

PRESIDENT VETOES CHILD CARE PLAN AS IRRESPONSIBLE

He Terms Bill Unworkable
and Voices Fear It Would
Weaken Role of Family

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PERKINS PLEDGES FIGHT

~~SECURITY~~

But Overriding of Nixon's
Step Is Doubted—Javits
May Seek Compromise

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 9—In a stinging message, President Nixon vetoed today a Congressionally initiated bill to establish a national system of comprehensive child development and day care.

The proposal, he said, was characterized by "fiscal irresponsibility, administrative unworkability and family-weakening implications."

The President said that he objected to committing, without wide national debate, "the vast moral authority of the national Government to the side of com-

Excerpts from veto message
are printed on Page 22.

munal approaches to child-rearing over against the family-centered approach."

The veto message, which had been expected, was unusually strong in its language. Mr. Nixon also criticized two other measures included in the same legislation—renewal of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Federal antipoverty agency, and the spinning off of the Federal legal services program as an independent corporation.

Congress Reacts Quickly

The veto brought quick, sharp reaction from Congress. "We'll fight it all the way," said Representative Carl D. Perkins, Democrat of Kentucky, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee.

It was extremely doubtful, however, that Congress could muster enough votes to override the veto. While the Senate passed the measure by a 63-to-17 vote last week, the House vote on Tuesday was only 210 to 186.

Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, co-sponsor of the bill, expressed disappointment and said that if the veto was not overridden he would seek a quick compromise bill. Senator Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, the other Senate co-sponsor, said that the veto was "a cruel blow to children and working parents."

The child development proposal had attracted unusually broad support from labor, reli-

Continued on Page 22, Column 1

PRESIDENT VETOES CHILD CARE PLAN

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

gious, women's liberation and public interest groups. They and Congressional advocates argued that it was a necessary response to a change in society as large numbers of mothers have gone to work.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, told reporters that the President was not opposed to day care. Mr. Nixon's opposition, rather, is to the particular program set out in the bill, Mr. Ziegler said.

However, in his message, Mr. Nixon said:

"Neither the immediate need nor the desirability of a national child development program of this character has been demonstrated."

The President called attention to other Administration proposals concerning child development. He cited particularly the \$750-million day care component of his welfare reform plan. This is to provide

service to welfare mothers who would go to work under the Administration's plan.

Repeatedly in the message, Mr. Nixon raised strong reservations about the principle of child development.

"We cannot and will not ignore the challenge to do more for America's children in their all-important early years," the message said.

Asks Measured Response

"But our response to this challenge must be a measured, evolutionary, painstakingly considered one, consciously designed to cement the family in its rightful position as the keystone of our civilization.

"Good public policy requires that we enhance rather than diminish both parental authority and parental involvement with children."

The Congressional proposal called for a broad system ranging from nutrition aids for pregnant mothers to after-school programs for teen-agers.

The plan would have cost \$2-billion in its first full year of operation. It would have operated through Federal grants to communities of down to

5,000 population that applied for funds and gave assurance of high standards of quality.

The Congressional proposal, Mr. Nixon said, would create "a new army of bureaucrats" without answering where qualified personnel would come from and without justifying costs that he estimated could reach \$20-billion a year.

Two Other Segments Scored

The President also applied sharp language to two other components of the bill, which began last winter as simply a two-year extension of O.E.O.

As to the extension of the poverty agency, Mr. Nixon criticized mandatory funding levels set by Congress for 15 programs. Such earmarking "is genuinely reactionary legislation," he said, most importantly because it restricts the amount of funds available for innovations.

The earmarking would mean, he said, that "O.E.O. would rapidly degenerate into just another ossified bureaucracy.

The President said that he

would have vetoed this proposal even if it had come to him separately.

The final component of the bill, the proposal to create an independent national legal services corporation, was supported in principle by the Administration. But once again Mr. Nixon said that the restrictions that Congress imposed in the final bill were "an affront to the principle of accountability to the American people as a whole."

Mr. Nixon expressed strong objections to the machinery for choosing this corporation's board. Six of the members would be appointed by the President, and the 11 others would be chosen by him from lists provided by professional groups.

The universal aim of the corporation proposal was to insulate the controversial poverty law program from political pressures. But Mr. Nixon said today "it would be better to have no legal services corporation than one so irresponsibly structured."