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## The Lucille N. Austin Memorial Lecture, October 10, 1995

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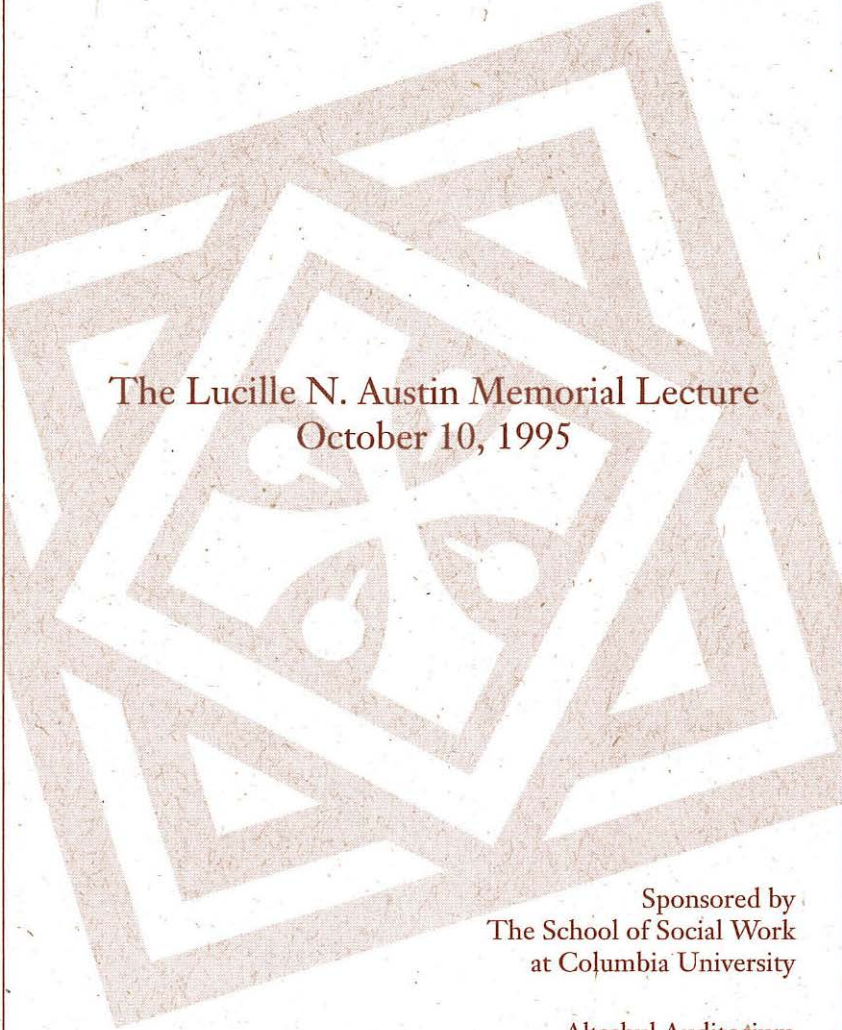
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# Dr. Augusta Souza Kappner

President, Bank Street College of Education



The Lucille N. Austin Memorial Lecture  
October 10, 1995

Sponsored by  
The School of Social Work  
at Columbia University

Altschul Auditorium  
School of International and Public Affairs  
Columbia University  
420 West 118th Street  
6:15 pm - 7:30 pm

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Five years ago I gave the Commencement Address for the Columbia School of Social Work. I opened with the words of Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom; it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief; it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the epoch of light; it was the epoch of darkness; it was the spring of hope; it was the winter of despair."

Since that time, foolishness, darkness and despair appear to have gained the upper hand and to be well on their way to vanquishing wisdom, belief, light and hope.

Today I will be addressing recent trends in social welfare and education policy. Although these two areas differ in many respects, there are parallels which affect future directions and which have implications for those of us who work in these respective fields, and in fact have implications for the nation.

A functioning democracy requires an informed citizenry and a basic, how-

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*Dr. Augusta Souza Kappner is the first woman and the first African-American to hold the title of president of Bank Street College of Education. Dr. Kappner came to Bank Street from Washington, D.C. where she served as Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education in the U.S. Department of Education. Before that, she served as president of the Borough of Manhattan Community College and acting president of the City College of New York. The first African-American woman to be named a college president in the City University system, she has served on many boards and commissions, including the American Association of Community Colleges, The College Board, the New York State Child Care Commission, and the New York City Advisory Council of Occupational Education. Dr. Kappner earned her B.A. from Barnard College, her M.S.W. from Hunter College, and her D.S.W. from Columbia University's School of Social Work. In 1988, she received one of Columbia's most prestigious awards, the Medal for Excellence.*

ever minimal, level of security for participation in the political life of the nation. As Aristotle once said: "If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost." Much of the political history of this American century has been the development of national policies to compensate for the limitations of states, and the Federal government has played an important part in the development of the concept of a national community. But we are, as we all know, living in a time of radical change.

Our present predicament has been characterized as the country's third great upheaval in social welfare policy, a trend which could quite possibly lead us into a new Dickensian era. The first upheaval occurred in the early decades of this century in response to industrialization; states enacted workmen's compensation, and widows' benefits for mothers. The second was triggered by the great Depression, which drew the Federal government into creating massive job programs, unemployment insurance, social security, and aid to families with dependent children. This phase reached its peak with Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty, the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965, and Nixon's expansion of food stamps. A third great upheaval is now underway.

Currently, under the banner of budget balancing and the rubric of reforms, programs serving low-income people are slated for 45 percent of the entitlement reductions in the Republican budget—almost twice their proportional share. The savings projected in low-income programs like Medicaid, welfare and food stamps are seven times the size of those passed in Ronald Reagan's first Congress.

Next year's Congressional spending plan calls for eliminating summer jobs for 600,000 low-income youths, reducing temporary shelters and social services for the homeless by 40 percent, reducing the main Federal elementary education program for disadvantaged children by more than \$1 billion, and possibly eliminating legal services to the poor—to name just a few items. Low-income programs lose 13 percent of their funds overall; all other Federally financed programs lose only one percent.

This is no across-the-board budget balancing act. This is no principle triumphing over politics. This is no economically driven decision. This is a calculated effort that hits hardest on the most economically vulnerable and politically defenseless citizens in our society—poor women and children. Even without any changes in Medicaid or other low-income programs—the poorest fifth of the population (which receives only four percent of the total United States

income) would bear a dramatically disproportionate share of the burden.

These actions are going forward with much discussion of the need to bring government closer to the people, of the need to provide states with the flexibility to solve their particular problems, of the need to avoid imposing unfunded mandates which might restrict the creativity which is thought to reside in the “great democratic laboratories” of the states.

These policy actions are going forward in the long shadow of Ronald Reagan’s attack on the role of government: “It is no coincidence that our present troubles parallel and are proportionate to the intervention and intrusion in our lives that result from unnecessary and excessive growth of government.”

The Reagan years were a dramatic departure from the broad policies of the post-New Deal Federal government. Reagan pushed through Congress the first significant cuts in funding for Aid To Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, Medicaid, and many other safety net programs. The reduction of big government and decentralization of Federal programs were ongoing Reagan themes. That poverty is the result of an individual’s deficiency and that the welfare state had expanded because the “undeserving” poor were receiving aid rather than working was also a pervasive theme of the Reagan presidency.

Reagan was successful in lowering the safety net for some families. In 1979, one in every five poor families with children were raised above the poverty level by government programs. As a result of the Reagan policies, by 1987 this had shrunk to only one in ten such families. Reagan, in fact, seemed to be moving toward dismantling even the social insurances, but retreated when Congress stood their ground on the issue of Social Security.

The politics of the ’80s set the groundwork for the policies of the ’90s. The ’80s were bracketed by the constant Reagan and Bush references to the evils of big government and to the evils of the Johnson-era Great Society programs in particular. While the Great Society programs certainly promised more than they did or could deliver, they certainly were not quite the “big government” Federal nightmare they have widely been portrayed to be. Part of the repainting of the Great Society picture has been the association, in the minds of many, of welfare (in the narrow sense of AFDC) with Great Society programs. President Bush, attacking the Great Society programs in 1991, argued that “programs intended to help people out of poverty invited dependence”—a chord which was to become a constant refrain, a refrain continued to be echoed by our current

Congress in their retreat from responsibility. AFDC, the Federal welfare program, was not a Great Society initiative but part of the original Social Security Act—a New Deal initiative. Lyndon Johnson proposed only one even modestly significant piece of welfare legislation—a proposal for states to pay the full amount of the standard of financial need, a standard which they themselves had determined. This very unradical idea died in Congress, which instead, in 1967, created a two-year freeze on Federal monies for AFDC and the first-ever compulsory work requirement for AFDC recipients.

But welfare—at least AFDC—is one of those ideological and political agendas in which fiction drives out fact. Large numbers of Americans persist in their belief that the prototypical recipient of welfare is a black teenaged mother with five kids, a drug habit, and more income than most wage earners. Most Americans also persist in the belief that welfare constitutes a huge proportion of Federal spending. These myths have been invaluable to the current crop of congressional revolutionaries who are leading today's so-called "reform" effort.

Too few media sources have taken the time and effort to set the record straight, to point out, as the *Washington Post Magazine* admirably did, and as we must:

- that two thirds of all welfare recipients are children—while there are 14.5 million people on welfare, 9.5 million of those are children;
- that only 8 percent of welfare mothers are teenagers;
- that 73 percent of welfare families consist of only one or two children, and this number is decreasing over time;
- that 85 percent of welfare mothers do not have a drug or alcohol problem;
- that 39 percent of welfare recipients are white, 37.2 percent black and 17.8 percent latino;
- that the national average monthly welfare stipend for a family of three is only \$367;
- that cash benefits declined 42 percent from 1970 to 1993; and
- that while 14 percent of Americans do receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children, AFDC accounts for only one percent of Federal spending and two percent of state spending.



Why should one percent of the Federal budget consume such an inordinate amount of time and attention of our elected leaders? Why should one percent of the Federal budget consume such an inordinate amount of our newspaper columns and ink?

Why, when each and every one of us benefits from government programs such as Federal home mortgages, public highways, and student loans, do only welfare recipients bear the stigma of being “on the dole”?

Perhaps it is easier to focus on the problems associated with a relatively small and thoroughly powerless group rather than to confront the question of why, even in an economy judged to be healthy, so many are feeling so insecure; why so many families are holding more than two jobs to make ends meet; why families are feeling that their children will not be able to achieve “the American dream”; why high school graduates, when employed, have seen their earnings plummet; why so many feel themselves to be only one paycheck away from dependency. Certainly these issues pose greater challenges and ultimately would involve more resources than welfare reform. In many ways, welfare reform is a diversion from the real and very difficult economic issues that the country needs to face.

To quote a famous republican by the name of Plato: “The partisan, when he is engaged in a dispute, cares nothing about the rights of the question but is anxious only to convince his hearers of his own assertions.”

As a result of only addressing the issues we are comfortable with, we now have the Personal Responsibility Act (PRA) and the Work Opportunity Act (WOA), both of which propose to replace the basic Federal guarantee of assistance to eligible poor families, with block grants to states, another national retreat from responsibility. Both proposals include what has come to be referred to as “drop dead time limits” of no more than 60 months of aid in a lifetime, and required work after two years.

There is much irony in the fact that AFDC, originally designed to keep women at home with their fatherless children while providing income for those families, has become the crucible for so much of society’s values around work and self-sufficiency. How ironic that the proposed legislation relies heavily on limiting aid to young mothers and newborn children, and puts into motion punitive processes targeted at blameless children.

It has been estimated that about 42 percent of current recipients would lose their eligibility totally under PRA and another 30 percent would receive lower benefits. If the experiences in Michigan are used as a guide, it is estimated that only about one third of welfare recipients who lose assistance after five

years are likely to be employed two years later. It is anyone's guess what will happen to the millions of other families who are not part of this one third.

Unless some natural or political disaster strikes the Congress, some blend of PRA and WOA will soon be sent to the President, providing him the opportunity to make good on his promise "to end welfare as we know it," and set in motion a new era of callous disregard for the needy. There seems to be widespread amnesia about states and their ability to provide for social welfare. One of the reasons the Federal government intervened in this arena in the first place was precisely because of the inability of the states to do what needed to be done. With the new block grants, states will find themselves with fixed sums of money and increasing pressures to keep benefits low in order to avoid serving as a "magnet" for poor people, and in order to avoid driving business across state lines by higher taxes. Thus, the race to the bottom, as described in an article by Paul Peterson, will soon be on.

Integral to the Clinton administration's now-forgotten welfare reform proposal was the concept of "making work pay." Making work pay for recipients moving into any available jobs would mean ensuring that work pays more than welfare. This means child care assistance, availability of health insurance and an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Not only are such necessities *not* on the horizon, but the Congress also currently proposes to reduce the EITC, an action which would not only work against moving welfare families off the rolls, but which will also contribute mightily to the likelihood of increasing the welfare rolls with low-income families who slip out of self-sufficiency into dependency.

The proposal to lower the EITC (which has been in effect since the Ford administration), especially to lower it *now* when the purchasing power of the minimum wage is at its second lowest level in 40 years and when millions of Welfare recipients are about to be catapulted into the low wage market, is just plain foolish. Again it is a proposal, like so many before the country today, which is politically expedient but policy imprudent.

Even with the EITC, the problems of the working poor are growing. The income of low-wage workers declined by 13 percent from 1979 to 1993. The value of the minimum wage is now 26 percent below its average value in the 1970s, and 18 million full-time workers earn less than poverty level for a family of four. The vast majority of states no longer provide direct aid benefits to poor families in which a mother works more than half-time. In the early '70s, 49 states provided benefits as a wage supplement to mothers with two children whose earnings equaled 75 percent or less of the poverty



level. Now only three states do so.

The EITC supplements income of low-wage workers. *It rewards work.* The proposed reductions would reduce or terminate benefits for more than 14 million of the 19 million low-income working households receiving the credit. Among those affected would be more than one million families that receive Social Security benefits. The proposal would require for the first time that Social Security benefits be counted in EITC eligibility. This includes families in which one parent works for low pay but the other parent is disabled and receives Social Security Disability benefits; families in which an elderly grandparent is raising a child and working at a low-wage job; and families raising a child who receives Social Security survivor's benefits because his or her parents have died. By contrast, earlier this year the House passed a Bill to *reduce* taxes on the Social Security benefits of the highest-income beneficiaries.

In essence, the Congress is proposing to raise taxes for the poorest workers in order to cut taxes for the highest-income workers—this is *not* good social policy. And it clearly is foolish social policy when being implemented at a time when welfare recipients are being directed into the low-wage workplace.

Food stamps are also an important part of the broader safety net—and these too are proposed for change. PRA would give states flexibility to set food stamp eligibility and benefit rules locally, thereby jeopardizing the stability of entire low-income communities and the nutrition and health of the more than 14 million children whose families receive food stamps.

As a nation, we are radically retreating from the Federal role in reducing poverty. Through 60 years and several cycles of social welfare policy, the definition of the “deserving poor” has changed, but poor children have always, without question, regardless of the status of their parents, been protected. We are, it seems to me, on the verge of a redefinition and shrinking of the concept of the deserving poor. Children of young unwed mothers—children of mothers on welfare—would be deprived, by many, of public assistance. Immigrant children of families who are *legal* permanent residents of the United States (who pay taxes and can serve in wars, by the way) would be deprived, by many, of their right to government assistance.

We are fond of saying that children are our future but we are actively pursuing policies in health, welfare and education that threaten this future.

Henry Ford once said: “What’s good for Ford is good for the country.” I say, what’s good for our children is good for the country. And what Congress is proposing is *not* good for our children.

It is not enough that Congress is jeopardizing the health and welfare of

children; they are also attacking the concept that all children can learn and deserve the opportunity to do so.

The Federal role in education, as we know it today, is a recent phenomenon which, like social welfare, is being subjected to major assaults on several fronts.

Although the Constitution makes no mention of public education, the tenth amendment to the Constitution reserves to the states the powers not delegated to the Federal government; and education has been and continues to be the primary responsibility of the states. Thus, Federal actions in education have historically had to be justified by the existence of some strong national interest or problem. The Land Grant Acts of the seventeen and eighteen hundreds supported state-run education and national agricultural productivity. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 was designed to support the national need for workers for an industrializing economy through Federal funds for vocational education. In the Depression era, both the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration—basically relief programs—had strong educational elements.

The U.S. Department of Education began in 1867 as a department, then later an office, then later again becoming a department. Its early purpose was primarily data collection and it was bounced around from the Department of the Interior, to the Federal Security Agency until, in the 1970s, it found a home in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Its role was quite modest, never approaching the status of a National Ministry of Education as is common in many other countries.

After World War II, the GI Bills vastly expanded the Federal investment in education and stimulated huge growth in higher education. The 1950s brought a grand leap in Federal education programs. We were newly aware of the role of science, having had to mobilize our scientific resources for war. The National Science Foundation was initiated with this defense consciousness in mind. The National Defense Education Act, in turn, was put in place to respond to the severe teacher shortage and need for school buildings which was caused by the post-World War II baby boom. The national policy goal of NDEA was to improve math, science and foreign language; in brief, to make us effective post-Sputnik competitors with the Russians. The Russians had five-year plans. The United States had to have a plan. A strong national defense required increasing national attention to education.

The greatest expansion of Federal funding and policy in education came in the 1960s through the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, and the establishment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In the Great Society programs, education was a major strategy for reducing poverty. Head Start (with the help of several Bank Street thinkers) was created for poor preschoolers. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was clearly the most significant and sweeping piece of Federal education legislation in the nation's history. By targeting dollars, not to education in general, but to schools serving disadvantaged youngsters in particular, ESEA reached into local communities to finance change and created instant constituencies. During its first year, ESEA provided more than 10 billion dollars to schools serving low-income communities. Schools not complying with desegregation orders were prohibited from receiving these newly available dollars. Through the intersection of Civil Rights and education policy, the Federal government established a clear national role as the "court of last resort" for the families and children in the public schools. In his inaugural address a decade later, Jimmy Carter continued this theme: "no poor, rural, weak, or black person should ever again have to bear the additional burden of being deprived of the opportunity for an education, a job, or simple justice."

Unlike the '60s, the '70s were not a time of program expansion but represented a time of structural change for education policy. The establishment of the National Institute of Education was implemented, and the Office of Education was moved into the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). In the late 1970s, a Cabinet-level education agency was created, but the contrast of a slim four-vote margin in the House to the wide 51-vote margin in the Senate demonstrated a discrepancy in Congressional activity around education which persists to the present day.

The agency, created by Carter, was immediately threatened by newly elected Ronald Reagan. David Clark and Mary Anne Amiot (*Education and Society*, May 1983) described the Reagan administration's efforts to disassemble the Federal role in education as the 5 Ds:

- Diminution
- Deregulation
- Decentralization
- Disestablishment
- Deemphasis

The Reagan administration was successful at diminution. From 1980 to 1988, the total education budget declined from 2.5 percent to only 1.8 percent of the total Federal budget. Reagan was also successful at deregulation and decentralization of education: 28 elementary and secondary programs were consolidated into what became known as “Chapter 2” (Educational Consolidation And Improvement Act), accompanied by a 37 percent reduction in funding—a harbinger of the coming national retreat from responsibility.

Reagan was not, however, successful at disestablishment or deemphasis. It is one of the supreme ironies of political life that due to the widespread attention and response to Terrell Bell’s Commission report, *Nation At Risk*, education in the Reagan era became a major national concern and the Department of Education, which Reagan pledged to abolish, was saved from elimination.

“If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war...” This now well-known phrase from *Nation At Risk* galvanized public sentiment that something needed to be done to rescue the nation from “the rising tide of mediocrity” described in the report. And his support of school prayer and tuition tax credits set aside, Reagan appeared around the country as a champion of education, presenting himself as an “education president.”

Reagan’s second-term Secretary of Education and now presidential candidate William Bennett affected not so much the specific dollars in education but, through his superb political and media skills, reshaped the role of Secretary of Education. Using the “bully pulpit” most effectively, he influenced the national debate on education issues as no Federal official had ever done previously. By the end of the Reagan era, progressives had a glimpse, to their dismay, of how the Office of the Secretary of Education could be used to promote an agenda, albeit one antithetical to their ideas. The Reagan era ended with education high in the public consciousness and low on a fiscal agenda which had to be set by a now quadrupled national debt.

The Clinton Education Department entered with an agenda attuned to both the realities of the deficit reduction debate and a strong commitment to standards-oriented education reform.

The superb and low-key negotiating skills of Secretary of Education Riley brought early victories with the passage of every piece of education legislation put forward in the first two years by this administration: Goals 2000, which included the National Education Goals; the Improving America’s Education Act, which continued and strengthened ESEA and focused Title

I even more strongly on the schools with the highest poverty rates; the Safe And Drug Free Schools Act and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

In 1989, a bipartisan group of governors, which included then-Governor of Arkansas Bill Clinton, had been called together by President Bush and had produced the National Educational Goals, giving the nation its first-ever national goals and an indication of the strong role governors would play in setting Federal education policy. On the backdrop of this "new Federalism," the Clinton Education Department built into new Federal legislation waiver provisions which preserved local and state flexibility while emphasizing standards and outcomes.

With the shift in the majority party in Congress, attacks on the Department went into full tilt. Although elimination of the Department was not included in the Contract for America, it quickly emerged as an agenda item, as did a second proposal to merge the Education Department with the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

As in social welfare policy, these proposals, and others, seek to block grant education funds with broad discretion. There is nothing in past experience which would lead us to believe that states would use these dollars for the students with the greatest need. In fact, the level of current litigation around school financing leads us to believe the contrary. Nor would there be any easy mechanism for holding states accountable for these taxpayer dollars.

At a time when the gulf between the wages of high school graduates and college graduates is widening and the cost of higher education continues to rise, the Congress is proposing cuts to the Student Loan Program. These cuts would potentially increase the cost of loan pay-back to as much as \$3,000 for undergraduates and more than \$9,000 for graduate students who borrow the maximum. These cuts threaten once again to make a college education an opportunity for only the rich. And Congress proposes to do this at the same time it proposes changes to social welfare policy which require work and self-sufficiency. One might ask, does the left hand know what the right hand is doing?

Goals 2000, which was funded for only \$400 million, has attracted wrath quite out of proportion to its modest appropriations. Through efforts of the religious right and the political use of myth, misinformation and scare tactics, Goals 2000 has been painted as a looming threat to American values. At the extreme, as the *Wall Street Journal* recently pointed out in a front-page story, Goals 2000 is depicted as a United Nations cabal, mind control, and even a plot to take guns out of the homes of gun owners. Goals 2000 simply calls for

monies to be used to develop local reform efforts based on high academic standards, strong parental involvement and broad community support. If the House proposal is accepted, the funding for Goals 2000 will be eliminated entirely.

Title I—still the major Federal support to disadvantaged children in public schools—is slated for a 10 percent cut by the Senate and a 17 percent cut by the House, which could result in denying assistance to from between 650,000 to 1.1 million children. On the home front, the House version of these cuts translates into more than 72,000 fewer students served in the New York City School System and nearly 3,000 fewer teachers employed in New York City Schools. Overall, even without merger or elimination, education could possibly lose 18 percent of its total program budget.

At the same time, we are told that the number of students enrolled from kindergarten through twelfth grade will reach a record high of more than 53 million in 1997. Does a 15 percent increase warrant an 18 percent decrease? The proportion of poor children in nonsuburban public schools and children from families with many needs is increasing. Where will the resources come from to address these needs? By what leap of faith do we believe that states and local communities, beset by decreasing budgets and undeliverable political promises, will choose to invest more in those constituencies which are least capable of being heard? As increasing numbers of these children are immigrants, will local reaction, as already seen in California and other states, be to restrict access to education rather than to find ways to invest in the children of those who are least politically able to defend themselves? The once universal objective of educating everyone to at least some minimal standard is much discussed, but little supported.

The Federal role in the public schools has historically been to provide support to even out economic differences between schools—to create the proverbial level playing field. Without a strong Federal investment, children in schools in poor communities will not have equal access to educational opportunities.

The education and social welfare proposals before the nation today pose a much greater threat to the poor (and particularly to children) than the budget cuts of the early 1980s. Budget cuts can always be reversed. Repeal or elimination of entitlement programs, and consolidation and block granting, will result in fundamental changes in the relationship between the Federal government and the states—shifting back to the states the cost and responsibility for maintaining both educational equity and the nation's safety net.

For at least six decades, the Federal government has kept its promise to provide basic assistance and education to its people. However, the capped block grants Congress is promoting will leave states with dramatically fewer dollars to meet the same and most often growing needs, leaving low-income families and children more vulnerable than they have been since the Depression.

We are clearly in the process of redefining the concept of responsibility—both personal and national. We are in the process of defining who is and who can be a part of the American community. We are in the process of redefining the concept of the citizenry. We are in the process of figuratively “circling the wagons” in the mistaken belief that looking inward will help us to hold on to what we have. And in the process, we are retreating from our responsibility to strive to achieve the common good, to preserve the general welfare.

How can we expect to foster a sense of national community—of civic duty—if all of our messages are designed to balkanize us back to the state level. To whom do we expect the next generations to pledge alliance?

If we truly recognize the value of remaining “one nation indivisible” with at least the hope of “liberty and justice for all,” we must ask, “What are we to do?”

First, we must try to stop the oncoming train. In the case of proposals that are almost ready to go to the President’s desk, we must ask the President to veto those that balance the budget at the expense of the poor. Let him know specifically what’s wrong with the Welfare Reform Bill—what it lacks in child care, what it lacks in education and training, what it lacks in job creation and preparation, what its impact will be on families, on New York State, on New York City. Many of you in this room are in excellent positions to see the direct impact. Let the President know that yes, welfare does need changing, everyone—even welfare recipients—agrees to that. But what’s on the drawing board now is *not* the way to go. There are many more pressing issues for Americans and more worthy goals than punishing a few whose share of the American dream is so small. Let the President know that he has the opportunity to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves—to stand for the much needed sense of national responsibility and national community to which these initiatives are so damaging. On the other hand, let the President know that you support his stand on education, that you support his past veto of the Recission Bill which would have gutted education and training, that you support his proposed increases for education and training, and that you support his proposed increase in the minimum wage.

In the case of dangerous proposals that have not yet found their way out



of Congress, write and call your Congress person. Have professional colleagues in other states write and call their representatives. New York may be the capital of the world, but it cannot stand alone in national policy. While we know that New Yorkers' hearts are in the right place, we must recognize that New York is not the heartland.

Make a strong case for the EITC. The working poor are, in traditional thought processes, the deserving poor. Argue for rewarding those who "work hard and play by the rules." Publicize and encourage people to use the EITC—very few people know of its existence.

Get ready to work intensively on the state level as some of these responsibilities are "devolved" onto the state. States are about to become the battleground of social policy. Get to know your state legislators and executive branch policy makers. Let them know the importance of investing in child care, in early childhood education and other services. Get involved in how this develops on the state and local level.

Document what happens to people. Document what happens to schools. Document what happens to social service agencies. Our social agencies and schools will soon be coping on a day-to-day basis with the results of the nation's retreat from responsibility. Responsible educators in our poorest schools will continue to try, against all odds, to provide a good education to as many as possible in the midst of deteriorating circumstances. Responsible social workers will continue to help as many as possible live the best lives possible in deteriorating circumstances. Continue to teach, continue to serve—but also document what's happening as you see it.

Educators and social workers have had considerable experience in doing more with less. The next few years will test this resourcefulness. Some agencies and some school systems will not survive the century: some will be privatized, others will have their workload increased many times over. It will become increasingly difficult to avoid being diverted from serving people into serving procedures. All of us will need to think of new ways to work collaboratively to adjust to the new reality.

Find allies where you can. One of the few loud voices against some of the most horrendous welfare reform proposals has been the Catholic Church. Others have been conspicuously absent. From the floor of the Senate the inimitable Daniel Patrick Moynihan recently said: "There are very few advocacy groups outside. You can stand where I stand and look straight out at the Supreme Court—not a person in between that view. Not one of those flaunted, vaunted advocacy groups forever protecting the interests of chil-

dren and the helpless and the homeless and what-you-will. Are they increasingly subsidized and, therefore, increasingly co-opted?"

The poor need advocates more than ever. Let us resurrect some old groups and think about what coalitions we can build to create a new presence.

There are five years left to the end of the century but only thirteen months until the next election. Now is *not* the time to let cynicism and apathy hold sway.

The radical majority is not as large nor as monolithic as the grandeur of their actions would make it appear. Voter registration campaigns are as needed today as they were in the summer of '64. The motor voter bill is in place. Thank you, Professors Piven and Cloward. See that it is being used. Let people know how important it is to vote. Encourage your colleagues in other parts of the country to do the same.

Teacher education and social work education are facing real challenges, not the least of which will be preparing people for two essential but undervalued professions, while we ourselves are subject to the diminution of Federal resources for higher education. Our graduates will be moving into a hostile political environment. We must engage in some serious self-examination about our role in this environment.

My institution, Bank Street College of Education, undoubtedly prepares some of the best early childhood educators in the world, professionals who know how to nurture and develop the potential of children, professionals who even thrive in the face of scarce public resources because they are knowledgeable and creative in using their environment.

Columbia School of Social Work, I am certain, has similar pride in the ability of its graduates to work effectively, and often under great duress, with individuals, families and groups. I suspect that Columbia graduates—like Bank Street graduates—when given lemons by life or work, know how to make lemonade.

But how well are we preparing our students for the political environment in which their work will occur? How well are we doing at helping our students to understand the policies that shape the environments in which they work and the resources they are allocated to do their work? How well are we doing in helping our students to develop the analytical skills needed to think about education and social welfare policy? Are we helping them develop the advocacy skills needed to influence education and social welfare policy?

In two years in Washington I met very few teachers or social workers who were making policy. I met scores of economists and political scientists and lawyers who were making policy. Schools of education and schools of social work need to be preparing more people who understand both practice and policy, and who will advocate for policies that will make practice more effective.

Schools of education and schools of social work also need to prepare more professionals who are capable of using research to support good pedagogy and good practice—and to advocate for policies that will support good pedagogy and practice. Although politics often wins out over data, data are essential to defending a policy agenda—particularly one which does not have a strong political constituency—and that, unfortunately, is increasingly true for both public education and social welfare programs.

As we anticipate a very political year ahead, we must fight against policies which jeopardize the health, welfare and education of our children and low-income families. We must look for ways to provide opportunities, education and pathways to success.

John Kennedy once said, “If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.” We must fight for positive change—this country cannot afford to retreat from our responsibility and allow regressive policies to be enacted. Together we must look toward a stronger, more compassionate America—a society in which change is effected for the betterment, not the punishment, of its people.

In 1956, Adlai Stevenson said: “There is a new America every morning when we wake up... The new America is the sum of many small changes—a new subdivision here, a new school there, a new industry where there had been swampland—changes that add up to a broad transformation of our lives. Our task is to guide these changes. For though change is inevitable, change for the better is a full-time job.” All this may seem like a simple civics lesson but *all* of us must participate in the political process during this time of crisis in national responsibility.

Let us begin.