

Chronological: Health and Community Services Council of Hawaii

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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REMARKS BEFORE THE HEALTH AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES COUNCIL OF HAWAII

IT NOW APPEARS CERTAIN THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN WILL SUCCEED
IN MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE BUDGETARY REDUCTIONS THAT HE HAS
RECOMMENDED FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, AND EDUCATION FOR BOTH FY'81 AND FY'82. OUR
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE, WHICH HAS JURISDICTION OVER THESE
THREE DEPARTMENTS, HAS COMPLETED NINE WEEKS OF INTENSIVE PUBLIC
HEARINGS ON THE PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS. ALTHOUGH I
PERSONALLY FELT THAT THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED TO US DID NOT BY ANY
MEANS JUSTIFY THE TYPE, NOR THE EXTENT, OF THE PROPOSED
REDUCTIONS, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MAJORITY OF MY COLLEAGUES DID.

MAY 21, 1981

THE OVERWHELMING NATURE OF THE RECENT VOTES IN THE U.S. SENATE ON BOTH OVERALL BUDGET LIMITATIONS AND ALSO ON A SPECIFIC \$250 MILLION REDUCTION FOR THESE THREE DEPARTMENTS DURING THE LAST QUARTER OF FY'81, MAKE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT MAJOR PROGRAMATIC REDUCITONS ARE COMING IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

IT SADDENS ME TO REPORT THAT CLOSE EXAMINATION REVEALS THAT 75% OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS BY THE PRESIDENT FOR FY'82, OR \$28 BILLION ~~OF~~ THE \$37.5 BILLION IN QUESTION, WILL COME FROM PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE BASIC SERVICES TO THE POOR. YET THESE

PROGRAMS ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN ONE-TENTH OF THE TOTAL FEDERAL SPENDING PROPOSED FOR THAT YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MUST EXPECT THAT FOOD STAMP BENEFITS WILL BE ELIMINATED FOR ABOUT ONE MILLION OF OUR FELLOW CITIZENS, THAT NUTRITION ASSISTANCE WILL BE ENDED FOR THE 700,000 INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND PREGNANT WOMEN WHO ARE PRESENTLY COVERED BY THE SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING PROGRAM, AND ^(DURING) THAT THIS FISCAL YEAR ALONE, MORE THAN 300,000 CETA PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS WILL BE TERMINATED, MANY OF THEM IN OUR NATION'S MENTAL HEALTH OR CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS. THIS, I AM AFRAID, IS JUST FOR STARTERS.

I AM ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT OUR DIMINISHED COMMITMENT TO INSURING THAT OUR NATION'S MOTHERS AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE HIGH QUALITY, NUTRITIOUS MEALS. EXPERTS FROM BOTH THE MEDICAL AND NUTRITION FIELDS HAVE INFORMED ME THAT EVEN TODAY, THE SINGLE GREATEST HAZARD TO OUR NATION'S NEWBORN IS LOW BIRTH WEIGHT. LOW BIRTH WEIGHT HAS BEEN DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH A NUMBER OF DISEASES, INCLUDING EPILEPSY, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, MENTAL RETARDATION, AND AUTISM.

IN OUR NATION, ABOUT SEVEN PERCENT OF ALL BIRTHS ARE BELOW
5.5 POUNDS; IN SWEDEN, WHICH HAS THE LOWEST RATE OF INFANT
DEATH, ONLY FOUR PERCENT ARE BORN BELOW THIS CRITICAL WEIGHT.
AND FOR ME, WHAT IS SADDEST ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED
BUDGETARY REDUCTIONS IS THAT NOT ONLY WILL THEY NOT REDUCE OUR
NATION'S INFLATIONARY RATE AT ALL, BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT, THAT
THEY ARE BASED UPON A NUMBER OF ASSUMPTIONS THAT SIMPLY ARE
NOT TRUE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE KNOW THAT THE SINGLE BIGGEST FACTOR

AFFECTING ELIGIBILITY IN OUR NATION'S FOOD STAMP PROGRAM TODAY
IS NOT FRAUD AND ABUSE, BUT INSTEAD UNEMPLOYMENT PER SE. FOR
EVERY ONE PERCENT INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT, NEARLY ONE MILLION
AMERICANS BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS. EVEN UNDER OUR
CURRENT LAWS, IF A FAMILY OF FOUR EARNS \$700 PER MONTH, OR
\$8,400 PER YEAR, THEY CAN NOT RECEIVE FOOD STAMPS. YET, RATHER
THAN ADDRESS UNEMPLOYMENT, WE SEE THE ADMINISTRATION SEVERELY
RESTRICTING THESE FAMILIES' VERY CHANCES OF SURVIVAL.

I AM EQUALLY SURE THAT VERY FEW OF YOU REALIZE THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S MUCH HERALDED "SAFETY NET" PROGRAM WILL NOT REALLY PROTECT THOSE MOST IN NEED. NEARLY HALF OF ITS BENEFICIARIES ALREADY HAVE INCOMES OF MORE THAN \$15,000 PER YEAR.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO PROPOSED A DRASTIC REVISION OF THE CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS FOR OUR NATION'S ELDERLY, DEPENDENT, AND POOR. AT FIRST GLANCE, THE "BLOCK GRANT" APPROACH MAY SEEM LOGICAL AND EVEN COST-EFFECTIVE.

WHY NOT ALLOW OUR VARIOUS STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS TO
ESTABLISH THEIR OWN PRIORITIES, TO TRULY CONTROL THE
DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL WELFARE EXPENDITURES? IN HAWAII, I
HONESTLY FEEL THAT THE BLOCK GRANT APPROACH WILL WORK OUT QUITE
WELL. WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE LEADERSHIP IN THIS STATE THAT
IS TRULY COMMITTED TO INSURING THAT NECESSARY HEALTH AND HUMAN
WELFARE SERVICES ARE DELIVERED. I AM AFRAID, HOWEVER, THAT
THOSE WHO LIVE IN MANY OF OUR SISTER STATES ON THE MAINLAND
WILL NOT FARE SO WELL. HISTORY HAS SHOWN US THAT OFTENTIMES

MINORITIES AND OTHERS WHO DO NOT HAVE POLITICAL CLOUT, SIMPLY
DO NOT RECEIVE THEIR "FAIR SHARE". THE OFTEN TIMES UNIQUE
PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS DO NOT RECEIVE ADEQUATE ATTENTION. THEY
ARE ALWAYS ON THE BOTTOM OF THE TOTEM POLE.

BUT EVEN IN HAWAII, THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE,
SECRETARY SCHWEIKER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES HAS PROPOSED FOUR BLOCK GRANTS. HE HAS ESTABLISHED

BROAD PARAMETERS WITHIN WHICH, IT WOULD BE UP TO LOCAL
AUTHORITIES TO DEVELOP PRIORITIES. FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR ONE
"BLOCK" MUST BE EXPENDED FOR PROGRAMS WITHIN THAT DESIGNATION,
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS, ETC. HOWEVER, IT IS THE
SECRETARY'S EXPRESS INTENTION NOT ONLY NOT TO PROMULGATE
DETAILED REGULATIONS SUCH AS THOSE REQUIRING 24-HOUR CARE FOR
OUR STATE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS, BUT ALSO TO REQUEST
FROM THE CONGRESS ONLY 75% OF THE FUNDS ALLOCATED IN FY'81 FOR
THESE PROGRAMS. THUS, FOR THE SECRETARY'S HEALTH SERVICE BLOCK

GRANT, 15 CURRENTLY CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS WILL BE CONSOLIDATED. COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS, HOME HEALTH SERVICES, AND MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH INITIATIVES WILL NOW HAVE TO DIRECTLY COMPETE WITH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS, DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAMS, AND EVEN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROPOSALS--ONCE AGAIN, FOR THREE-QUARTERS OF THIS YEAR'S SUPPORT.

SIMILARLY, UNDER THE SECRETARY'S PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICE BLOCK GRANT, 11 PROGRAMS WILL BE CONSOLIDATED INCLUDING VENERAL DISEASE, RAT CONTROL, FLUORIDATION, AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH SERVICES. UNDER HIS SOCIAL SERVICE BLOCK GRANT, TWELVE PROGRAMS ARE TARGETED FOR INCLUSION INCLUDING: DAY CARE, CHILD WELFARE SERVICES, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, CHILD ABUSE, AND REHABILITATION SERVICES. THE SECRETARY'S FINAL BLOCK, ENERGY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, IS LESS ACUTE FOR HAWAII.

THE SPECIFICS OF EACH OF THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSALS ARE STILL
SUBJECT TO CHANGE, HOWEVER, I AM SURE YOU CAN APPRECIATE HOW
UNSETTLING THEY WILL BE FOR ALL CONCERNED. NOT ONLY WILL THERE
BE SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER RESOURCES AVAILABLE, BUT THOSE WHO WILL
NOW BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES WILL BE COMING
FROM A VERY DIFFERENT VANTAGEPOINT THAN BEFORE.

IN MANY WAYS, OUR STATE WILL ALSO FACE UNIQUE CHALLENGES.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANTS PER
CAPITA, AND DURING THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL
IN HAVING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PROVIDE
US WITH SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO ADDRESS THEIR UNIQUE PROBLEMS.
WE OF COURSE, DID NOT RECEIVE ALL THAT WE DESIRED, BUT A START
WAS MADE. UNDER THE BLOCK GRANT APPROACH, IT IS NOT CLEAR
WHAT RESPONSIBILITY THE FEDERAL AGENCIES MIGHT STILL HAVE FOR
SITUATIONS SUCH AS OURS. WILL THESE "FUTURE CITIZENS" BECOME THE
EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF OUR STATE LEGISLATURE? IT IS TOO
EARLY TO TELL.

THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS THE EXPRESS INTENT OF
DISMANTLING MANY, IF NOT ALL, OF THE MOST HERALDED PROGRAMS
OF THE KENNEDY-JOHNSON ERA OF THE GREAT SOCIETY. IN MY
JUDGMENT, THEY HAVE NOT PROPOSED ANY VIABLE ALTERNATIVES. WE
ARE STILL FACED WITH A NUMBER OF VERY SERIOUS SOCIETAL PROBLEMS,
SUCH AS PROVIDING CARE FOR OUR NATION'S ELDERLY, HANDICAPPED,
AND DISADVANTAGED. THESE INDIVIDUALS WILL NOT MERELY GO AWAY.
THEY HAVE AS MUCH RIGHT TO A GOOD LIFE AS YOU OR I DO; IF THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM,
WHO WILL?