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John Pollack

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON
RENEWING OUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER
WASHINGTON, DC
October 6, 2000**

Good morning. Every year, more than 56,000 Americans die from colorectal cancer, and another 130,000 are diagnosed with the disease. These are people we know and love: our families, our friends, our neighbors. Today I want to talk about our common fight against this quiet killer, and what we can do as a nation to save more lives.

A lot of people are uncomfortable talking about cancer, especially colorectal cancer. While all of us can certainly appreciate this reluctance, our silence protects nobody – least of all those we love the most. That's why tens of thousands of people, led by Katie Couric, have come to Washington this weekend to speak out and rally against colorectal cancer.

For almost eight years now, Vice President Gore and I have made the fight against cancer one of our top priorities. We've nearly doubled funding for cancer research and treatment. We've accelerated the approval of cancer drugs, while maintaining the highest standards of safety. We've strengthened Medicare to make prevention, screening and clinical trials more available and more affordable. And just a few days ago – during Breast Cancer Awareness Month – the Senate voted to fund our proposal to provide health coverage to uninsured women with breast and cervical cancer.

Our efforts are paying off. This year, for the first time, cancer deaths in the United States are no longer rising. We need to build on that progress by encouraging more early detection and treatment. Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cancer killer in America. The good news is that – caught soon enough – more than 90% of these cases can be cured. That's why, in 1998, my wife Hillary helped launch the first national campaign against colorectal cancer, much as we have been working for years to defeat breast cancer.

Hillary's leadership in promoting more cancer education and research has made a real difference in so many lives. Sadly, our family knows all too well the terrible toll that cancer can take, and we are doing everything we can to help others avoid that same loss.

Today, I am announcing several new actions in the war against cancer. First, the National Cancer Institute will invest \$30 million over the next five years to help doctors expand and improve screening procedures for colorectal cancer. We need to address the chronic under-use of these life-saving tools, and this new investment will encourage physicians to make regular use of the most effective procedures.

Second, we are launching a new initiative to educate Medicare beneficiaries about the importance of regular checkups and cancer screenings. Beginning next year, every senior and

every American with a disability using Medicare will get a screening reminder – starting with one on colorectal cancer – every time they go to their doctor, or use Medicare’s toll-free hotline.

Third, I am urging Congress to pass bipartisan legislation that expands Medicare to include more sophisticated colorectal cancer screening tests for people over the age of 50. Congress should not adjourn before sending me this legislation. They should also pass my proposal to eliminate all cost-sharing requirements for colorectal screening and other preventive procedures under Medicare. If we take these steps, we will remove major barriers to older Americans getting the preventive care they need.

And finally, once again, I am calling on Congress to pass a strong, enforceable Patients’ Bill of Rights, one that assures that cancer patients – and all patients – have access to the specialty care they need. It’s time to put progress before partisanship, and get people the medical care they deserve.

While the war against cancer is not yet won, we all have reason for new hope. Even as I speak, scientists are fast unlocking the secrets of the human genome, and revolutionary treatments are sure to follow. As they do, Americans should know that we will do everything necessary to safeguard their privacy, and to outlaw genetic discrimination in both employment and health insurance.

In the meantime, we must all stand watch against cancer, even if that means confronting – at times – our own worst fears. None of us will ever die of embarrassment, so go to the doctor and get that screening done. I did, and it was just fine. Remember, with early detection, quality care, love from our families and the grace of God, we can all lead longer, healthier and better lives.

Thank you.

TALKING IT OVER

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

July 29, 1998

We are facing a critical juncture in the war on cancer -- a time when our nation's investment in research is beginning to pay off and cancer rates are beginning to decline.

With further investment, we can even anticipate the day that our children won't live in fear of this dreaded disease.

Dr. Richard Klausner, the director of the National Cancer Institute, says there's a "palpable optimism" within the cancer community. "The 1990s," he predicts, "will be remembered as the decade when we measurably turned the tide against cancer."

It is not only the doctors and scientists who have brought us to this point, but also thousands of advocates and volunteers whose dedication and passion have helped to raise awareness and increase funding for ongoing research.

Two such advocates are Dr. Ernie Bodai and Betsy Mullen. They fought for the creation of a postal stamp to raise funds for the fight against breast cancer -- a stamp that I was honored to unveil at the White House -- and which goes on sale around the country -- this week.

The release of the Breast Cancer Research Stamp marks the first time the U.S. Postal Service has issued a stamp that costs more than its face value -- 40 cents in this case, eight cents more than a typical first-class stamp. The net proceeds will be used to fund breast cancer research.

Legislation authorizing the issuance of this historic stamp builds on my husband's long record of support for research and prevention in order to conquer breast cancer, a horrible disease that claims an American woman's life every 12 minutes and costs this country \$10 billion a year to treat.

In 1993, in response to the 2.6 million signatures collected by the National Breast Cancer Coalition, this administration crafted the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer -- a strategy designed to eradicate the disease.

The President also fought for the expansion of Medicare coverage to help fund annual mammogram screenings for beneficiaries over age 40. And he secured increases in breast cancer research funding from \$276 million in 1993 to over \$500 million today. Recent research has contributed to dramatic breakthroughs, such as the discovery of two breast cancer genes and the trial of tamoxifen, a drug with the potential to prevent breast cancer.

Understanding that the pace of medical discovery is no longer limited by science or imagination, but only by financial resources, my husband has requested budget increases that would see funding for NIH's cancer research grow by 65 percent over the next five years.

We know that victory over cancer will be brought about by a dedicated partnership of scientists and advocates. Over the course of the next few months, the President and I will welcome a number of these advocates to the White

House many of whom have fought cancer themselves or watched loved ones suffer without hope of a cure.

"Today's" Katie Couric, whose husband, Jay Monahan, died of colon cancer in January, along with Good Housekeeping magazine, will help launch a campaign to promote prevention and awareness of colon cancer, the second leading cause of cancer-related death in this country.

I'm also working with Liz Tilberis, the editor of Harper's Bazaar magazine, to plan events designed to inform women about ovarian cancer. Liz has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer, which is expected to kill 14,500 American women this year, and causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system.

Financier and prostate cancer survivor Michael Milken is one of the sponsors of a march on Washington this September aimed at focusing national attention on the magnitude of the cancer problem in our country. The march, called "Coming Together to Conquer Cancer," has been endorsed by over 250 organizations, including The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship and the American Cancer Society. General Norman Schwartzkopf, also a survivor of prostate cancer, is the honorary chairman.

Ernie Bodai, Betsy Mullen, Katie Couric, Liz Tilberis, Michael Milken and Norman Schwartzkopf, along with thousands of other men and women, have dedicated their talent and their resources to the cause. Now it's time for all of us to join them.

We can buy stamps, attend marches and learn about prevention. We can regularly undergo the diagnostic tests that catch cancer in its early stages. We can take better charge of our own health by improving our diets and giving up smoking. And we can support the increased research and funding that will lead us to a time when America's children will never again live in fear of this awful killer.

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Talking it Over

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