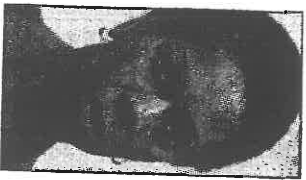


# Capital-area figure leads pack for labor chief

By David Whitney  
and Michael Doyle  
Bee Washington Bureau



**Eloise Anderson has little background in labor issues.**

WASHINGTON - Eloise Anderson, a Sacramento-area welfare reformer and former head of the Department of Social Services under Gov. Pete Wilson, emerged Wednesday as the leading candidate for labor secretary following

the sudden withdrawal of Linda Chavez a day earlier.

Anderson, 58, met with President-elect Bush's transition team Wednesday after her late-afternoon arrival from Sacramento, where she is director of the Claremont Institute's Program for American Families.

Before going to work for Wilson in 1992, Anderson served

as Wisconsin transportation secretary under Gov. Tommy Thompson, now Bush's nominee as secretary of health and human services.

Ari Fleischer, transition team spokesman, indicated that an announcement on the labor post could come as early as today.

Others reportedly under consideration include Elaine Chao, former deputy transportation sec-

retary and the wife of Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.; Stephen Goldsmith, ex-mayor of Indianapolis; and ex-Rep. Jim Talent, who lost his race for Missouri governor.

Anderson, like Chavez, has long been known as a woman who speaks her mind. She has little experience on labor issues but has

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## Anderson: Crusade against welfare has been chief focus +

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spoken and published widely in opposition to welfare and even food stamp programs from which she once benefited.

Her crusade against welfare has been her primary focus in and out of public office. Last year, when the California Legislature was working on a budget bill providing wage-based community service programs and expanded services for the working poor, Anderson blasted away in a Claremont Institute publication.

"Welfare is supposed to be a program you turn to when all else fails," she wrote in the piece, available on the Institute's Internet Web site. "The more lenient these programs, the more likely the increase in the number of people who will qualify and languish on welfare."

Kevin Aslanian, director of the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, said Wednesday that his organization battled with Anderson many times in court, and he criticized her for her belief that women

### Eloise Anderson

- ▶ Age: 58
- ▶ Education: Central State University, Ohio, 1960-1965, B.S., sociology
- ▶ Graduate Studies: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1974-1976; urban affairs, public administration and planning
- ▶ Experience: Director, California Department of Social Services, 1992-1998; administrator, Wisconsin Division of Community Services, 1988-1992.

should return to work 18 weeks after childbirth to stay off welfare.

"For her, working comes first, parenting second," he said. "It's our opinion that the family should always be ahead of your job."

But Anderson, an African American, has greeted controversy with gusto, even when it has brought personal insults.

"If you're black, you get called Uncle Tom, Aunt Jemima, handkerchief head," she said in a 1996 interview with The Sacramento Bee. "You name the name.... Then

they say you're mean spirited. You don't have a heart."

For a potential secretary of labor, she holds a remarkably unromantic view of work.

"Somewhere in the '60s, we started to believe that work was supposed to make us happy," Anderson told the conservative magazine Reason in a 1998 interview. "I didn't grow up thinking work was supposed to make us happy."

The former community organizer once told "60 Minutes" that she thought welfare should be completely abolished, and she dismissed fears about people who would find it too difficult to get a job.

"Welfare sucks," Anderson was quoted as saying when she was director of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program in California.

Anderson does, though, understand something of the government safety net. In the early 1970s, after her husband left her and their three children, she briefly received food stamps - a program she has since criticized.

For her, working comes first, parenting second.

Kevin Aslanian  
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations

In Sacramento, the blunt-talking Anderson was also an advocate for increasing fathers' involvement in raising children. In a 1995 interview, she told The Bee that society has "got to get out of this mode that men are evil and negative and that they don't belong at home."

But welfare and fathers' rights are not the domain of the Labor Department, which is more focused on union issues and worker rights.

And on those issues, Anderson hasn't much of a background. Stan Greer, news director for the National Right to Work Com-

mittee, an association that opposes mandatory union enrollment in jobs under labor contracts, said his group was scrambling to learn about her views.

"She doesn't have much of a track record on our issue," Greer said, adding that as long as she has an open mind, "we have no reason to oppose her."

Claremont President Tom Silver said naming Anderson would be a "feather in the cap" of the decentralized government and individual and local responsibility.

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