

patients on Medicaid, and all emergency cases normally treated by the private Hermann Hospital, which shut its emergency unit down after losing millions in unreimbursed federal revenues.

The result is that parts of Houston have an infant mortality of 18.5 deaths per 1,000 live births—higher than Costa Rica. Last year, Houston faced a measles epidemic that killed a record-breaking dozen children. Dr. Jeff Starke, a pediatric infectious disease expert at Baylor College of Medicine, reports that Houston's rate of tuberculosis among children is three times the national average. A few months ago, a year-old child died of tuberculosis at Ben Taub Hospital, just 20 hours after admission. The child had had TB for months, but the 66-day delay at the baby clinic precluded his being treated.

Another ominous sign is that between July 1989 and June 1990, 13 maternal deaths were reported at Houston's Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital. Between 1981 and 1986, there were an appalling three to four maternal deaths each year in the same district. The national maternal mortality rate is 6.6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. The rate for this Houston hospital alone translates into a startling 82 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. The nation has not experienced that high a maternal mortality rate since 1950!

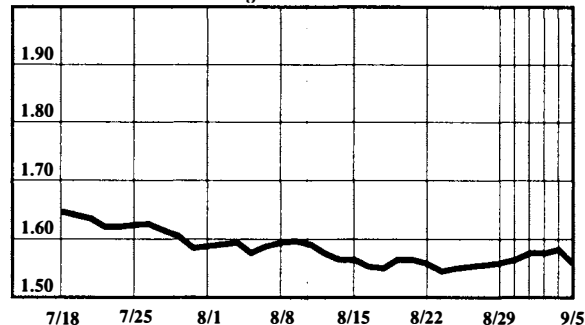
Another major factor of babies being born with dangerously low birth weight—who are 40 times more likely to die within the first 28 days of life—is under-nourishment of pregnant mothers. The federally funded program that is key in assuring proper weight gain is the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). As of 1988, only 49% of all eligible women and children in the country received WIC services. In some states, less than one-third those eligible received WIC benefits. Three months ago, the WIC program reported that 36 of 44 state governments intended to cut their portion of the WIC program. Some states found ways to sustain their caseloads, but others made major cuts. Pennsylvania, one of the 10 states with the highest number of black babies born at low birth weight, dropped 30% of those receiving WIC benefits—about 60,000 needy people. Without exception, black and non-white infant mortality rates, and neonatal and post-neonatal mortality rates in Pennsylvania have escalated between 1986 and 1987 by as much as 1.8 points. The lack of WIC benefits will lead to those rates skyrocketing.

A fundamental problem contributing to infant mortality—beyond poverty, lack of timely care, AIDS, crack-cocaine addiction, and lack of education—is the White House's unwillingness to see that the wealth of a nation is its citizenry. The task force members are correct: This nation has the answers to save lives. However, after the report was leaked, the Bush administration has not acted, and instead trotted out Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Louis Sullivan to announce new statistics to indicate that the country's infant mortality rate of 9.7 is at an all time low.

## Currency Rates

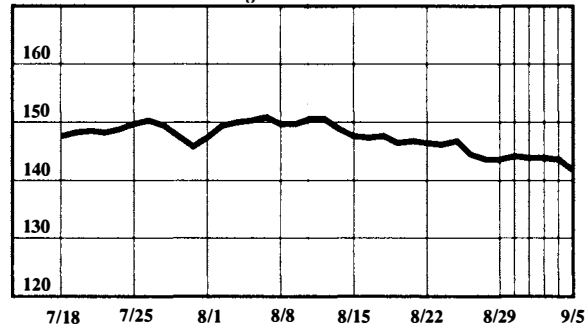
**The dollar in deutschemarks**

New York late afternoon fixing



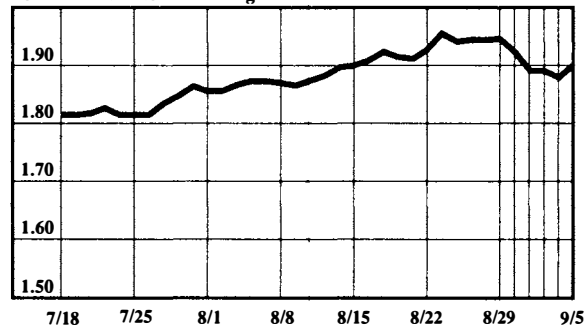
**The dollar in yen**

New York late afternoon fixing



**The British pound in dollars**

New York late afternoon fixing



**The dollar in Swiss francs**

New York late afternoon fixing

