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advanced nation, and yet we're actually seeing worse health care outcomes in many cases.

And to give you a sense of what we're looking at down the road if we don't initiate serious reform, one-fifth of our economy is projected to be tied up in our health care system in 10 years—one-fifth. Millions more Americans are expected to go without health insurance if we don't initiate reform right now, and outside of what they're receiving for health care, workers are projected to see their take-home pay actually decrease if we don't get a handle on this.

So we can't afford to put this off, and the dedicated public servants who are gathered here today understand that, and they are ready to get going. And this window between now and the August recess, I think, is going to be the make-or-break period. This is the time where we've got to get this done.

I want to just make mention of something that I've talked to many of you privately about. I want to say this publicly. As we move forward on health care reform, it is not sufficient for us simply to add more people to Medicare or Medicaid, to increase the rolls, to increase coverage in the absence of cost controls and reform. And let me repeat this principle: If we don't get control over costs, then it is going to be very difficult for us to expand coverage. These two things have to go hand in hand. Another way of putting it is, we can't simply put more people into a broken system that doesn't work.

So we've got to reform the underlying system. And this means promoting best practices not just the most expensive practices. And one of the things I'm going to be discussing with the Health and the Finance Committees is how can we change incentive structures so that, for example, places like Mayo Clinic in Minnesota are able to provide some of the best health care services in the country at half or sometimes even less of the costs than some other areas where the quality is not as good. What we should be—and by the way, that's not just unique to Mayo; the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, same thing, top-notch quality, lower costs.

What we've got to figure out is how do we create the incentives in terms of how we reimburse, how we deal with getting doctors to work together more effectively, how we're working on prevention and wellness so that we're driving down costs across the board.

Now, I appreciate the efforts that are being made by these Senators. I look forward to discussing with them their ideas. This is going to be a heavy lift, I think everybody understands that, but I'm also confident that people want to get this done this year. And under the leadership of Max and Chris and all the other participants here, I'm confident that we're going to get it done.

So thank you very much, everybody. And now we're going to get to work.

The President's Upcoming Visit to Egypt

Q. Mr. President, how's that Cairo speech?

The President. We'll find out in Cairo. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks on Signing the Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission Act
June 2, 2009

The President. Well, thank you all for coming to the White House today as we commemorate the life and work of a President in the president—in the presence of those who loved him and knew him and respected him deeply as both a leader and as a man.

And in particular, I want to thank our special guest here today, Nancy Reagan, our former First Lady, who redefined that role in her time at the White House, and who has, in the many years since, taken on a new role as an advocate on behalf of treatments that hold the promise of improving and saving lives. And I should just add, she has been extraordinarily gracious to both me and Michelle during our transition here, and I'm thankful for that.

There are few who are not moved by the love that Ms. Reagan felt for her husband, and fewer still who are not inspired by how this love led her to take up the twin causes of stem cell research and Alzheimer's research. In saying a long goodbye, Nancy Reagan became a voice on behalf of millions of families experiencing the depleting, aching reality of Alzheimer's disease.

I'd also like to recognize the Members of Congress who are standing alongside us, who worked so hard to pass the Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission Act, particularly Congressman Elton Gallegly, the lead sponsor of this bill. Finally, I want to thank the trustees of the Reagan Foundation who are here today as well.

This legislation, approved by an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives and passed unanimously in the Senate, will create a commission to honor President Reagan on the 100th anniversary of his birth, and I am proud to sign it into law.

President Reagan understood that while there are often strong disagreements between parties and political adversaries—disagreements that can be a source of conflict and bitterness—it is important to keep in mind all that we share. For all of the deepest of divides that exist in America, the bonds that bring us together are that much stronger. Now, we may see the world differently, but we must never stop seeing one another as fellow Americans and as patriots who want what is best for the country that we love.

Now, this Nation was built on the basis of the principle that we are stronger, not weaker, for even the most vigorous debates, debates that have energized our politics since the inventors of America argued over our founding documents more than two centuries ago. Through the weighing of different views, we take measure of where we stand and where we must go, and the moment we fail to recognize the good in those with whom we quarrel is the moment that we've lost sight of who we are as a people.

President Reagan helped as much as any President to restore a sense of optimism in our country, a spirit that transcended politics, that transcended even the most heated arguments of the day. It was this optimism that allowed leaders like the President and Speaker Tip O'Neill, who held sharply different philosophies, to sit down together at the end of difficult debates as friends and to work with one another on complex and contentious issues like Social Security. It was this optimism that the American people sorely needed during a difficult period, a period of economic and global challenges that tested us in unprecedented ways.

In these perilous times, President Reagan had the ability to communicate directly and movingly to the American people, to understand both the hardships they felt in their lives and the hopes that they had for their country. That was powerful, that was important, and we are better off for the extraordinary leadership that he showed.

So I'm glad to have all of you here today. I'm especially glad to have Mrs. Reagan here today as we sign this bill. I'll look forward to seeing the fruits of this commission's work, culminating in the celebration of President Reagan's life on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

And on that morning in America, we can be proud to come together as one nation and one people to honor a leader who loved this country and wanted nothing more than to see its promise fulfilled.

So thank you all very much. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Ms. Reagan, let's go sign this bill.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

The President. I've gotten good at this. Although, I think that President Reagan's signature was more legible than mine. [*Laughter*] All right, there you go.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:51 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. H.R. 131, approved June 2, was assigned Public Law No. 111–25.