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pretty clear that we need to take this very first report by our latest distinguished Surgeon General and do the right thing with the report and for our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The report was entitled, ''Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups.''

Memorandum on the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

April 27, 1998

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 1998 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

I am delighted that Rodney E. Slater, Secretary of Transportation, has agreed to again serve as the Chair of the 1998 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area. I ask you to support the campaign by personally chairing the campaign in your agency and appointing a top official as your vice chair.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an important way for Federal employees to support many worthy charities. This year our goal is to again raise more than $38 million. Public servants not only contribute to the campaign but assume leadership roles to ensure its success.

Your personal support and enthusiasm will help guarantee another successful campaign this year.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28.

Remarks on Receiving the Report of the Social Security and Medicare Trustees and an Exchange With Reporters

April 28, 1998

The President. Good afternoon. Five and a half years ago, America chose a new course of fiscal discipline and economic growth, balancing our budget and investing in our people. Holding fast to that course, our people have built the strongest economy in a generation.

Success of this strategy cannot be cause for complacency, however. Instead, it offers us an opportunity and an obligation to act boldly to strengthen our Nation for the new century. Above all, we can harness our unsurpassed prosperity to uphold our duty to our parents, to our children, and to each other through Social Security and Medicare.

I've just been briefed by the four Social Security and Medicare trustees for the administration: Secretaries Rubin, Shalala, Herman, and Social Security Commissioner Ken Apfel. The trustees have issued their annual report on the future financial health of these vital programs.

The trustees have told us today that the Balanced Budget Act I signed into law last year has significantly improved the financial future for Medicare. The unprecedented reforms included in that law have cut the so-called 75-year deficit of Medicare in half, even as we have extended new preventive benefits, provided more health choices for Medicare beneficiaries, and instituted other reforms that extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for a decade.

In fact, because of the bipartisan steps taken last year, the long-term prognosis for Medicare is stronger than it has been in over a decade. A bipartisan commission is now at work to craft further steps to strengthen the complex program into the 21st century. I look forward to their recommendations.

The trustees also report that the strength of our economy has led to modest improvements in the outlook for Social Security. They project that economic growth today will extend the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund by 3 more years, now to 2032.

Today's report is encouraging. It shows we can honor our values and meet our most fundamental obligations, even as we balance the budget. However, these modest improvements only underscore the fundamental challenge we face. We must act to make certain that Social Security is as strong for our children as it has been for our parents.