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November 18, 1980

TO: SENATOR PELL
FROM: EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
RE: IMPACT OF REAGAN AND REPUBLICAN SENATE MAJORITY ON EDUCATION

It is difficult to predict what the Reagan Administration will do in education at this time. He had very little to say about education during the campaign, other than to call for the repeal of the Department of Education. Whether he will push for that or not is hard to say at this time. An analysis of possible moves in education can be looked at from the viewpoint of budget issues, legislative initiatives, and necessary re-authorization actions.

I. Budget issues

The major concern is that the Reagan administration will not request sufficient appropriations to fund essential programs. Programs that could suffer because of insufficient funds are the Pell Grant program, title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, impact aid, and small demonstration programs such as metric education, arts in education, community schools. These small demonstration programs will probably receive no funding if the Reagan administration has its way, and impact aid could be in a similar situation.

II. Legislative initiatives

There are several areas where the Reagan administration might undertake legislative initiatives. First, it most likely will advocate tuition tax credits. This could jeopardize all of the existing student assistance programs, since the Congress most likely will be unwilling to support both tax credits and grants and loans. Second, all demonstration programs (metric, arts, etc.) will face repeal or phase out efforts. The Reagan administration will concentrate on the bare necessities and will try to eliminate innovational programs which it feels are not the responsibility of the Federal Government. Third, existing categorical programs such as emergency school aid, title I of ESEA (aid to disadvantaged), bilingual education, and Education of the Handicapped, could be in jeopardy if the Reagan Administration pushes block grants for education. There will be a growing tendency to give states more flexibility in using Federal funds, de-emphasizing the restrictions and specifics of existing programs and pushing a block grant approach to States. Fourth, impact aid will most likely face a repeal effort, or a definite phasing out. Fifth, title IX, the sex discrimination title, will face problems. In this area as in bilingual education, the decision might be to let institutions decide how they will comply with the law and not issue strict Federal regulations. Finally, the Reagan administration will try to develop ways of providing aid to non-public schools, and may introduce legislation to repeal the Department of Education.

III. Necessary reauthorizations

Two programs, vocational education and the Library Services and construction Act, will have to be reauthorized during the 97th Congress.

There are few indications of what the Reagan Administration's position will be in these areas. However, it is probably safe to say that block grants, with a lesser emphasis on special specific target populations might be the direction they could choose to follow in the vocational education area.

In conclusion, all of these developments and issues should surface during the next two years. Thus, there will be considerable work to do, both in developing positions that the Democratic party can support, and in trying to save old programs that are working well and that meet the needs of the American people.