

The original documents are located in Box 7, folder “Domestic Council” of the Loen and Leppert Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

File

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 29, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

The President is announcing the dates and cities for six Public Forums on Domestic Policy to be conducted across the country before the end of the year as part of a major Domestic Council review of domestic programs.

The Forums, to be chaired by the Vice President with Cabinet members and other Federal officials participating, will begin on October 21 in Denver, Colorado. The remaining schedule will include:

Wednesday, October 29	Tampa, Florida
Tuesday, November 11	Austin, Texas
Tuesday, November 18	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, November 25	Indianapolis, Indiana
Tuesday, December 9	Los Angeles, California

The review is designed to provide fresh recommendations on domestic policy.

The President stressed the high priority he placed on this review during the last Cabinet meeting, and said: Our 200th anniversary is an appropriate time to reflect on the past and look toward the future. He feels it is essential that we look at domestic policy from a broad perspective and not in isolation. For example, Federal programs affecting the health and welfare of the American people have a direct impact on employment, the role of State and local governments, and the economy.

Therefore, the President asked the Domestic Council neither to isolate the issue, nor to isolate themselves with only a Washington perspective. He also asked that they seek out the best and broadest advice possible from throughout the country so that we can use our domestic resources in a way that is responsive to the needs of the people.

(MORE)



The President has asked the Domestic Council to focus its review on the four following major domestic policy areas:

- . Economic Recovery
- . Resource Development and Environment
- . Social Policies
- . Community Building

While the Forums are expected to center on the four general areas, specific discussion issues may vary in emphasis depending on regional interests.

The Forums will consist of one-day meetings. Public witnesses will present testimony on major policy issues and respond to questions. During the afternoon, four separate simultaneous sessions will be held with representatives of the public discussing specific issues with Cabinet members and other Federal officials.

#



Presidential Focus by Dom Bonafede

New Life for the Domestic Council

White House officials are playing it down, but efforts are being made to revitalize the Domestic Council's role as President Ford's chief domestic policy-making agency.

Changes already made or in process involve an increase in personnel, a reshuffling of several staff members, the establishment of a policy and planning section and the disbandment of the domestic policy forums operation.

All this comes on top of the voluntary withdrawal of Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller as the agency's jurisdictional supervisor.

The extent of the revisions, which have been quietly carried out, indicates a determination by Ford to improve the council's performance.

Staff increased: James H. Cavanaugh, deputy director, said that the operational and functional responsibilities of the Domestic Council basically will remain the same.

However, he reported that a recent supplemental appropriation of an estimated \$315,000 approved by Congress would allow the council to add 10 positions to its rolls. This would increase the staff from about 30 to 40.

Policy and planning: Probably the most significant functional change involves the creation of a policy and planning division under deputy director Arthur F. Quern. "We are going to try to put emphasis on issues not of an immediate urgency," he said.

Over-all, his group will be devoted to assessing national problems and proposing alternative resolutions within a time frame ranging from now until 2000. Among such prospective issues are social security financing, national health insurance and welfare reform.

Named to assist Quern are Allen Moore, formerly a staff aide with the domestic forums operations, and Janet Brown.

Essentially, the policy and planning unit will take over a function virtually abandoned when Richard L. Dunham, the council's deputy director, left in mid-1975 to accept an appointment as Federal Power Commission chairman.

At the time of Rockefeller's Domestic Council appointment in February 1975, the White House stressed that he would be involved substantively in the agency's long-range studies. Shortly thereafter, executive director James M. Cannon said that the agency would devote at least 20 per cent of its time to long-range reviews. But it never worked out that way.

"We did a lot of talking about long-range studies but weren't doing much about it because of our constant involvement in daily problems and ongoing assignments," commented a Domestic Council official.

Presumably, Quern's operation will right that balance.

Personnel changes: Recent personnel shifts include:

- Spencer C. Johnson, former administrative assistant to Rep. James F. Hastings, R-N.Y., replacing Quern as associate director for health, social security and public assistance;

- Stephen G. McConahey, associate director for transportation, transferred with the same rank to intergovernmental relations;

- Rayburn Hanzlik and Margo M. Boyle, former staff aides with the forums operations, named as assistants to McConahey;

- Judith R. Hope, daughter-in-law of comedian Bob Hope and council consultant, appointed associate director for transportation;

- F. Lynn May, former staff assistant to Richard D. Parsons, associate director for crime, justice, civil rights and communications, named associate director for housing and community affairs.

May replaces Tod R. Hullin, who was transferred to the Defense Department as an assistant press secretary.

In still another change, Cavanaugh has been given a dual title as deputy assistant to the President for domestic affairs.

The new title gives Cavanaugh an expanded area of responsibility, including participation in Ford's campaign, since presidential aides are exempted under the Hatch Act, which prohibits political activity by federal officials.

Earlier, Warren K. Hendriks Jr., associate director for operations, was shifted to the newly formed Office of Presidential Spokesmen. His duties have been assumed by his former assistant, Judith Johnston.

John G. Veneman, counselor to the Vice President and principal organizer of the domestic forums, is not expected to play an active council role under the new set-up.

A Domestic Council aide said that Rockefeller's activities mostly will involve promotion of President Ford's revenue sharing proposal, and that Veneman will assist him in that effort.

Rockefeller: The Vice President's muffled departure as the Domestic Council's chief operational executive was in marked contrast to the fanfare that greeted his appointment.

At a "Salute to the Vice President" dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York Feb. 13, 1975, the President declared, "I am here tonight to tell you that one of the best ideas this Ford ever had was nominating Nelson Rockefeller to be Vice President of the United States."

He then announced that he was designating Rockefeller "to be vice chairman of my Domestic Council. . . . Because of the complexity in the interrelationship of domestic policy and programs, I believe the broadest perspectives must be utilized in Domestic Council deliberations. That is why I personally . . . have asked the Vice President to serve as vice chairman of the council and to personally and vigorously oversee its work."

Probably never before had a President granted a Vice President operational authority in such a significant policy area.

Then, in less than a year, Rockefeller reportedly asked to be relieved of his Domestic Council responsibilities.

According to a Domestic Council official, Rockefeller asked to withdraw in mid-December when he gave Ford his report on the six Domestic Council forums.

"He told the President that he didn't realize that daily operations took so much of the council's time. And secondly, he felt that his identification with the Domestic Council might affect the way the President's programs would be viewed," the aide said.

Thus ended a major experiment in presidential government. □

