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NOVEMBER 1976

# THE SINGLE PARENT

The Journal of Parents Without Partners, Inc.



# SINGLE PARENT



# on the HILL

Bob Westgate

THE 1976 PRESIDENTIAL election is only a few days away.

For months, the parties and the candidates have been citing their positions on major issues; millions of Americans saw the debates on television.

Many of these topics concern single parents—there are 7.5 million single-parent families in the U.S. today, raising more than 11 million children—but they have unique financial, legal, emotional and social problems which need solutions, too.

Both vice-presidential candidates have good records on federal legislation affecting children: Sen. Walter F. Mondale received a rating of 100% from the American Parents Committee, Inc., and Sen. Robert Dole, 70%. However, vice presidents seldom set White House policy.

Therefore, SINGLE PARENT ON THE HILL asked President Ford and Governor Carter for their views on seven important single-parent issues. Their unedited responses follow:

1. *Federal taxes are discriminatory against single parents. How would you correct the unfairness of existing taxes that are 20% higher for single parents than for two-parent families? Do you favor the deduction of ALL child-care costs—including care after school, while a parent is sick, and at summer camp—as a business expense for a working parent, rather than as a personal expense? Do you favor the deduction of all health care costs? Do you favor the deduction of all or some of the expenses of higher education? Do you favor a more equitable division of a deduction for children between two divorced or separated parents, rather than giving it to the one who pays \$1,200 or can prove at least 51% of support?*



FORD: Just what constitutes a fair distribution of tax burden among households of different types is a question to which there is no definitive answer. Present law incorporates a compromise on the treatment of single parents, in that it allows them some of the income-splitting advantages of married couples.

A single parent is usually eligible to calculate the tax according to the "unmarried head-of-household" schedule, which assures that the tax

total for a given amount of taxable income will never exceed that for a married couple with the same taxable income by more than 10% (and not 20% as in the case of single individuals). By and large the Administration feels the present compromise draws a reasonable balance among competing considerations.

In order to reduce the disincentive implied by the tax system for single parents to work, particular exception has been made in the case of the costs of replacing child care services of a parent. Generally speaking, the Administration does not favor a significant extension of such deductions. In particular, summer camp fees are not regarded by most taxpayers as a business expense.

The concept of "health care costs" might incorporate an extremely broad range of expenditures. Under present law, reasonable health expenditures are borne by all taxpayers and allowance for them is made in the standard deduction. Extraordinary health expenditures—those which generally exceed 3% of income—are presently deductible, along with a portion of expenditures for health insurance premiums.

The Administration believes that some way should be found to assist those who are bearing the heavy burden of expenditure for higher education for their children. There are various ways the tax system might be used to effect such assistance, including a deduction or tax credit for all or some portion of education expenses. The exact way this should best be approached is currently under thorough and detailed study.

(On division of deductions for children): Unfortunately, relations between separated or divorced parents are often acrimonious and it would often be difficult for them to exchange information necessary to allocate the deduction between them. The IRS could be left as the arbiter of these disputes. The Administration is currently reviewing ways in which the tax system can be made more equitable and simple and the Congress will have to enact reforms once proposals are introduced.



CARTER: It is tragic that some of our federal government programs have not remained attuned to some of the changes in family structure and child upbringing which have occurred over the past generation. Today 1/7th of the nation's children—11 million—reside with a single parent, and a greater percentage of children live amidst

## *A monthly report on actions by the White House, Congress and Federal Agencies of special interest to single parents and their children.*

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poverty today than did in 1970.

The growing problems of the single parent demand immediate recognition and alleviation. Several things can be done to lessen the financial burden of the parent who alone must provide for his or her children.

Clearly the federal tax system demands revision, especially as it relates to the single parent. Carefully contrived loopholes have shifted the total tax burden more and more towards the average earner. It is disgraceful that a family with an income of \$10,000 a year pays a larger portion of its income in taxes than a family with an annual income of \$1 million or more. It is shameful that the tax burden on a single parent is greater than that on a two-parent family.

I am considering a drastic simplification of the income tax system that would lower taxes on middle and low income families. Such reform would treat all income the same, eliminate hundreds of tax breaks for the already privileged and, according to a recent study, reduce the tax rate by as much as 40%.

In a direct effort to equalize the tax burden on single and two-parent families, I will carefully review the use of deductions for child care in revising the tax code.

Beyond tax reform, however, we must remain aware that the single parent has suffered disproportionately from the economic malaise that has plagued our nation this decade. The present administration's "Misery Index," tabulated by adding the nation's average rates of inflation and unemployment since President Ford assumed office, is at a level (16%) unprecedented in the past half-century.

A new economic approach is required, one based on an expansionist fiscal and monetary policy, specific stimulation of industry, provision of productive public employment and improved coordination between all government bodies involved in directing or regulating our economy.

2. Do you favor the reintroduction and passage of the Child and Family Services Act?

CARTER: I support the basic objective of the Child and Family Services Act—to provide "adequate health, nutritional, educational and other services" to the children of parents of limited income who request such assistance.

The bill, introduced by my running mate, Sen. Walter Mondale, who last year received the "Par-

ents Without Partners' Distinguished Service to Children Award," addresses critical problems confronting the most important dynamic element of our society—the family.

The need for improved child care facilities, based on volunteerism and parental request, is well documented. This need is often particularly acute for the single parent who must somehow find a way to work and care for his or her child simultaneously.

Today, there are six million pre-school-age children of working parents. Only one million of these are cared for in licensed child care homes and institutions. These facilities—monitored to meet basic health, safety and educational standards—should be available for all those who need and desire them.

I might add that I wholeheartedly endorse Sen. Mondale's suggestion that all federal legislation be evaluated for its impact on the American family. The enactment of this proposal would not necessitate the creation of a new bureaucracy, but could routinely be handled by Congress or the Executive branch. I will certainly rely on the advice of Sen. Mondale, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Youth, in charting my administration's pro-family policy.

FORD: The President does not favor the reintroduction and passage of the Child and Family Services Act. Better day care and related services are needed for the children of working parents, but he believes that we need a wholly new service delivery system which would utilize existing programs.

Accordingly, the President has signed into law H.R. 12455, providing \$240 million extra in federal funds for day care services already operated by the states under Title XX of the Social Security Act. Furthermore, he has called upon the Congress to pass the Allied Services Act of 1976, under which federal funds from a variety of sources could be pooled to create unified social and health service delivery systems to address the needs which states themselves identify as priorities, and The Financial Assistance for Community Services Act of 1976, which would give far greater freedom to states to create and manage services programs, including day care.

3. Do you favor uniform child support and custody acts among the states and similar reciprocal acts between the U.S. and Canada to help eliminate child-snatching and non-support by parents who cross the border?

FORD: President Ford is greatly concerned over these issues. Throughout his public life, he has sought to support federal and state laws and programs aimed at preserving the integrity of families and ensuring that absent parents fulfill their financial obligations to the children they leave behind. One of the first legislative proposals the President introduced as a freshman Member of the House of Representatives in 1949 was a bill to establish a federal program designed to help enforce absent parent support obligations. Shortly after assuming the Presidency, Mr. Ford signed into law P.L.93-647, the Child Support Amendments to the Social Security Act. This law provides that the states must establish comprehensive child support enforcement mechanisms open to people of all incomes, as well as to those receiving welfare assistance.

The President does not believe that any further federal legislation is necessary in this area. Nor does he believe that any special child support compact with Canada is necessary since Canadian provinces will cooperate with states in the pursuit of support obligations. Moreover, many states have entered into formal compacts with individual Canadian provinces, thereby formalizing reciprocal support enforcement arrangements at the more effective level of government involvement.

CARTER: I would favor reasonable legislation to make equitably adjudicated child custody decisions binding and that would also prohibit child-snatching.

Our already overburdened judicial system, unable now to process an ever-increasing backlog of serious criminal indictments, should not be further encumbered with duplicative and potentially disruptive child custody cases.

4. Do you favor the Bennett and/or Moss bills (HR 13134 and HR 10977) to eliminate child-snatching?

CARTER: I endorse the precepts of the Bennett and Moss bills. Both pieces of legislation—the former seeks to prohibit parental child-snatching and the latter to promote recognition of fairly-adjudicated child custody decisions—are noble in intent.

It only remains to be seen whether or not they represent the most comprehensive means of discouraging child-snatching and the abrogation of child custody laws and court decisions.

FORD: Neither the Justice Department nor any

other section of the Executive branch has been asked to testify before Congress on either of these bills. Until a request is made by the Congress and hearings are held, the White House cannot comment specifically on this proposed legislation.

5. How would you lessen existing Social Security discrimination against widows, widowers and divorced persons?

FORD: Full benefits for aged survivors of deceased workers—where benefits are first paid at or after age 65—are equal to the full amount of the worker's benefit. Aged survivor's benefits are available on a reduced basis as early as age 60—two years sooner than workers and their spouses can start getting benefits.

Social Security also provides protection for young survivors of deceased workers who have young children in their care. Benefits are provided, regardless of age, to the widow or widower, or surviving divorced wife, with a child who is under age 18 or disabled in his or her care. Under a 1975 Supreme Court decision, benefits are provided for the surviving father caring for a child on the same basis that they are provided for the widowed mother with a child in her care—in order to help make it possible for the parent to stay at home to care for the child rather than seeking full-time employment. Of course, if the surviving parent goes to work and has substantial earnings, some or all of his or her benefits would be withheld under the Social Security "earnings test." However, the parent's earnings would not cause any reduction in benefits for the child or children.

There are, however, certain distinctions in the law under which male survivors of women workers cannot get Social Security, which must be continually reviewed to make sure all such distinctions are proper. The President is totally committed to ending any form of discrimination.

CARTER: First, I should state that I have been an enthusiastic proponent of the Equal Rights Amendment, supporting it as Governor of Georgia despite strong opposition and advocating its passage in every state I visited this year.

Secondly, I support efforts to revise our Social Security program, a primary source of income for the nation's elderly citizens. Raising the maximum income ceiling subject to Social Security taxation, rather than increasing every wage-earner's Social Security contribution, as the present administration proposed, would more equitably distribute the burden of the system and widen the program's financial base.



Women still bear the preponderance of the Social Security system's bias. As the incidence of divorce has burgeoned so dramatically over the past decade, the Social Security provision which requires a woman to be married to her spouse twenty years before being eligible for benefits has become increasingly impractical.

Furthermore, housewives and their spouses are not protected by the system in case the housewife dies or is disabled. We have remained remiss in not crediting housewives for their essential contribution to our economy.

Finally, a retired working woman who qualifies for Social Security benefits both as a laborer and as a dependent receives only the larger of the two. In effect, working wives pay full Social Security taxes for protection that they substantially already receive as spouses. This inequity, too, must be addressed.

The implications of the Equal Rights Amendment and the realities of contemporary America have increasingly rendered certain presumptions of the Social Security system obsolete. The program as codified today is predicated on the belief that working men head virtually all of the nation's households and that women work only because they want to.

Recent figures, however, dispel this popular conception. By 1973, 23% of all households were headed by women, and in the majority of two-parent families both partners were members of the labor force. Most women work not because they wish to, but because they have to if the surging costs of food, housing and child care are to be met.

6. *Do you favor the formation of a new division within HEW to handle the problems of the 12 million single parents in the United States?*

CARTER: As I have stressed throughout my campaign, the federal bureaucracy needs streamlining. Too great a portion of the taxpayer's dollar is squandered in implementing duplicative and overlapping programs.

I would take the same approach to reorganizing and revitalizing the federal government that I took towards trimming the state of Georgia's governmental excesses. There, we were influential in abolishing 273 out of the 300 agencies and in clearly defining the goals and policies of the remaining 22.

Through instituting a zero-based budget system whereby an agency must justify every expenditure and through implementing a tough system of monitoring and auditing, we were able to make the

state bureaucracy more responsive to the needs of those it serves.

I have asked Joseph Califano, a former Johnson advisor, to head a task force aimed at determining how federal programs can be designed to assist and support the American family. Along with the advice of others actively involved in this critical area, his recommendations will help me decide how best to insure federal sensitivity to the unique problems of single parents.

FORD: The President does not favor creating a separate organization in HEW for single-parent households. While sympathetic to the extra demands that are placed on an individual acting as both mother and father for a family, President Ford does not believe that creating a costly special organization and bureaucratic structure at the federal level would necessarily be the most effective way to assist them.

7. *Do you favor the Displaced Homemakers Bill?*

FORD: Since the Congress has never moved formally to consider the proposed Equal Opportunities for Displaced Homemakers Act, the Administration has not had the opportunity to examine this proposal in detail, nor to testify on it.

However, the President believes that programs already exist that provide the kinds of services envisioned in this bill. The creation of any new federal program targeted to serve only the displaced homemaker, rather than all people regardless of the circumstances which created their need, would lead to a duplication of services already in place.

CARTER: I find the basic objective of the Displaced Homemakers Act (H.R. 10272 and S. 2541) laudable. Sen. Mondale was an original co-sponsor of the Senate version of the bill.

According to recent estimates, nearly 2.2 million Americans fit the description of the displaced homemaker. The "DH" is an individual who has worked in the home without compensation and, because of separation, divorce or death, finds income upon which he or she was dependent gone.

It is indeed frightening to imagine the plight of the displaced homemaker. More than likely the individual is a woman who has been dependent on her husband's income, has no job experience or skills, is too young to collect Social Security benefits, and might not have been married long enough to be eligible, and has dependents she must now support.

Those who face this situation in life need the confidence and practical skills to provide for those relying on them; the possibility for assisting displaced homemakers should be examined. America can ill afford to waste the potential represented by its displaced homemakers.

# Outdoor Life

NOVEMBER 1976 75¢

Where to  
hunt, fish  
in your  
region

**RICHARD  
STARNES**  
...starting in  
this issue



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## COVER STORY

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Lake; **WOODCOCK** hunting



THE WHITE HOUSE  
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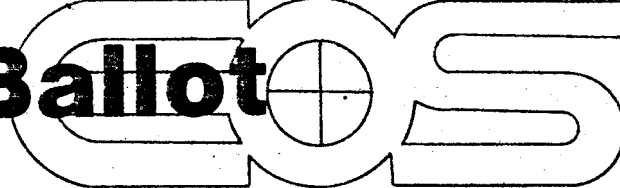
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# Election Ballot



TRANSACTIONS, AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION  
VOLUME 57 NUMBER 11 NOVEMBER 1976



PROPOSITION I:

## Earthquake Prediction Research

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION II:

## Weather Modification

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION III:

## Flood Plain Identification

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION IV:

## Planetary Missions

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION V:

## Restrictions on Research of Sea

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION VI:

## Nuclear Power

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION VII:

## Increased Funding for Basic Research

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION VIII:

## Peer Review

YES ☐

NO ☐

PROPOSITION IX:

## Freedom of Inquiry



## Jimmy Carter

It is crucial that the advice of the scientific and professional community of this nation be actively and permanently sought by elected officials in the evolution of national policy dealing with the complicated, unpredictable, and rapidly changing technological problems of this modern world.

The day when political leaders could make effective policy decisions independently and turn to the scientific community only for assistance in implementation has long passed.

The Office of Science Advisor to the President should be upgraded immediately to provide a permanent and high level relationship between the White House decision-making process and the scientific community.

### Science and the Candidates

In early July, AGU sent letters to the major presidential candidates. These letters described AGU and its membership and posed several questions:

1. What do you expect the role of the science advisor to be in your administration?

2. There are a number of organizations within the federal government that have a preponderantly scientific or technical role; examples are the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Energy

Research and Development Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. How will you go about selecting the directors/administrators and their key staff and specifically to what extent do you feel political consideration should enter into the selection of such individuals?

3. Research and development consumes approximately 15% of the federal budget at the present time, but of this amount a very small fraction is spent on basic research. Quantization of the benefits of basic research is a

classically difficult problem. How do you propose that the federal government should determine how much money should be spent on basic research? Do you have any feeling as to whether we are now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount?

4. What role do you feel should be played by science and scientists in support of the U.S. foreign policy and how would you propose to implement that role?

A nominal limit of 2000 words was set, and the candidates were given ample time to respond. Their replies are printed here.

# Gerald Ford

## Question

What do you expect the role of the science adviser to be in your administration?

## Answer

The Congress has approved my proposal to create an Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in the White House. As I indicated when submitting this proposal in June 1975, the Director of the OSTP will serve as my adviser on science and technology.

The principal overall responsibility of this adviser will be to provide advice on the scientific, engineering, and technical aspects of issues requiring attention at the highest levels of government. He will be one of my senior advisers, and he will also provide advice and assistance to other senior people in the White House and the Executive Office of the President.

In carrying out his responsibilities, my science and technology adviser is expected to

- Participate in the formulation of my budget and legislative proposals, particularly where scientific and technical considerations are involved.
- Review existing policies and programs to identify opportunities for and constraints upon the use of our scientific and technical capabilities in achieving national objectives.
- Help identify new opportunities for using science and technology to improve our understanding of national problems and contribute to their solution.

The Director of OSTP will be a member of the Domestic Council and an adviser to the National Security Council. He will be a member of and play a major role in the President's Committee on Science and Technology, which will consist of 14 experts from outside the federal government and will conduct a two-year review of federal science and technology policies, activities, and organization. He will also be Chairman of the Federal Coordinating Council on Science, Engineering, and Technology, which will promote the coordination of research and development among



federal agencies. Finally, he will lead a panel that will focus attention on problems at the state and local levels of government which can be mitigated through the application of science and technology.

## Question

There are a number of organizations within the federal government that have a preponderantly scientific or technical role; examples are the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Energy Research and Development Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. How will you go about selecting the directors/administrators and their key staff and specifically to what extent do you feel political consideration should enter into the selection of such individuals?

## Answer

The principal criteria for selection of men and women to fill top level positions in such organizations are

- Recognized professional qualifications, competence, and standing in their area of responsibility.
- Capacity or proven ability to (1) manage the resources that they will have to carry out their agency's responsibilities and (2) work effectively in

a complex environment such as that found in the federal government.

- An understanding of the mutual responsibilities of the public and private sectors.

I will continue to seek recommendations for such positions from respected leaders of scientific and engineering communities before making selections for positions requiring scientific and technical backgrounds.

The question of partisan political affiliation inevitably is raised in the case of any presidential appointment requiring Senate confirmation. While this is the case, political affiliation of candidates has not been an overriding consideration in my appointments to scientific and technical positions in the past, and it will not be an overriding consideration in the future.

### Question

What role do you feel should be played by science and scientists in support of the U.S. foreign policy, and how would you propose to implement that role?

### Answer

Science and scientists have played a major role in the support of U.S. foreign policy, and this role can be continued and expanded.

For example, scientific and technical considerations are very important in a number of problems that have global importance, including population growth, food supply, energy, mineral resources, environmental quality, and weather and climate modification. We must draw upon scientists and engineers to identify and describe these problems more accurately and to contribute to their solution.

In addition, science and technology have contributed significantly to our economic strength and national security. For example, we have an important competitive advantage in world trade because of the contributions of science and technology in agriculture, electronics, communications, computers, aircraft, and other high technology areas. We look to our scientists and engineers to assist in finding new and better solutions to the problems facing lesser developed countries of the world. Often scientists are the first to be aware of problems, solutions, and new opportunities. This awareness is shaped in a variety of ways including the participation of U.S. scientists in international meetings with their colleagues.

The conduct of research has become increasingly international, as witnessed by worldwide programs of scientific exploration and discovery such as the International Geophysical Year and the Global Atmospheric Research Program. The United States now has formal arrangements with some 25 countries for cooperation in science and technology which involve our colleges and universities, federal laboratories, professional scientific and engineering communities, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Medicine, and hundreds of individual scientists and engineers.

Opportunities and problems such as those outlined above generally are complex and involve many considerations in addition to the scientific and technological ones. However, scientific and technological considerations are very important, and we will continue to engage scientists and engineers as part of teams involving people with expertise in other areas to work cooperatively in finding the most effective approaches.

### Question

Research and development consumes approximately 15% of the federal budget at the present time, but of this amount a very small fraction is spent on basic research. Quantification of the benefits of basic research is a classically difficult problem. How do you propose that the federal government should determine how much money should be spent on basic research? Do you have any feeling as to whether we are now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount?

### Answer

There is no precise way to determine either how much federal investment there should be in basic research or where the investment should be made to optimize the contributions which basic research can make. As the question indicates, basic research does not lend itself well to cost-benefit analysis. We must therefore look to other means for evaluating and justifying our basic research funding.

My administration strongly believes that we must continue to look to basic research to provide the new knowledge that underlies our advances in science and technology. We have examined trends in federal support of basic research and undertaken to assess the impact of these trends on the status of basic research in the United States.

Based on our analysis, my 1977 budget proposed \$2.6 billion for 1977—an increase of 11% over 1976 estimates—for basic research to help assure that the flow of new scientific knowledge continues. This level of funding would reverse the steady decline—in constant dollar terms—in the federal investment in basic research which began in 1967.

Since much of the nation's basic research is conducted at colleges and universities, I requested significant funding increases for the NSF and other agencies that support basic research in these institutions. In my request, basic research funding by the NSF would have increased by 20%. Unfortunately, the Congress has not approved all of the funding that I requested for NSF support of basic research in 1976 or 1977. This means that both the scientific community and the administration will have to work harder to explain to the Congress the importance of basic research.

Although the role of the federal government in the support of basic research is very important, the role of the private sector is also significant. Industry and other elements of the private sector must continue to support basic research, and we should seek ways of preserving or expanding incentives for the private sector to continue these investments.