

What follows is a proposal that would, at little or no cost, provide a highly substantive and highly visible series of new initiatives for the Ford Administration. All three of the initiatives can be accomplished at little or no extra cost to the budget.

In sum, the suggestion is for the appointment of the youngest Counselor to the President ever who would have responsibility for pursuing one or all of the following areas:

- A program of real political and governmental involvement of young people, initiated by a national conference of youth organization presidents.
- A plan to implement career education throughout American public schools, easily one of the most far reaching actions in terms of positively affecting individual Americans.
- A proposal for the reorientation of such agencies as ACTION to fulfill the promise of "Voluntary Action" -- provide the means for literally hundreds of thousands of Americans of all ages to commit part of their time to building up America.

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Again, the expertise and necessary Party, Congressional and Administration support for these initiatives has been carefully assessed and the response has been most positive. The impact of such a high appointment of a "youth" would give these initiatives the kind of visibility and internal clout required to get the job done.

All of these initiatives could easily be tied into the Bicentennial to enhance both.

Obviously, the proposal could be easily modified, but the reaction of those in the Administration, on the Hill and in the Party has been so positive that I strongly recommend the most serious consideration be given to some form of implementation.

  
KENNETH M. SMITH

July 30, 1974

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Vice President

FROM: Ken Smith

RE: A Proposal for Action: Youth Involvement  
in Government and the Political Process

In the previous memorandum a plan for implementing a program of real youth involvement in politics and government was outlined. Essentially, it called for:

1. The assembling, at the invitation of the Vice President, the presidents of all the youth organizations (ages 14-17) of over 50,000 members as an advisory group to the Domestic Council as it surveys the future for the Bicentennial. This to be done in late November, 1974.
2. This group, through the existing White House Youth Office, would prepare and implement a plan for the first national conference ever of all the state presidents of all those youth organizations. This to happen by the summer of 1975.
3. The conference would chart a course for genuine involvement by young people in the nation's political and governmental institutions. These proposals, as agreed to by the Administration, would take effect during the Bicentennial (1976).
4. Suggested ideas for the conference consideration included: a) lowering the age of majority, b) the appointment of concerned young people to all the open precinct chairman positions in both parties, c) lowering the age, by Constitutional Amendment, for Senate and Congressional candidates.

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5. The Vice President, both in his role as Chairman of the Domestic Council and key Party leader, would take the lead in supporting the conference and carrying out the most worthwhile programs. A part-time consultant would be retained to ride shotgun on the project through the existing Youth Office (under Anne Armstrong).

#### WILL IT WORK?

If all that is ever done is simply to assemble those youth leaders and have them involved in the Bicentennial activities, then something worthwhile has been done. All the previous actions of the Party and the Administration to involve young people will be highlighted and a desperately needed freshness added to the Administration.

But think of the impact if the youth leadership called upon the two parties to allow concerned young people fill the open precinct positions -- and our party responds! It is at the precinct level that the real power lies: delegate selection, county and state chairman election, candidate consideration and approval. Fundamental involvement for young people, planned, promoted and activated by the GOP!

Such an agreement by the Party would take some firm national leadership -- yours, the Chairman's and key House and Senate members, to assure state and local action. That support currently exists, I have found, if you are prepared to direct it.

Consider too, the sight of our Party leaders leading the fight to gain approval of a Constitutional Amendment to allow young people to run for national office. The Administration that brought the 18 year old vote would be fighting to give the people the right to decide who, no matter what age, among the franchised voters, will represent them. Again, the support for that action -- rallied by your leadership -- is also there.

Tremendous impact -- and all coming just prior to an election year when reform and integrity will be the watchword. The effect of the "Watergate Administration" openly promoting such basic reforms will be all the more dramatic.

July 30, 1974

HOW TO DO IT

The time to move is now. Things are not going to get any better in the near future and if all is not to be lost constructive actions looking to the future must be undertaken now. Their psychological effect on our battered supporters of seeing some long range planning going into effect and programs to point to with pride would be an important side benefit. It's been a long time since some fresh initiatives have been taken.

You must decide. The President, clearly, will not be in a position to direct such efforts for sometime to come. You are the ranking Party and Administration figure with operational, maneuvering potential. If anyone can call such a play, and have it stick, it must be you. If you decide to get started, the next action is to get the part-time consultant hired to get things going. I would, of course, be delighted to fill that role but there are many good people who could do the job. The important thing is to get it going.

The beauty of it is that no other staff or costs would be involved -- one of the best and most effective offices in the Administration is the Youth Office and they would be both excited and very capable about getting this underway.

It is time for some positive actions, for a minimum cost the results from this type of program would be, at the very least, a strongly positive and visible one. Beyond that lies the potential for truly revitalizing our Party and the political process. Indeed the potential elements of our long cherished goal of majority status are there -- without broad support among young people that status by definition, will remain unobtainable. This gives us a real shot at the electoral jackpot.

August 12, 1974

MEMORANDUM

TO: The President  
FROM: Ken Smith *KMS*  
RE: A Proposal for the Implementation of Career Education

American public education is widely believed to be falling slowly apart. It is, I believe, an accurate judgement. Unresponsive, incredibly bureaucratic and inert while across the nation the Scholastic Aptitude Test results fall lower and lower each year, the dropout rate holds steady and growing numbers of pupils defect to private schools. Of those who do graduate, fully 40% have no marketable skill or any prospects of higher education. Of those who do go on to higher education, 40% drop out with a skill and 35% of those who do get their degree are prepared for jobs which do not exist or have (like teachers) 25 competing for each available job. At the same time, any additional educational funds are spent on buses, gasoline and tires.

The Queen Mary of Education is dead on course for the docks with no one on the bridge evincing great concern.

Meanwhile, in perhaps two dozen local school districts, new educational programs are meeting with great success in stimulating student interest, training students so that everyone who graduates from high school will have a marketable skill and expanding the horizons of students at each level (K-12) of the opportunities available in the world of work.

Career education (a skill, a job, motivation to a worthwhile career), properly applied, is a basic answer to the pervasive illness infecting public education -- but the will to take the medicine, to effect basic change, just cannot overcome the ancient inertia. The Queen Mary just won't respond to the new currents. Unless someone on the bridge takes control and forces her into the new course, the ship will be literally plowing into the docks in a relatively short time.

August 12, 1974

Much like the "new politics", career education is essentially a return to basics. How we ever got so far away from the basics of education -- skill training, vocational and social development directed at qualifying for a job and a productive career -- is for the historians to determine. All that can be said for sure is that we are nearly 180° away.

It is to the great credit of the Nixon Administration that the concept of career ed has been extensively modeled and tested. The models have been remarkably successful. One of the ignored tragedies of Watergate is that precisely when the political and societal realities were in concert for implementing the career concept throughout public education, the will of the Administration to pursue it was lost or diverted.

I propose, through your active involvement, to press forward the implementation of career education.

#### The Requirements

The staff for researching the necessary legislative action is not only available in the White House and the Office of Education but are in fact waiting for direction.

All that is really needed is top level commitment -- you -- and some determination to do the job instilled throughout the bureaucracy.

Our research shows that the major problems in a national implementation are that the Office of Education can't agree on a definition of "career ed" or "work"! The real testing and evaluation has been done and a general consensus reached among educators and students that career education works and can be one of the most effective educational approaches yet attempted.

#### Conclusion

The problems, of course, would be many. Opponents would rise to the fight at once and forces of bureaucratic inertia aligned with philosophical opponents would be a tough combination. I have, however, no doubt that the job could be done. An idea whose time has come is the best political army ever fielded -- and the American people are so fed up with their educational system they are more than ready to try something new.

August 12, 1974

Even if we fail at first, a sense of purpose and top level determination would do everyone involved a world of good. Furthermore, the groundwork for making the change will be laid for us to build on over the next two years. I have already reviewed with a dozen members of Congress on both sides of the aisle the potential of reworking the legislative thrust of education to a career education orientation and they were, to a man, excited about it.

The beauty of it is that the studies all show a minimal, if any, additional cost to rearrange their structure for career education. Those same studies show a sharp upturn in student attendance and interest and teacher satisfaction.

It is also worth noting the old political axiom that the strongest political impact is that action which personally affects the greatest number of people. A positive fundamental change in public education would have the most far-reaching impact of any domestic program yet attempted by the Administration.

If you are interested, I will follow up with a timetable and some specifics on a suggested plan of how to proceed.

PREPARE PLAN \_\_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_\_

KMS

August 12, 1974

MEMORANDUM

TO: The President  
FROM: Ken Smith *KFS*  
RE: Voluntary Action

All of the great things have been said about voluntary action. Many strategies -- and literally mountains of rhetoric -- have been expended on the subject. Yet the fact remains that millions of Americans who would get involved if only asked (and then told how) have never been recruited.

Simply stated, a variety of vehicles (much broader than VISTA or Peace Corps) must be built to channel those energies to the best advantage of the country.

In its essential forms, broad categories of involvement (National Youth Volunteer Corps; Senior Service Corps; Americans In Action; etc.) would lend themselves to attracting the greatest interest from the areas of greatest potential number of volunteers in the population.

These groups would then be put to work on a national scale on national priorities, perhaps reflecting the goals of the Bicentennial, such as:

1. Cleaning up the inner cities.
2. Remedial educational and social development work for inner city residents, particularly young people.
3. Clearing of rivers, lakes, streams, ocean beaches, as well as tree planting and other conservation efforts.
4. Physical assistance, entertainment and related activities for the elderly confined to nursing homes.
5. Similar efforts for orphanages, institutions for the neglected and delinquent.
6. Similar efforts in institutions for the mentally retarded and handicapped.



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The list of things that need to be done is nearly  
endless -- but so are the numbers of Americans who would go  
to work on them if asked and shown how.

The national staff is already available to direct these energies (in ACTION and elsewhere). What is needed is to have new directions given and the necessary legislative action taken to authorize the redirection of these resources.

In its most succinct form, the proposal is for the President to ask Americans to get involved in helping America -- and then providing the methods and the means for them to go to work.

The reawakening of national spirit, and unity, could be beyond anyone's hopes if such a program were instituted.