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Politicians hoping to exploit children in Kiddycare debate, Libertarians say

Kids used as 'battering rams' to expand welfare state

WASHINGTON, DC — And a little child shall lead them . . . to higher taxes, new federal programs, and more government power.

That seems to be the strategy of Congressional Democrats as they prepare their 1997 agenda, Libertarian Party Chairman Steve Dasbach charged today.

"Republicans and Democrats have grown fond of using children as human battering rams to bring more government crashing into our lives," Dasbach said. "They used children as their bipartisan weapon in 1993 to justify the Family and Medical Leave Act — and now they're using them again to try to create a new government-run health care bureaucracy."

Dasbach was referring to various proposals by Congressional Democrats to provide health care subsidies for millions of American children. One proposal by Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and John Kerry (D-MA), would provide federal subsidies to about seven million families — some making over \$40,000 a year.

"By targeting children in their continuing quest to expand government control over health care, Democrats are playing the compassion card — and daring anyone to call their bluff," he said. "Well, we dare."

If Congress really wants to help America's children — not just expand the welfare state — Dasbach said it should:

■ Slash taxes — and liberate one parent from having to work, allowing him or her to stay home with the children. Dasbach noted that a household making between \$35,000 and \$45,000 pays over \$19,000 in total taxes, according to the Commerce Department.

■ Provide a 100% tax deduction for health care costs. "That would provide enhanced health care for children without raising one tax or building a new bureaucracy," Dasbach said.

The Kennedy-Kerry plan's cost has been put at \$24 billion over five years, Dasbach said. "Of course, no one really knows how much another open-ended entitlement would *really* cost," he said. For example, he noted that when Medicare passed in 1965, Congress projected its cost at \$12 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars by 1990. Instead, it cost \$98 billion.

"The last thing any truly compassionate politician would do is pile an even heavier debt onto today's children. Politicians have elevated child exploitation to an art form, and it's time someone stood up and asked, 'Have you no decency?'"

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