negotiations

and applauds the dedicated efforts of all who have helped to bring the talks to a successful conclusion. The United States firmly believes that removing the threat of these weapons of terror is now possible and will be achieved when all states join and abide by this treaty.

The United States underscores its intention of working actively to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention into force at the earliest possible date and believes that all responsible governments will join us in this pursuit.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Proposed Legislation on Welfare Reform

August 13, 1992

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Enclosed for the consideration of the Congress are four legislative proposals to promote work, provide flexibility, and encourage innovation in Federal public assistance programs. Enactment of these proposals is a necessary step to ending welfare being a way of life and accomplishing this task in a way that learns what works in making public assistance recipients self-sufficient.

Much has been accomplished during my Administration to transform welfare from a system of assistance to a ladder of opportunity. Much more can be accomplished. What we have done and what we have already asked you to do were reviewed in a paper my Administration released on July 31.

We must do more if we are to realize the call I made in my State of the Union address to you earlier this year to replace the assumptions of the welfare state. My objective for welfare reform is this: to create conditions that will enable recipients of public assistance to achieve self-sufficiency at the earliest possible moment. Achieving

this goal means a new commitment to work. To realize this commitment, I am proposing to remove obstacles and limitations that currently face States that want to make a commitment to work the center of what welfare means in that State. The "Welfare Employment and Flexibility Amendments of 1992" and the "Food Stamp Employment and Flexibility Amendments of 1992," forwarded with this letter, remove limits to work.

In the State of the Union address, I promised help for States that wanted to reform their welfare systems. The Federal Government would give expeditious consideration of State requests for waivers. Since that time, my Administration has approved six demonstration waiver projects for five States.

All six demonstrations involve the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. But our public assistance program is broader than AFDC, and many individuals benefit from multiple programs. The "Food Stamp Employment and Flexibility Amendments of 1992" and the "Housing

Assistance Innovation Act of 1992” create the authority comparable to that available for AFDC to test new ideas in the food stamp and public housing programs.

And yet the program of assistance to low-income Americans offered by the Federal Government is far more extensive than AFDC, food stamps, and public housing. One effort to catalogue them all counted more than 150 programs. To allow States, localities, and community groups to pursue new ways for programs to function and interact, we propose the “Community Opportunity Pilot Project Act of 1992.” This would allow five communities, competitively selected, to put into effect new ideas about how the streams of resources from the myriad Federal programs that reach a single community can be made to serve as an integrated effort to create opportunity for the low-income residents of that community they are intended to serve.

We must give new attention to personal responsibility, especially that of absent parents. All mothers and fathers have obligations to their children. Child support en-

forcement holds absent parents responsible for financial support of their children. Under my Administration, the number of identified absent fathers has already increased dramatically—from 307,000 in 1988 to 462,000 in 1991—but the number is still too low. Thus our “Welfare Employment and Flexibility Amendments of 1992” proposes to strengthen the requirement that mothers receiving assistance identify the fathers of their children.

Progress has been made in making our welfare system an opportunity system, but this progress has been insufficient to the task at hand. Prompt enactment of the legislation I forward with this letter will add rungs to the ladder of self-sufficiency we offer to recipients of public assistance.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

Note: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Dan Quayle, President of the Senate.

White House Fact Sheet: The President’s Welfare Reform Legislation

August 14, 1992

The President has transmitted to the Congress by letters to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House four legislative proposals to implement those parts of his welfare reform strategy requiring legislative changes. The President announced his plans for further welfare reform on July 31, 1992, in Riverside, CA.

The legislative proposals sent to the Congress today are the:

- “Welfare Employment and Flexibility Amendments of 1992” that would amend the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) statute;
- “Food Stamp Employment and Flexibility Amendments of 1992,” making similar changes to the Food Stamp Act;
- “Housing Assistance Innovation Act of 1992” that would allow innovation in

public and assisted housing programs on a basis similar to other welfare programs; and

- “Community Opportunity Pilot Project Act of 1992” that would authorize selection of five communities to redesign the delivery of Federal assistance to create increased opportunity in those communities.

The Problem

Flexibility. Federal public assistance programs are structured in fixed, categorical ways. This limits the ability of the State and local agencies administering Federal funds to meet local needs and conditions.

State and local officials seeking a greater role for work in welfare programs face unnecessary obstacles in implementing work-