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Christmas card to Reagan

As many of you settle down and begin in earnest to prepare for the joys of this holiday season, there is a significant segment of our population that cannot and should not be forgotten. On behalf of children and families in this country and others who will have NO CHRISTMAS, please remember:

The two million families that will be without homes this Christmas and the one million more facing foreclosures on their homes or farms.

While \$24 million per hour are spent on the development of weapons to murder and intimidate other poor, minority, and starving people throughout the world, while programs designed to assist the 1.4 million victims of child abuse annually, the maternal and infant nutrition program, and the program that would assist poor and middle class people to obtain legal services to protect their constitutional rights are continually cut to the bone.

While tax cuts are designed to benefit those earning in excess of \$58,000 annually, Larry Speakes informs us that taxing unemployment benefits would motivate the jobless to find work—as if the agony of having to explain to your child why Santa won't be coming this year is not motivation enough for mothers and fathers who desperately desire employment.

That unemployment among minority youth runs 65%, while one out of every five Black adults is unemployed and one in ten White adults have no job;

That businesses are closing at the rate of 500 per week (Black businesses at three times the rate of White businesses).

That one out of every five children and one out of every two Black children in this nation lives below the poverty line.

That while the U.S. loans \$1.1 billion to South Africa, lifts bans on the sale of military and police equipment, and attempts to sell "2,500 shock batons," one out of every two of its Black children dies before the age of five due to starvation, poor sanitation, lack of clean water, and lack of adequate medical care in set aside internment-concentration camps.

That alarming recent yet repeated attempts to decrease air pollution control standards and allow increased lead levels in gasoline threatens the health of this and every future generation through increased rates of mental retardation, brain damage, and learning disabilities.

While 40 percent of the world's population is malnourished or starving, tens of billions of dollars are spent on price supports, crop destruction, and compensation to farmers for not cultivating their fields annually;

That millions of adults and children suffering from alcohol or other substance abuse addictions will not be able to afford treatment, since health insurance benefits have been cut (3 million adolescents alone need treatment for alcohol addiction);

That through the relaxation of occupational safety and health standards, the health of many workers will be jeopardized or lost, especially lives of the poor, minority and the middle class;

The devastation taking place in our country's school systems and infrastructure while funds that could remedy these problems are diverted for other sadistic purposes;

The continuous attempts to deny handicapped students an equal education by cutting funds to provide special educational services;

The millions of senior citizens being forced to choose between food and heat as they struggle on fixed incomes, while there is talk of cutting their social security and Medicare;

The resurgence of hate groups and world-polarization of one group of human beings against another under the current Administration;

The humiliation and disgrace shared by all Americans before the world community, as ours was the sole country in the U.N. to vote against non-binding guidelines for corporations that promote infant formula to poor countries, where this has been documented to contribute to infant death;

The insult added to injury by the nomination of Ernest Lefever, a proponent of allowing the marketing of infant formula to go unchecked, to head the Human Rights Commission.

How this generation and future ones are being deprived of a clean and beautiful environment forever by the policies of James Watt, who champions wanton pollution of our wilderness and plundering this country's natural resources;

The role models provided our youth by the likes of a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission who views the acceptance of outright bribes as the purest form of free enterprise.

Hopefully this will provide some food for thought as you enjoy this holiday season. Ironically, food for thought is all that some families in this, the richest nation on earth, will have this Christmas. For the sake of us all, we hope that whatever God you profess to worship, will teach you how to love your fellow human beings.

Willie T. Hamlin, M.D.