

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 3, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

Washington Hilton  
Washington, D.C.

11:52 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. Thank you for your remarks, and thank you for doing such a good job for America. (Applause.) Thank you, Secretary Shalala, Secretary Brown, Mr. Fleming, Mr. Blancato, Fernando Torres-Gil. Hugh Downs, thank you for being master of ceremonies. I wish I could sit here and watch you work the whole time. I'm delighted to see you. (Applause.)

To Congressman Martinez and Congresswoman Morella, the former members of Congress who are here; the senators who have gone because they have to vote. I want to say a special word of thanks to the Conference chair and one of the best friends I ever had in my life, David Pryor. I think he is a wonderful man. (Applause.)

As all of you know, Senator Pryor is now retiring from the Senate. I can remember when, as a young congressman, he once volunteered as an orderly in Washington area nursing homes to document the conditions under which seniors were then living. And when he couldn't get the members of Congress to listen, he conducted hearings out of a trailer in a parking lot. The trailer led to the creation of Claude Pepper's House Aging Committee. And as chairman of the Senate's Special Committee on Aging, David Pryor has led fight after fight after fight for the interest of the seniors in this country, especially in his efforts to expand the availability and limit the cost of prescription drugs. We will miss him, and we should be grateful to him. (Applause.)

I'm glad to see all of you in such good spirits. I hope you will stay that way. (Laughter.) I hope you'll stay that way because I am identifying more and more with you and -- (laughter) --and I understand Secretary Shalala read the letter we got from the child that

said old people are smart and Bill Clinton is old. (Laughter.)

I remember very clearly about six or seven years ago when I had two events occur within two days, when I knew I was getting older. My hair had begun to gray, but I thought I was still in reasonably good shape. I felt fairly chipper. And I was making the rounds in my state and this beautiful young girl, whose parents were very close friends of mine and, therefore, I felt that I almost had a hand in her upbringing from the time she was born -- she was 18 or 19 years old and she was nearly six feet tall. And she was just beautiful. And she came up to me -- I was so please to see her -- she came up to me and threw her arm around me, looked me straight in the eye, and she said, "Governor, you look so good for a man your age." (Laughter.)

And then, the very next day I was in a different part of the state, and I saw this wonderful retired school teacher who was then 80 years old, who had worked in every single campaign I had ever run. And I was so happy to see her. And she said, "Governor, I'm so glad to see you. You're aging gracefully." (Laughter.)

But I think the right thing about this, you know, is to have a good attitude about it. All of you have a good attitude. (Applause.) And you -- that's a big part of this. (Applause.)

I just want to tell you one more story that illustrates the right attitude. It's a true story. We had a man in north Arkansas in a little rural county who ran a tiny phone company back when there were lots of these little phone companies. And he was about 92 years old. And they decided to give -- actually, he was 96. And the people in the town decided they'd give him a banquet. And everybody got up and said nice things about him, you know, and the time came for him to speak. And he said, "The very first thing I want to do is to thank my secretary." And he introduced her, and she was 72. (Laughter.) He introduced her and said, "I want to thank my secretary. She has been with me for 40 years. She has been wonderful. I don't know what I'm going to do when she passes on." (Laughter and applause.)

So you've got to have the right attitude. Now, if you're all in the right attitude, let's get after it.

I am proud to convene this 1995 White House Conference on Aging. This is the fourth of these conferences in the history of our country; the first to be held since 1981; the last of the 20th century. I thank the members of Congress and the citizens of this country from both parties who have supported this endeavor. These conferences have a productive history -- from the establishment of Medicare, Medicaid and the Older Americans Act, as a result of the 1961 conference, to the creation of the House Select Committee on Aging, coming out of the 1971 conference.

But this conference must be about looking forward, not looking back. All across our country we have seen a dramatic reversal in the way we think about older Americans. We have, after all, twice as many older Americans as we had 30 years ago. And 30 years from now, we'll have twice as many again. People over 55 are younger, healthier, better educated than ever before, and beginning entirely new careers and endeavors in life as they grow older.

Your job here, more than anything else, is to help determine how to use the accumulated experience and judgment of older Americans to make all of our country stronger in the future. That is the purpose of our National Senior Corps, which works with AmeriCorps, our national service initiative in which -- (applause.) Thank you. The AmeriCorps program is a national service program in which young people earn money for their education by doing community service. And not all of them are young. I've met retired naval officers in Texas doing work in Americorps and intending to go back to college.

But the Senior Corps, like the AmeriCorps volunteers, are a new source of energy for American social problems and challenges. And they make sure that as the poet said, "The best is yet to be." Your conference agenda confirms your concern with the future. Issues such as crime, ethics and ways to inspire a renewed sense of community affect all Americans, regardless of their age. To be honest, seniors are in a better position than ever before to help us address these concerns.

I want to mention just a couple of things that have happened since 1981 that are very important with reference to your agenda. First, briefly, since 1981, you and your generation won the Cold War and the battle against communism. And you can be very proud of that. And we are now trying to finish that work so that for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age there are no Russian missiles pointing at the American people. (Applause.)

But we know there are still threats to our security, and we were reminded of it very painfully in the last few days. So I ask all of you as you focus on crime to remember that we need to continue to fight to lower the crime rate. And with a strategy of punishment, police and prevention, we can do that.

But we must focus on the special problems of terrorism to which all open societies are vulnerable. I have sent legislation to the Congress to address this terrorism problem. It has broad bipartisan support. The leaders of the Congress are working with me on it. We must pass it and pass it this month. And I urge you to take a stand for that on behalf of all Americans. (Applause.)

The other truly remarkable thing that's happened since 1981

affects you particularly. Just one year after the last conference in 1982, for the first time in this history of the United States, older Americans were less likely to be poor than Americans under 65. In the full span of our country's history, that is a stunning change and remarkable achievement. We have seen it happening over the course of the past several decades. Since 1960, the poverty rate among elderly people has declined by 65 percent. It did not happen by accident. It happened because the American people kept faith with the social compact first forged 60 years ago when President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act. (Applause.)

That compact has been strengthened over the last three decades with Medicare, with Medicaid, with the cost of living adjustments for Social Security, with community-based services under the Older Americans Act like Meals on Wheels, transportation, with efforts to prevent abuse of the elderly. This is a remarkable record, and you should be proud of it. (Applause.) It happened because people understood that their government could be made to work for them in a positive and strong way. (Applause.) And it is something our country should be very proud of.

Now, our administration is committed to continuing that work -- first, to the (core principles) that have made Social Security work. America has a solemn commitment to every person still working, no matter what their age, that Social Security will be there for them and their families when they need it. (Applause.)

We have also worked to strengthen retirement and to make it safer through strengthening private pensions. The Retirement Protection Act signed late last year reformed the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and secured 8.5 million pensions that were at risk in this country, stabilizing 40 million others. It was a remarkable bipartisan achievement. (Applause.)

So every American should be proud that we have completely altered the way our people live their lives as they grow older, providing new hope for an entire lifetime of purpose and dignity. But we must remember that with this kind of opportunity in a democracy goes continued responsibility. Our job today is to preserve this progress not only for you during your lifetimes, but for all generations of Americans to come.

You are here to look ahead to the next 10 years and beyond, and not just to the past or to your personal concerns. We know that with regard to seniors our country has been moving in the right direction. (Applause.) But the truth is, we know that too many younger Americans are not. We have to think about this: How are we going to pass along the next century with the American Dream alive and well for our children and grandchildren?

From the year I was born, right after the war, well into the '70s, almost to the end of the decade, people at all levels of our country grew economically, and they grew together. Prosperity was unprecedented. Without regard to income groups, people's incomes rose. Today, we have to face the hard fact that 60 percent of working Americans today are working for the same or lower wages than they were making 15 years ago while working, on average, a longer work week.

We also have a new class of poor people -- mostly unmarried, uneducated young women and their little children. We must do more to discourage the things that create poverty, especially teen pregnancy, and to require more education and efforts to enter the work force for those who are dependent upon welfare.

But the real problem facing this country is the problem of the middle class and stagnant earnings, and the insecurity of the American Dream that so many people feel, and the gnawing worry so many working people have when they come home at night that they won't be able to give their children a better life than they enjoyed.

The new split in the middle class is caused by the global economy and the technology revolution. And it is rooted, more than anything else, in one word -- education. (Applause.) We know that those who have it, and continue to get it and learn from a lifetime, do well, and those who don't tend not to do very well.

So as we look ahead to the next 10 years the question is, how can we preserve the gains and enhance the quality of life further, and enhance opportunities to serve and to live and to grow and to thrive for seniors, while reversing the economic fortunes of those who are stuck and being driven away from the American Dream, who are younger and dealing with the fundamental problems of this country which include the education deficit, and also the budget deficit?

It exploded in the 12 years before I became President. It, too, is undermining our ability to give your children a better future and to build opportunity.

For the past two years, our administration has made great strides in dealing with that deficit. (Applause.) We've passed two budgets -- (applause) -- we've passed two budget that cut it by \$600 billion over five years. I want you to hear this very carefully. When you hear that we have not cut spending, that we have not reduced the deficit -- we have reduced the deficit by \$600 billion over five years, and this is the more important fact -- if it were not for the interest we must pay this year on the debt run up between 1981 and the end of 1992, the budget would be in balance today. (Applause.)

We have also worked to strengthen the Medicare trust fund. It

still has problems, but it's stronger than it was on the day I became President. (Applause.) Despite all that, we know we have to do more. I have been consistently saying for three years, beginning with my first address to the Congress and, indeed, all during my campaign in 1992, that we will never fundamentally solve the deficit problem and have the funds we need to invest in education and the future growth in earning of our people until we are able to moderate the growth of health care spending. (Applause.)

Ask any member of Congress here present today -- all defense and domestic spending are either frozen or declining. Social Security and other retirement income is increasing, but only at the rate of inflation. We have to pay interest on the debt, and we're driving that down, but that changes as interest rates change. The only thing that is going up by more than the rate of inflation and the increased population growth in the programs are the health care programs. Over the next five years alone, almost 40 percent of the growth in federal spending will come from the rise in federal health care costs. More than our economy is growing, more than inflation is going up, faster than other items of government spending. So let us not pretend that there is not a challenge here for us to face. And let us face the challenge with good spirits.

You and I know that there is a right way to face this challenge and a wrong way to face the challenge. But not facing the challenge is not an option. I believe it is wrong simply to slash Medicare and Medicaid to pay for tax cuts for people who are well-off. (Applause.) Beyond that, reducing the deficit is terribly important. But it is also important that Congress programs for seniors like Medicare. We must have a sense of what our obligations are. Some proposals would increase the out-of-pocket costs on Medicare by up to \$35,000 for our seniors.

I also think it's wrong to cut Medicaid over \$150 billion in ways that threaten long-term care for seniors. (Applause.) You know -- let me just say in parentheses here, I hope that if nothing else comes out of this conference, the American people will come to understand that Medicaid is not simply a program for poor people. Yes, it provides health coverage to people on welfare and their children. But two-thirds of the Medicaid budget goes to care for the seniors and the disabled in this country -- two-thirds of the Medicaid budget. (Applause.)

To give you a stark example if Medicaid were not there, middle class people all across this country struggling to raise and educate their children would face nursing home bills for their parents that would average \$38,000 a year. Medicaid is primarily a program for the elderly and the disabled.

It is wrong in my judgment to reduce coverage under the Medicare program, or to undermine health services in rural and urban areas that

are already underserved, or to make changes that just simply coerce beneficiaries in managed care. We can't save Medicare and Medicaid by using savings to fund tax cuts for people who are already well-off or other purposes. That is the wrong way to approach this problem. (Applause.) But we must approach the problem. The right way is to start from the perspective of the people the system is intended to serve; to ask, what does it take to preserve and strengthen it, and what is fair to expect of everyone to do that -- to preserve and strengthen it.

For three years I have said that the right way is to strengthen Medicare and Medicaid by containing costs as part of a sensible overall health care reform proposal that works for everyone. (Applause.)

If you want to hold down costs, expand coverage, and reduce the deficit, you must reform the health care system. You have to expand long-term care, for example, in terms of the options for seniors, not restricted. Look at the growth in the population. Look at what's going to happen in the next 30 years. If you don't provide for people to get more long-term care in their home and in other less expensive settings -- (applause) -- if you don't provide -- (applause) -- if you don't provide for alternatives to more expensive hospital care, if you don't provide, in other words for the problem in the least costly way, given what you know is going to happen to our population, then we will have greater costs, not lower costs.

So let's look at this in the right way. I do want to work with the Congress. But we must do it in the right way. I have said all along that I will evaluate proposals to change Medicare and Medicaid based on the issues of coverage, choice, quality, affordability and costs.

We ought to have some simple tests. For example, does a proposed change reduce health care coverage by eliminating services or by charging seniors with modest incomes more than they can possibly be expected to pay? Does it deal with this long-term care problem in a way that will lower costs per person in long-term care, but recognize that we have to have more options? Does it restrict choice by forcing seniors to give up their doctors and enter into managed care programs whether they're good ones or not? Or does it, instead increase choice by giving people incentives and options to enter into managed care programs and other less costly options that might be made more attractive to them? Does it reform Medicare and Medicaid to lower the rate of cost increases without threatening the quality of care? Does it keep health care affordable for seniors and does it help to control costs for the government?

Many people say, well, all these things are mutually inconsistent. But that cannot be. We are spending over 14 percent of

our income as Americans on health care. No other country is over 10 percent. We know that there are changes that we can make that will improve coverage, broaden services, control costs, and help us with the deficit. But we can only do it if we start from the point of view of what it takes to have a health care system with integrity that can be fairly paid for in a way fair manner. (Applause.)

So, while I will not support proposals to slash these programs, to undermine their integrity, to pay for tax cuts for people who are well off, or to pay for them -- all by themselves, to pay for these kinds of arbitrary targets on the budget, I cannot support the status quo. And neither can you. (Applause.)

We must find a way to make this system work better that deals with the internal issues of the system, your health care issues and those that are coming behind you, and that deals with the genuine problems the Congress faces with our budgetary situation. That's why I have said repeatedly that when the Republicans present their budget as required by law, we will evaluate where they are in terms of their commitment and what they want to do, where we are, and then we will do our best to work through this. I will not walk away from this issue. (Applause.)

I watched from afar when I was a governor and a citizen for 12 years while people here walked away from problem after problem. And I sustained, as President, an agonizing experience when large numbers of people walked away from problems that I asked them to face for short-term political gain. I will not do that. The status quo is not an option. (Applause.)

But in order for us to have discussions we have to know where everyone stands. I have presented a budget. I have said for three years where I stand. As soon as we see the budget that is legally mandated from the members of Congress who are in the majority, we will then talk about where we go from there and what we can do so that I can make sure that your interests and the interests of people coming behind you are protected, but that no one pretends that the status quo is an option. We can pursue both those goals and do it in the right way. (Applause.)

Now, let me also say there are problems -- right ways to address this problem that we in the Executive Branch can be doing right now. You know, waste, fraud and abuse has become a tired phrase in politics. But the truth is there's a lot of it in the health care system. And you know it as well as I do. With all the problems we have today with income for citizens, and with the budget for the government, people who rip this system off jeopardize the health of beneficiaries and the stability of our government and our economy.

Since the beginning of this administration, Secretary Shalala and Attorney General Reno have worked hard to crack down on fraud and abuse. And I am pleased to announce today that, as a part of phase two of the Vice President's outstanding reinventing government initiative, we are taking an additional strong measure. We are forming a multistate effort to identify, prosecute and punish those who willingly defraud the government and who victimize the public. (Applause.)

In five states, with nearly 40 percent of all the Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries -- New York, Florida, Illinois, Texas and California -- we will have an unprecedented partnership of federal, state and private agencies. For every dollar we spend, we will save you six to eight dollars in the government's health care programs to stabilize what we need to be doing. (Applause.)

This is a win-win situation for everybody, except the perpetrators of fraud. And it's about time they lost one. (Applause.)

Let me close with this thought. This should be an exciting time for you. You should welcome this challenge. You should know that I will be there with you and for you to protect the legitimate interests of the senior citizens of this country, and not to see us trade the long-term welfare and health of the American people for anybody's short-term gain. (Applause.)

But you should also know that we need you to be here for us. We need for you -- (applause) -- we need for you to say, these are changes that make sense; these are changes that don't; these are things that will make us all stronger; these are things that will help you guarantee higher incomes and better wages and a better future for our children and our grandchildren. These are things that will bring us together.

This country is always strongest when we are together. (Applause.) We are always stronger when we are together. (Applause.)

I'll bet you more than half of the people in this room wept in the aftermath of that terrible tragedy in Oklahoma City. (Applause.) We were for a moment, once again, one family, outraged and heartbroken. And you saw what happened when people gave up their lives and came from all over the country to go there to help with the rescue effort, to help to deal with the families who are grieving, to help with all the efforts that were going on. That's when we're strong.

The theme of this conference is "Generations Aging Together." You know when we're together we're strong. And so many forces in America today are trying to turn us all into consumers -- of goods or politics or other things -- so that we're all divided up in little markets and segmented, and we fight with each other all the time. And the people that provoke the fights make a lot of money or votes, or

whatever, out of us when we do that. (Applause.)

But that's not when we're strong. I saw the end of the film, when you quoted my speech at Normandy. I don't know that I have ever or ever will have a greater honor than to go and honor the generation of my parents for winning the second world war. We were one, because of what you did, because of your sacrifice.

And I just want to say to you today, we can win the challenges of today and tomorrow. We can make the 21st century an American century. We can continue the progress in expanding the quality of life for our seniors. We can solve the health care crisis. We can do it if we will do it together. Lead us there; help us there. And I will stay with you.

Thank you, and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END12:25 P.M. EDT

## 1995 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING SATELLITE LOCATIONS

Hundreds of thousands of individuals across the United States will have the opportunity to view the opening plenary session of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) via satellite. Any facility equipped to receive a Ku-band signal may show this historic event. There is no charge to receive the signal. The satellite coordinates and other technical information can be obtained by calling Tibor Saddler at Advanced Engineering & Planning Corporation, Inc., in Alexandria, VA at (800) 800-2372 or at (703) 838-6885.

The broadcasting of the opening plenary session, as well as the funding for eleven satellite locations, have been made possible through an "in-kind" gift to the WHCoA from five regional Bell operating companies: Pacific Telesis Group, BellSouth, NYNEX, Bell Atlantic, and SBC Communications. The eleven Bell satellite sites, coordinated by Health and Human Services Regional Directors, are listed below.

- Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI Contact: Philip Johnston (617) 565-1500  
~~2-11-95~~
- The Meadowlands Hilton East, Rutherford, NJ Contact: Alison E. Green (212) 264-4600
- Hunter College, New York, NY Contact: Alison E. Green (212) 264-4600  
*Eli Segal*
- The Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA Contact: Lynn Yeakel (215) 596-6492  
*Bonnie Campbell*
- Radisson Twin Towers, Orlando, FL Contact: Patricia Ford-Roegner (404) 331-2442 *(may not happen)*
- INFOMART, Dallas, TX Contact: Patricia Montoya (214) 767-3617
- University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR Contact: Patricia Montoya (214) 767-3617  
*Carol Rasco*
- San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA Contact: Grantland Johnson (415) 556-1961
- California Exposition, Sacramento, CA Contact: Grantland Johnson (415) 556-1961  
~~2-11-95~~
- UCLA, Los Angeles, CA Contact: Grantland Johnson (415) 556-1961  
*Anita Perez Ferguson (Lt. Gov. Gray Davis)*
- John Knox Center, Kansas City, MO Contact: Kathleen Steele (816) 426-2821  
*Shirley Chater*

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To obtain information about other satellite locations, contact Bryan Preston at (202) 245-0105.

## 1995 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING SCHEDULE

DRAFT

### ***Tuesday, May 2***

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 3:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. | Registration     |
| 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  | Speakout Session |

### ***Wednesday, May 3***

|                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.                            | Registration                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.                            | Opening Breakfast (delegates only)                                                                                                                                                            |
| 8:30 a.m. - 8:50 a.m.                            | Observers, VIPs, and staff seated for the Opening Plenary Session                                                                                                                             |
| 9:30 - noon<br><del>9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.</del> | Opening Plenary Session<br><i>President Bill Clinton, Sen. David Pryor (D-AR), Sec. Donna Shalala, Sec. Henry Cisneros, Sec. Jesse Brown, Arthur Flemming, and Hugh Downs</i> (all tentative) |
| 11:30 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.                           | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.                           | Special State & Constituency Caucuses                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.                            | First Issue Resolution Development Session                                                                                                                                                    |
| Evening...                                       | Entertainment                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### ***Thursday, May 4***

|                        |                                                                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.  | Breakfast (delegates only)                                                   |
| 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.  | Official WHCoA event<br><i>First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton</i> (tentative) |
| 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Second Issue Resolution Development Session                                  |
| 1:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.  | Lunch                                                                        |
| 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  | Third Issue Resolution Development Session                                   |
| 5:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.  | Special State and Constituency Caucuses                                      |
| 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.  | Dinner and Plenary Session (tentative)                                       |

### ***Friday, May 5***

|                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 7:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. | Closing Breakfast and Resolution Vote |
| 10:30 a.m. - Noon      | Closing Session                       |

***Note: All events noted will be held at the Washington Hilton & Towers Hotel***

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 2, 1995

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

DATE: May 3, 1995  
LOCATION: Washington Hilton  
Washington D.C.  
TIME: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
FROM: Jeremy Ben-Ami *JB*

I. PURPOSE

You are speaking at the opening plenary of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging. Your remarks are a charge to the delegates as they begin the 3-day Conference. Your remarks will focus on Republican proposals to cut Medicare and Medicaid in the context of their forthcoming budget.

II. BACKGROUND

The White House Conference on Aging is a once-a-decade gathering of seniors from around the country to outline an agenda of concerns and policy proposals for older Americans. This is the fourth Conference -- previous ones were held in 1961, 1971 and 1981. This will be the last Conference of this century.

The 1995 Conference began on Tuesday evening with a Senior Speak-out and will continue until noon Friday. Numerous administration and elected officials will be addressing the Conference during plenary sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. The 2,300 delegates will spend the remainder of their time in "issue groups" where they will be discussing resolutions in four broad areas: economic security, health care, housing, and other quality of life issues. Primary issues of concern to the delegates include the long term solvency of Social Security, potential cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, and issues such as housing and crime which affect their quality of life.

The Conference will result in resolutions that will be voted on during the Friday plenary. Following the Conference, there will be a series of events around the country designed to ensure follow-through on the resolutions and to monitor results. Just as the Conference agenda and resolutions were the result of over 800 local events in the year leading up to the Conference, there will be a full schedule of events around the resolutions for the year following the Conference.

### III. PARTICIPANTS

The President  
The Vice President  
Senator David Pryor

### IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

### V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Pre-arrival Prior to your arrival, there will be several speakers including Secretaries Shalala and Brown; Senators Mikulski, Pryor, and Cohen; Representatives Martinez and Morella; Dr. Robert Butler (chair of the Advisory Committee), Dr. Arthur Fleming, and Hugh Downs.

There will be a video introduction and a chorus will provide entertainment.

#### Post-arrival

You and the Vice President are announced.

Senator Pryor introduces the Vice President.

The Vice President speaks.

Senator Pryor introduces you.

You speak.

Following your remarks, you will work the ropeline to greet delegates and you will depart.

### VI. REMARKS

To be provided by Speechwriting.

PRESIDENTIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS  
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

MAY 3, 1995

Attached is a list of individuals speaking at the opening plenary session. Below are some individuals that the President may want to personally acknowledge:

The Policy Committee of the WHCoA

Secretary Shalala -- Provided leadership, Pol. Comm. Member

Senator David Pryor -- Chairman, Policy Committee

The Advisory Committee of the WHCoA

Bob Blancato -- Executive Director, WHCoA

Entertainment

Olathe Intergenerational Choir

Special Delegate Notes:

Oldest Delegate -- Ms. Genevieve Johnson  
Washington, D.C. delegate  
Age 95

Youngest Delegate -- Ms. Fiona McKinnon  
Kalispell, Montana  
Age 16

Veteran Observer in Audience:

Charles Lindberg -- an original flag raiser at Iwo Jima  
(materials sent via Molly Brostrum, DPC)

Note: there are a large number of WWII Veterans serving as delegates to the Conference.

Other:

If you haven't had a chance to see the video, it might be helpful in preparing remarks. The first piece on Senior Olympics and the last piece which highlights "senior" achievers is helpful.

Satellite Sites

# THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 1, 1995

## WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING SPEECH PREP/BRIEFING

DATE: May 2, 1995  
LOCATION: Oval Office  
TIME: 12:45 - 1:30 p/m  
FROM: Jeremy Ben-Ami *JS*

### I. PURPOSE

To review the speech you will be delivering to the White House Conference on Aging.

### II. BACKGROUND

On Wednesday, May 3, 1995, you will be addressing the White House Conference on Aging. The Conference is a once-a-decade gathering of seniors from around the country to outline an agenda of concerns and policy proposals for older Americans. This is the first Conference convened by a Democratic President, and the last of this century.

In your speech, you will be reiterating your commitment to issues of importance to the senior community including the long-term stability of Social Security and taking a clear position on the current debate about cuts in Medicare.

### III. PARTICIPANTS

The President  
George Stephanopoulos  
Gene Sperling

Don Baer  
Terry Edmonds  
Jeremy Ben-Ami

### IV. PRESS PLAN

No press.

### V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Briefing.

### VI. REMARKS

None required.

Draft 5/1/95 9:00 a.m.

- 1 - Acknowledgments
- 2 - Legacy of Conf / Description of the
- 3 - Context / Dig Ernst
- 4 - Who are older Am
- 5 - Admin Acknowledgments / Soc Sec

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

1995 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 3, 1995

[Acknowledgements: Senator Pryor, conference chair, for introduction and Senate leadership on seniors issues; Bob Blancato, conference executive director; Hugh Downs, Master of Ceremonies; Secretary Shalala; Secretary Jesse Brown; Senator Cohen; Rep. Martinez; Rep. Morella; Arthur Fleming; delegates...]

I am proud to convene the 1995 White House Conference on Aging. This historic event is the first Conference to be held since 1981, and the last one of the 20th century. This is also the first Conference to be assembled under a Democratic presidency. But I can tell you if Al Gore has his way, it won't be the last.

This is also the last conference for one of the best friends older Americans have ever had. Our conference chairman, Senator Pryor, has announced his retirement. He has devoted his entire congressional career to fighting for the rights of older Americans. He's volunteered as an orderly in Washington area nursing homes to document the dire conditions seniors were living under. When he couldn't get Congressional leaders to listen to

\* I would also like to acknowledge all the SRS part's in Of History thru Satellite - 12 sites x country (San Diego, Utah Rock, Missouri) - First time

him, he took to the streets, conducting hearings out of a trailer in a parking lot. He's been the conscience of both Houses. We will miss his fighting spirit and his ageless wisdom. We all owe him our thanks.

This Conference has a rich legacy. President Truman convened the first National <sup>forum</sup> ~~Conference~~ on Aging in 1950. Since then, the official White House Conference has been held three times. The 1961 Conference <sup>contributed</sup> led to the creation of Medicare, Medicaid and the Older Americans Act. The 1971 Conference led to the creation of the House Select Committee on Aging and an <sup>improvements</sup> ~~expansion~~ of the Older Americans Act to include transportation and nutrition services. And in 1981, under the vigilant eye of Claude Pepper, the White House Conference solidified the national commitment to Social Security.

As we stand at the threshold of the 21st century, this Conference marks a <sup>potential turning pt</sup> (major departure from the past). This is not merely an - <sup>Context</sup> ~~Demographic~~ opportunity for seniors to come to Washington to voice their demands. In the coming days, you have challenged yourselves to not only identify problems and concerns, but also to seek methods to effectively address those issues. ~~At last~~ you have a seat at the negotiating table as decisions are being made that will determine the course of aging services for the balance of this century and beyond.

<sup>Δ S</sup>  
- Political debate  
- Fiscal - fight resources on Fed. sta. & local

*less old / what young*

We know that Older Americans want the same things we all want.

*✓*

You want to be listened to and valued. You want to feel safe and secure in your homes and communities. You want good services, easily accessible to those who need them. And most importantly, you want a future of opportunity for your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

*Describe*

So this is the first citizen's referendum on aging issues. The resolutions that will emerge will be the result of your work and your vision. And I know a lot of that work has already been done. I want to applaud the unique grassroots planning process of this conference. More than 800 local, state, and regional events, involving tens of thousands of seniors preceded this event. It was in those pre-conference forums that you determined which issues and solutions to bring to the nation's attention.

*Logan*  
*✓*  
*2*

*→ Also unique - post-conf actions → impl steps*

What you have done is a great example of what I call the [New Covenant] -- a dynamic partnership between government and citizens to expand opportunity and demand responsibility. You are setting a tremendous example for the rest of us. I commend your

responsible approach and I pledge to work with you to accomplish our common goals. I have often said, that in this country we

don't have a person to waste. As we focus on ways to strengthen families and rebuild communities...as we reform our approach to education to prepare more of us for the rigors and challenges of a new global economy...as we seek to build bridges of

understanding and cooperation at home and abroad...we must honor and make full use of the creative energies of more than 30 million Americans who can make the difference.

*Who are older Americans*

*diversity - not a monolithic bloc*

— We must never forget: Older Americans have made us what we are as a nation. You are our parents, grandparents, teachers, and mentors. You are the great achievers who laid the cornerstone of the American dream. It was your generation that ended legal segregation in this country. It was you who safely got us to the moon and back. And it was your generation that defeated the evil dictatorships in Europe. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, I would particularly like to salute the courage and sacrifices given by our WWII veterans, many of whom are with us today. You fought selflessly to protect freedom for all Americans and our neighbors abroad. You and your generation have taught us the values of patriotism, community, sacrifice, and self-reliance. You turned back evil and set us on the course of greatness. We owe you more than a pat on the back and a few kind words. We owe you the security of living out the rest of your lives in productive peace and dignity. Without fear of where the next meal is coming from or how the next medical bill will be paid.

*We will all be older, & young & old need to want same things*

Older Americans are all of us. And this is the first Conference to aggressively affirm the intergenerational linkages and the vibrant diversity that bind us all together.

*Int pt of Conf*

I am proud that my Administration has placed greater emphasis on the concerns of older Americans. We have fought hard to promote the health and independence of this growing and vital segment of our population. One of the first things I did upon taking office was to elevate the position of Commissioner on Aging to full Assistant Secretary status. We did that to make sure the interests of older Americans were considered in all our decisions. And, let me tell you, you couldn't ask for a better advocate than Assistant Secretary Fernando Torres-Gil. He is a tireless crusader on behalf of older Americans. And we are fortunate to have his leadership.

We have also championed long-term care and made it an integral part of last year's Health Security Act. The Administration on Aging, celebrating 30 years of service this year, has developed a blueprint for the future which focuses on the issues of:

- strengthening community-based long-term care;
- the special needs of older women who too often are left in poverty after lifetimes of caring for others;
- a plan to improve nutrition services and to reduce hunger among the elderly;
- A crime and violence prevention initiative to protect older Americans from the horrible crime of elder abuse and other crimes;

- and a disability initiative to focus attention on the special needs of the growing numbers of older people with disabilities.

We have also taken steps to strengthen and protect the two most important programs serving older Americans -- Social Security and Medicare.

Let there be no doubt about this Administration's commitment to Social Security. I will fight to make sure that the promise of this program is fulfilled for this generation and for generations to come. It has been almost 60 years since President Franklin Roosevelt created the financial safety net that now serves 15 million people, keeping many of them out of poverty. This government has a solemn commitment to every working American and to their families that Social Security will be there for them when they need it. I will work to honor that commitment. But we must take action ~~now~~ to keep Social Security safe, sound, and secure throughout the 21st century. That's why we are making the agency more accessible through an improved 800 number. We are reducing the number of pending disability claims. And we are beginning to mail annual earnings statements to every American, so they can know the amount of retirement benefits they can expect.

Medicare  
#1's out of poverty  
Must address Time to do so

view price plus

But we must do more. Senator Moynihan and others have long recognized that Social Security was too important not to have ~~direct access to the White House~~. That's why this year we have made Social Security an independent agency and raised it to ~~cabinet-level status~~. We have also convened a bipartisan panel to develop policy recommendations aimed at achieving long-term solvency for Social Security. We ~~expect~~ <sup>they will</sup> their report this fall. But you should know that, whatever their recommendations, this Administration is committed to the core principles that have made Social Security so effective for 60 years. Those principles are universal participation, the linking of benefit eligibility to wage-earning labor, and the recognition of Social Security's vital role in keeping older Americans out of poverty. We will not back away from those principles.

statutory  
reg  
guaranteed

*Program* And we will not back away from our commitment to Medicare and Medicaid. For thirty years, these programs have provided life-saving health coverage for millions of older Americans, and we must not sacrifice them on the alter<sup>a</sup> of a balanced budget or tax cuts for the wealthy.

Medicare works. Ask the 37 million elderly and disabled Americans who depend on it for health care. Let's not forget that before Medicare, almost 30 percent of our nation's elderly lived in poverty. Today, that number is down to 12 percent. And let's not forget that before Medicare, about 45 percent of the

elderly had no health insurance and even more were underinsured. For 30 years, Medicare has guaranteed health security to older Americans -- even as the number of uninsured in this country continues to rise. And Medicaid has helped middle class families who have exhausted their savings to manage the overwhelming costs of nursing home care.

But these are different times. And they call for different approaches. There are real problems in Medicare and Medicaid that need to be addressed. We cannot get a hold of the deficit without addressing growing health care entitlement spending. Over the next five years alone, almost 40 percent of the growth in Federal spending will come from rising costs in Federal health care programs. They are growing faster than GDP. Faster than overall inflation. Faster than almost all other items of government spending. If we are serious about bringing the deficit under control and reducing the debt we bequeath to future generations, we must address the growth of Medicare. And yes, it is true that the long-term solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund remains a problem. <sup>It</sup> We must contain costs in these programs, but there is a right way and wrong way to do this. As I said in my 1994 and 1995 state of the union messages: To those who would cut Medicare without protecting seniors, I say the solution to today's squeeze on middle-class working people's health care is not to put the squeeze on middle-class retired people's health care. We can do better than that, and I will oppose any attempts

to pay for tax cuts with Medicare cuts. It's not right. And we won't allow it.

The wrong way to deal with our budget deficit is to simply slash Medicare and Medicaid, using these programs as a bank to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. We should not go backward by reducing coverage. And we shouldn't make changes in Medicare that call for coercion over choice.

Let me explain: The Republicans claim that they would increase choice by giving Medicare beneficiaries vouchers to buy insurance in the private market. In reality, these vouchers would pay for only the low cost health plans in an area. Your choice would be simple: take the cheapest plan or pay more. That's not choice, that's financial coercion. I know it. You know it. And the people who are trying to sell us this bill of goods know it.

So let's deal with this problem honestly. We do need to build for our future and our children's futures by addressing the long-term solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund. The Fund is in better shape now than when I took office because of the actions we took in our 1993 budget and because of the strong 1994 economy. But, as with Social Security, we need to make a bipartisan commitment to keep Medicare sound and secure throughout the 21st century. The Trustees have recommended that a commission be appointed to

review this problem thoroughly. And I am prepared to work with Congress to get the commission in place.

*Simple test*

Let's not start by cutting Medicare benefits. Let's start by cutting waste, fraud and abuse. And let's get serious about health care reform. As I have said repeatedly, we must contain costs in Medicare and Medicaid, but we must recognize the imperative of doing so in the context of reforming our health care system. That's why I fought so hard to pass comprehensive health care reform last year. The Congress and the American people chose not to do it. But that does not mean we should back away. There are some steps we can take to reduce costs and expand coverage for the American people. I have already signed into law a bill that will make insurance more affordable for self-employed workers and their families. But we can do more. We can reform the insurance market so that people don't lose their health insurance when they lose their job or change jobs or a family member becomes ill -- and so that small businesses can afford to buy insurance for their workers.

We can make coverage more affordable for working families. We can help families provide long-term care for a sick parent or disabled child. That's why we support tax clarifications for private long-term care insurance as well as consumer standards so that long-term care insurance policies are worth more than the paper they are written on.

And we can take aggressive steps to crack down on fraud and abuse. Simply put, fraud jeopardizes the health of beneficiaries and rips off the government. We must put a stop to it. Since the beginning of my Administration, we have vigorously cracked down on fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid. I am pleased to announce today that as part of phase two of our Reinventing Government initiative, we are taking additional strong steps to strengthen the financial integrity of the Medicare program. The first, and most important step, is the formation of a multi-state (demonstration project) known as ("Operation Restore Trust,") that will crackdown against Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse associated with home health agencies, nursing homes, and durable medical equipment suppliers.

We are creating an unprecedented partnership of federal, state, and private agencies to focus on five states that have nearly 40 percent of all Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries: New York, Florida, Illinois, Texas, and California. In addition to identifying and penalizing those who willingly defraud the government, the project will alert the public and industry to fraud schemes, and it will correct the vulnerabilities in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Operation Restore Trust will be a win-win for everybody except the perpetrators of fraud. For every dollar we spend on this program, the Medicare and Medicaid Trust Funds will save six to

eight dollars back in lower spending on wasteful practices and court awards from fraud cases.

And we will reinvest some of these savings from this project to expand enforcement activities.

This is the right way to address health care spending. And as we consider changes to Medicare and Medicaid this year, we must make sure that we maintain coverage, choice, quality, and affordability for older Americans who depend on these programs.

In closing let me say that I want to work with all of you to make growing old the pleasurable experience we all want it to be. It has been said that if we were to live our lives like a poem, we would be able to look upon the sunset of life as a time of great joy, and instead of trying to postpone old age, we would actually look forward to it, and gradually build up to it as the happiest period of our existence.

That is my hope for you and for all of us.

I look forward to the guidance and recommendations that will come out of this conference. And I know that your <sup>reflect</sup> greatest desire is to leave a legacy of hope for <sup>our</sup> ~~your~~ children and grandchildren, <sup>future</sup> ~~generations~~ <sup>gen's</sup>.

Thank you.