

Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means; William Roth, chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Fi-

nance; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Statement on Assistance for the Homeless

December 24, 1997

Today—on the eve of Christmas and the first day of Hanukkah—it is important for all Americans to come together as one community and remember those who are less fortunate, particularly our fellow citizens without the warmth and security of a home. I applaud the many Americans who dedicate their lives—and the hundreds and thousands of volunteers who work tirelessly—to help provide shelter, food, and dignity to homeless men, women, and children.

As long as there are children waking up in America on Christmas morning without the comfort of a warm home, we have more work to do. Religious and community organizations are doing their part to help alleviate homelessness. The Federal Government must do its share too.

That is why I have asked Secretary Cuomo to announce today that my next budget will provide an additional \$327 million for homeless assistance—if enacted, one of the largest dollar increases ever. My new budget will request \$1.15 billion to help move the homeless from the streets to self sufficiency—a 40-percent increase over this year. This amount includes 34,000 vouchers to help individuals and families who are¹ now homeless celebrate future holidays in a place they can call “home.” These funds will help create safer places for our children to grow up, more stable families, and a stronger American community. I look forward to working with Congress to achieve this needed assistance for the homeless.

The President’s Radio Address

December 27, 1997

Good morning. The holidays are a time when families come together to celebrate the season with love. And they remind us of our bonds of duty to care for one another. Today I’d like to talk to you about how we’re expanding the shield of Medicare protection to honor our parents and grandparents in important new ways in the new year.

Looking back over 1997, it’s clear that we achieved major reforms of the Medicare system that will help Americans live healthier, happier, longer lives. This year’s bipartisan balanced budget agreement reaffirmed our commitment to preserving and strengthening Medicare. We extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund until at least 2010. We made Medicare protec-

tion more affordable for low-income Americans. We modernized the Medicare system by expanding choice, opening up competition, and controlling costs. And we created a blue ribbon commission to examine ways to ensure that Medicare will serve baby boomers and our children as well as it has served our parents.

Now, as part of the balanced budget agreement, we’re also implementing expanded Medicare benefits to provide greater protection to Americans in the fight against cancer. On New Year’s Day, we’ll introduce a series of changes in Medicare that will make screening, prevention, and detection of cancer more affordable and frequent. We’re ringing in the new year

¹White House correction.

resolved to take new steps in our battle against cancer, one of mankind's oldest foes.

First, we will guarantee the option of annual mammograms for every woman over 40 and, by waiving the deductible, we'll make annual breast cancer screenings more affordable. Right now, nearly half of older women do not get regular mammograms. By making mammograms more accessible and detecting cancer earlier, we can significantly increase the likelihood of successful treatment for this disease. Hillary has conducted a longstanding campaign to encourage older women to get these crucial tests, and these new changes will bring us closer to success in those efforts.

Second, we're expanding coverage for the early detection of cervical cancer. We have sophisticated tests to pick up early signs of cervical cancer, and from now on, Medicare will pay for regular access to this lifesaving technology.

And third, for the first time we'll now cover regular examinations for colon/rectal cancer.

Most Americans don't receive this important preventive test, but when we catch this cancer early, we can beat it more than 90 percent of the time.

Nearly every American family has been touched by the shadow of cancer. My own mother passed away just about 4 years ago from cancer, and especially at this time of year, I miss her a lot. So many other families have the same story. That's why these actions are so important. By detecting cancer early on, we offer our loved ones one of the greatest gifts of all, the gifts of life, health, and many holidays to come.

Thanks for listening. Happy holidays, and have a happy and healthy New Year.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:16 p.m. on December 24 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 27.

Statement on the Health Care Task Force Civil Case *December 29, 1997*

While the Department of Justice is still reviewing whether to appeal Judge Lamberth's ruling, I am quite confident that Mr. Magaziner acted appropriately. Any suggestion to the contrary is unfair and unsupported by the facts and the findings of the U.S. Attorney's Office in its 1995 investigation of this matter.

The U.S. Attorney's Office concluded that "there is no basis to conclude that Mr. Mag-

aziner committed a criminal offense in this matter. There is no significant evidence that his declaration was factually false, much less that it was willfully and intentionally so."

Mr. Magaziner is, and will remain, a valued member of my administration.

NOTE: In the statement, the President referred to U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth.

Statement on Vandalism of the Islamic Star and Crescent Display on the Ellipse *December 29, 1997*

I strongly condemn the vandalism of the Islamic star and crescent displayed on the Ellipse in front of the White House. This year for the first time, an Islamic symbol was displayed along with the national Christmas tree and the menorah. The desecration of that symbol is the em-

bodiment of intolerance that strikes at the heart of what it means to be an American.

It is especially hurtful that such an act would occur at a time when so many communities are