

## F I N A L R E P O R T

### LEGISLATIVE POLICY ON THE FAMILY SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RESOURCES

January, 1981

The Legislative Policy on the Family Subcommittee of the Senate and House Committees on Human Resources was established by the Legislative Council to study the effects of state government actions on the family and develop a policy statement of legislative goals for the future evaluation of legislation and policies.

Members serving on the Subcommittee were:

Senator Julia Gentleman, Des Moines  
Representative Sue Mullins, Corwith  
Senator Merlin Hulse, Clarence  
Senator Alvin Miller, Ventura  
Senator Tom Slater, Council Bluffs  
Senator Sue Yenger, Ottumwa  
Representative Gregory Cusack, Davenport  
Representative Emil Husak, Toledo  
Representative Lyle Krewson, Urbandale  
Representative Virginia Poffenberger, Perry

During the 1980 legislative session, the House Committee on Human Resources had established a Family Subcommittee to consider bills relating to the family. The Subcommittee drafted a proposed Family Policy Statement which was used as a working draft.

The Subcommittee was authorized two meetings. The meetings were held on August 20 and October 2, and a public hearing was held October 1. At the first meeting Senator Gentleman and Representative Mullins were elected Co-chairpersons.

At the first meeting the Subcommittee heard testimony from the following individuals:

Mary Acton, a legislative intern for the Family Policy Subcommittee of the House Committee on Human Resources.  
Kate Keating, Managing Editor of Better Homes and Gardens, who reviewed for the Subcommittee the findings of a national survey conducted by Better Homes and Gardens in which the question "Is government helping or hurting American families?" was asked.  
Helen McDonald, Chairperson of the Iowa Council for Children and Families, who addressed the Subcommittee regarding the White House Conference on Families.  
Binnie LeHew, from the Program Evaluation Division of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, who reviewed her research regarding the proposed Family Policy Statement.

Ruth Mosher and Doneen Woodward, from the Citizens' Aide/  
Ombudsman Office, who presented suggestions to the Subcom-  
mittee for consideration in developing the Family Policy  
Statement.

The Subcommittee amended and approved the proposed Family Policy  
Statement and arranged for the Statement to be reviewed by various  
concerned groups.

The following individuals presented testimony to the  
Subcommittee at the public hearing regarding the proposed Family  
Policy Statement:

Richard Hardin, Coalition for Family and Children's Services  
in Iowa, Inc.  
Karen Turner, Iowa Home-based Family Services Association  
Norm Ostbloom, Iowa State Technical Assistance and Training  
Team, Inc.  
Carol Rick, League of Women Voters of Iowa  
Judy Baur, Junior League of Des Moines, Iowa  
Helen McDonald, Iowa Council for Children and Families  
Barb Ruppell, Families, Inc.  
Anita Lane, Iowa Chapter of the National Association of Social  
Workers  
Rick Long, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Dubuque  
Mary Acton, Legislative Intern  
Wayne Merkley, Interested Citizen  
Margaret Borgen, Iowa PTA

The Subcommittee considered suggestions made by those persons  
testifying at the public hearing and amended and approved the  
Family Policy Statement and the criteria for the examination of  
certain legislation within the Senate and House Committees on Human  
Resources. Copies of the Family Policy Statement and the criteria  
are attached to this report.

### Recommendations

The Subcommittee makes the following recommendations:

1. That the Chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on  
Human Resources and minority party ranking members during the 1981  
legislative session select legislation under the Committees'  
jurisdiction and evaluate the legislation in terms of its impact on  
the family using the Family Policy Statement.

2. That the House and Senate Committees on Human Resources  
prior to the 1982 legislative session evaluate the progress of the  
use of the Family Policy Statement and the feasibility of expanding  
this use to other legislative committees.

3. That the Human Resources Appropriations Subcommittees and  
the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittees be invited to

participate in evaluating legislation under their respective jurisdictions by using the Family Policy Statement.

4. That the Chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on Human Resources be urged to explore establishing ad hoc committees composed of interested persons to help the Committees assess the impact of the legislation on the family.

5. That the Chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on Human Resources be authorized to indicate to the appropriate persons their interests in supporting a state organization requesting a grant from a Family Impact Seminar at The George Washington University's Institute for Educational Leadership so that the state agency will have funding to work with the House and Senate Committees on Human Resources in implementing the Family Policy Statement.

PROPOSED  
IOWA FAMILY POLICY STATEMENT

By the Legislative Policy on the Family Subcommittee of the  
House and Senate Committees on Human Resources

It is in the interest of the people of Iowa that a family policy be adopted which promotes the stability and well-being of Iowa families in order that those families may carry out their responsibilities to family members of protection, providing for their physical and emotional care and support, and guiding their education and moral development. The actions of government may affect the ability of families to perform these important responsibilities. It is our intent that the actions of government in Iowa will be directed at strengthening families. The constitutional rights of individual family members must also be guaranteed.

It is proposed that the General Assembly adopt the following principles during the 1981 legislative session in regard to legislation affecting families which is referred to the House and Senate Human Resources Committees:

1. The state recognizes the primary nature of the family as a unit and its responsibility for the physical and emotional care of its members.

2. The state recognizes and respects the diversity of contexts within which families may exist.

3. The policies of state government shall be directed at enhancing the integrity and stability of the family.

4. When the family finds it difficult to perform some of its responsibilities, the policy of the state shall be directed at providing support in those areas where the family is having difficulty. The state's policy shall be to encourage the family to perform as many of its supportive functions as possible. Families themselves shall be included in determining the solutions to the problems affecting them.

5. The rights of individuals to mental, emotional and physical well-being shall be safeguarded.

6. It shall be the policy of the state to enable and encourage neighborhood, church and local community-based resources wherever possible to provide preventive and supplementary support to the family.

The following criteria will be used when examining legislation affecting families which is referred to the House and Senate Committees on Human Resources:

1. If this measure is directed toward a particular family context or responsibility, what is it (i.e., what is its focus and what are its limits)?

2. To what extent will this measure enhance or detract from the family's responsibilities of acculturating children and protecting and providing for the care and support of its members?

3. To what extent does this measure promote the stability of the family or promote the separation or fragmentation of family ties?

4. If the measure promotes the separation or fragmentation of family ties, how is it designed to protect the rights of individual family members to mental, emotional and physical well-being.

5. To what extent does this measure support, supplement, or substitute the performance of family responsibilities by the state?

6. When government intervenes, what provisions does this measure include for utilizing the family's strengths in performing the responsibilities of which it remains capable and returning full performance of the supplemented function to the family?

7. When government intervention is necessary, to what extent does this measure encourage the use of neighborhood, church or other local community-based resources?

8. What provisions does this measure include to insure equal involvement of family members with the other parties responsible for making decisions regarding the family unit?

9. What provisions does this measure include to insure coordination of efforts of various public and private agencies?

10. Are the funding implications of the measure consistent with the principles of the family policy statement?