Clinton Proclaims The Era Of The Nanny State

Sept. 12, 1996 by Phyllis Schlafly

It's unclear why Bill Clinton started his post-Convention campaign in Cape Girardeau, the home of Rush Limbaugh, but Rush said it best when he described Clinton's acceptance speech as an umbilical cord to the future (rather than a bridge, as Clinton called it). The headlines proclaimed the boast that the era of big government is over, but the fine print of Clinton's speech and his Party Platform proclaimed that the era of the Government Nanny is starting.

The Nanny State isn't "big" government in the sense of starting a new grandiose project like sending a man to the moon or breaking the bank with another middle-class entitlement. But the cumulative costs of all those items about which Clinton wants us to believe that "he feels our pain" add up to very big government, indeed.

The Democratic Platform promises "a final rejection of the misguided call to leave our citizens to fend for themselves." Bill Clinton's vision is to shield us from life's daily annoyances.

Most of the promises in the Democratic Platform concern matters that are not properly presidential or federal issues, but which should be left to state or local governments, or to families, or to the private sector. Bob Dole, bring out that copy of the Tenth Amendment you keep in your pocket! We really need it now.

Gone is the notion that each of us should build our own life as we wish. Instead, we get a hug from Bill Clinton and the promise that Hillary's "village" will never leave us "to fend for ourselves."

The Platform assures us that two-year-olds will get their immunizations and that five-year-olds will continue to see Big Bird. Big Bird is hardly an endangered species. Big Bird's program, Sesame Street, makes almost a billion dollars a year in merchandising and related revenues, and pays its top executives over a half-million dollars a year.

The Democratic Platform promises that "every child should be able to read by the end of the third grade." This meshes with Clinton's $2.75 billion literacy project, which he announced while on his campaign train heading toward Chicago.

This is a crude ploy to double-bill the taxpayers for a goal that is a cheat on children, parents, and taxpayers. All children should be reading by the end of the first grade and, if they can't, the schools must have been merely baby-sitting kids in grades 1 and 2, so they should refund to the taxpayers the $5,000+ per child per year they already collected.

Teaching children to read is not a federal responsibility anyway; it's the job of local schools with state and local funding. The Clinton and Platform rhetoric assumes that the voters are too illiterate to know the difference.

The Democratic Platform marches to the tune of more and more federal control over local schools through Goals 2000. Big Brother Bill even wants to give us school uniforms, curfews, and better enforcement of the truancy laws.

The Democratic Platform promises to make two years of college a new federal entitlement. Since public schools have been dumbed down by two to three years, that's another way to make the taxpayers pay double for what students should have learned in high school.

The Platform doesn't call for socialized medicine, but most of what it says about health care would achieve the same result incrementally. The Platform promises that Americans will have access to quality health care, that the elderly will be given long-term care, that there will be full coverage for mental health, and that Clinton will give us a cure for AIDS and breast cancer.

The Platform promises to set up a 24-hour hotline for women to phone if their boyfriends or husbands get violent. If there ever were a non-federal issue, that's it; but no doubt Janet Reno will try to justify it as "interstate commerce."

The Platform promises that the government will take on the awesome task of supervising corporations to require them to provide their employees with education, a safer workplace, and opportunities for greater involvement in company decision-making and ownership.

The Platform promises to get employers to adopt work schedules so parents can attend parent-teacher conferences, take their children to the doctor, and have more time with their families. Such micromanaging of business certainly doesn't sound like the end of big government.

The Democrats will give us tax deductions only if we spend our money for purposes designated by the Nanny State. That's very different from the Republicans' promise to cut taxes so we can spend our money as we choose.

The Platform's determination to make sure that government doesn't leave us "to fend for ourselves" extends even to telling parents how to raise their children. It admonishes every parent "to put their children first, to help them with their homework, to read to them and to teach them right from wrong."

Stop for a minute and think. Can anyone imagine George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, or even Franklin D. Roosevelt or John F. Kennedy, saying that it was the government's responsibility to tell parents to do these things?

Louis Rukeyser accurately summed up the theme of the Democratic Convention: Clinton is running for Nanny-in-Chief instead of Commander-in-Chief.