

George Bush for President

9/1/88

THE GEORGE BUSH RECORD ON WELFARE

George Bush's theme toward welfare reform has always been to help people to help themselves - the keystone of the 1988 Welfare Reform Act.

- o "There are some people that prosperity never touches -- people trapped by circumstances beyond their control -- and society must respond, generously and compassionately. During our Administration, spending on welfare programs has increased by 50 percent, from \$80 billion to \$120 billion.
- o "But the liberals want government to help people directly; we want government to help people help themselves. They want to empower the government; we want to empower the people.

Speech by Vice President
George Bush, 6/30/88

LEGISLATIVE RECORD

George Bush has long been a supporter of welfare reform and the system that offered a "hand up", not a "hand out." His legislative and campaign records are testimony to the direction that he believes welfare programs should take.

- o Early in his Congressional career, George Bush voted for Social Security amendments containing appropriations for day care centers for mothers who enroll in work-training programs. [HR 12080 (1967)]
- o In 1969, Congressman Bush voted to repeal the freeze on AFDC payments. [HR 8644 (1969)]
- o In 1970, he voted for the Family Assistance Plan which provided a federal floor of \$1,600 for poor families. President Nixon called it the most significant legislation since passage of the Social Security Act. [HR 16311 (1970)]

"Under this proposal, if an individual does not accept work or work training he may be removed from the welfare rolls. Under the present system, there is no way that a state may remove an eligible individual from the welfare rolls. Thus,

WELFARE
PAGE TWO

between 1961 and 1969, both the number of families and individuals receiving welfare more than doubled, with costs tripling...The welfare reform bill that passed the House is not a guaranteed annual wage. A man has to register for work and has to take a job if he's going to get the family assistance level. Without this work requirement, the bill would not have had my support."

Bush Record on Welfare Reform,
September, 1970

WELFARE REFORM

Consistent with his earlier position, in 1979 as a candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination, George Bush proposed the following welfare reform program:

- o "Our welfare programs must be reformed to ensure that benefits extend to those truly in need. Those programs that do not work -- some of which actually harm the family -- must be eliminated. Where programs show that they can work effectively, consideration should be given to strengthening them.
- o Welfare involves the transfer of federal money -- federal tax dollars and in-kind services such as food, medical benefits and other assistance. These, like medicare and unemployment insurance, require some uniformity of treatment and basic benefits. A basic goal of a welfare program is fairness and neutrality.
- o We should consider working through block grants and encourage local innovation on welfare and work programs. But we should be careful about giving anyone a blank check with federal tax dollars. Again, we have to encourage fairness and uniformity of basic treatment."

George Bush Issue Statement,
1980

- o "I am opposed to the federalization of it (welfare). I am opposed to the federal government taking over all the welfare burden, because I believe in decentralized answers as much as possible."

Human Events, 11/24/79

WELFARE
PAGE THREE

WELFARE REFORM IN A BUSH ADMINISTRATION

- o "There is a bi-partisan consensus that America's welfare system is a trap door to poverty, not a ladder to prosperity. I want to turn what is now primarily a payments system with a minor work component into a system that is first and foremost a jobs system. I want a welfare system that strengthens families -- not weakens them. We can do it with a new national strategy that stresses grass roots participation, state and local involvement, and innovative ideas for reducing dependency on the federal government."

Vice President George Bush
Issue Statement, 1988

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