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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I regret that the House of Representatives has failed to sustain my veto of H.R. 9803, the Child Day Care Services under Title XX of the Social Security Act.

This legislation runs counter to a basic principle of government important to all Americans -- the vesting of responsibility in State and local government and the removal of burdensome Federal regulations.

I am firmly committed to providing Federal assistance to States for social services programs, including child day care. But I am opposed to unwarranted Federal interference in States' administration of these programs.

H.R. 9803 would make permanent highly controversial and costly day care staff-to-children ratios. And it would deny the States the necessary flexibility to establish and enforce their own staffing standards for federally assisted day care.

This bill would not make day care services more widely available. It would only make them more costly to the American taxpayer. The expenditure of at least \$125 million over the next six months, and possibly as much as \$250 million more each year thereafter, would be required under this bill.

H.R. 9803 would also require that a portion of Federal social services funds be available under Title XX of the Social Security Act for a narrow, categorical purpose. In the deliberations leading to enactment of Title XX, a little over a year ago, the States and voluntary service organizations fought hard to win the right to determine both the form and the content of such services according to their own priorities. This bill would undermine the Title XX commitment to allow the various States their own initiative by dictating not only how day care services are to be provided, but also how they are to be financed under Title XX.

The Federal day care standards imposed by H.R. 9803 have been subject to considerable debate. In fact, the bill recognizes the questionable appropriateness of these standards by postponing their enforcement for the third time, in this case to July 1 of this year. Fewer than one in four of the States have chosen to follow these standards closely in the administration of their day care programs. The Congress itself has required by law that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare conduct an 18-month study ending in 1977, to evaluate their appropriateness.

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For these reasons, I urge the Senate to join me in opposing the enactment of this measure. And I urge that the Congress extend, until October 1, 1976, the moratorium on imposition of Federal day care staffing standards that it voted last October 2. This would give the Congress ample time to enact my proposed Federal Assistance for Community Services Act, under which States would establish and enforce their own day care staffing standards and fashion their social services programs in ways they believe will best meet the needs of their citizens.

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