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And there is nothing on the other side of this.

We have the study now from the CBO, and we have the evidence of the Federal health employment plan which led to increases in premiums of less than a dollar a month. That's what our costs were. How would you feel? And I want to ask all of you who are reporting this—you can't be biased; you have to give their side and ours. But just ask yourself—how would you feel? That's what's happening in America today, and we're here to try to do something about it. And God willing, and the creek don't rise, we'll do it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks to the Communications Workers of America Convention in Miami Beach

July 13, 1999

Thank you for that wonderful welcome. You, in particular. [*Laughter*] Thank you, President Bahr, Mrs. Bahr, members of the executive committee. President Sweeney, it's great to see you here, to see all of you out here and all of those behind. I always knew the CWA was behind me, but when I saw so many people up here, I thought it was a literal truth today. [*Laughter*]

I want to say I also believe that two gentlemen who came with me are still here—Florida representatives, our Democratic Congressman, Representative Alcee Hastings, and Attorney General Bob Butterworth. I welcome them here.

I came here, first and foremost, to say a simple thank you. Thank you for what you do to make America great. Thank you for what you have done for me and the Vice President. Thank you for the help you have given us to move this country forward.

Harry Truman once said, whenever labor does well, the whole country does well. As usual, he was right. You prove it. The CWA is stronger than it's ever been, and America is more prosperous than it has ever been. The bounty we enjoy today is in no small measure the result of your hard work—every day programming computers, manning customer service centers, electronically filing news stories, running MRI machines, laying the very cable of the information superhighway. The CWA is building the new economy of the 21st century,

In that endeavor, the Clinton-Gore administration and our allies in Congress have been your partners. Remember what it was like when I became President 6½ years ago? Unemployment was high; the deficit was huge and rising; poverty and inequality were increasing; our social problems were getting worse. We promised to make a new covenant with the American people: opportunity in return for responsibility; a community of all Americans; and a Government committed to giving the American people the tools and conditions they needed to solve their problems and make the most of their own lives.

That strategy was set in motion with our economic plan in 1993. In the years since, we have turned the red ink of deficits into the black ink of surpluses, lowered interest rates, and fueled an economic expansion of truly historic proportions. Meanwhile, we've nearly doubled investment in education and training; put more police on the street and taken more guns out of the hands of criminals; invested more in technology, medical research, in cleaning up the environment; passed family leave and other family-friendly measures, including substantial tax cuts to help families pay for college and to help families raise their children. We showed, in other words, that our Democratic administration could balance the budget while honoring our values.

Now, because we believe it is wrong for any child to be without access to the Internet, one of the greatest vehicles of opportunity the world has ever seen, we created our E-rate program to make sure every classroom—thanks to the leadership of Vice President Gore—every classroom in America can be hooked up to the Internet by the year 2000. We're well over half way there now, and I thank you for your role in that. I also want to thank Morty Bahr for serving on the Advisory Council on the National Information Infrastructure, which laid the groundwork for the E-rate program, which has brought discount after discount after discount to poor

schools and libraries throughout America to make sure everybody can afford to be part of the information superhighway.

Now, because we believe all Americans should have the means to upgrade their skills, we unveiled in January a new initiative to offer literacy and job training to every single working American who needs it now and who will need it in the future. And again, Morty Bahr was there with me at the unveiling, having served on our 21st Century Work Force Commission.

And now, because we believe that to be secure means meeting the challenge of the aging of America by reforming Social Security and Medicare, providing more health care security, more retirement security, and strengthening our economy, we have put forward a sweeping proposal to use most of our surplus for these purposes.

Today I want to talk to you in detail about the challenge of strengthening and modernizing Medicare for the 21st century. The simple problem is that more Americans are living longer. That's a high-class problem. But with the baby boom retirement just ahead of us and more Americans living longer, the number of Medicare beneficiaries is simply growing faster than the number of workers paying into the system. By the year 2015, the Medicare Trust Fund will be insolvent, just as the baby boom generation begins to retire and enter the system, eventually doubling the number of Americans over 65 by the year 2030.

Over the last 6½ years, we've taken some important steps to strengthen Medicare. When I first became President, Medicare was scheduled to go broke this year. We've helped to extend the life of the Trust Fund to 2015 by fighting waste, fraud, and abuse, and taking tough action to contain costs, in 1993 and in 1997.

But we must do more, not only to extend the solvency of Medicare but to ensure that its benefits keep up with the advances of modern science. No one, for example, no one would devise a Medicare program if we were starting from scratch today without including a prescription drug benefit. It wasn't as important back in 1965. Many of the drugs we now use to treat heart disease, arthritis, and other conditions didn't even exist back then when Medicare was first created.

When it comes to securing health care and its benefits, nobody—nobody—has done more than the CWA. When it comes to controlling health care costs and maintaining quality of care, no union has worked harder or more cooperatively with employers and insurers than the CWA. What you have done for your retired members, we as a nation must now do for all our senior citizens.

Last month I set out a plan to secure and modernize Medicare. Here are its elements:

First and foremost, my plan would provide what every single objective expert has said Medicare must have if it is to survive—more resources to shore up its solvency. The plan would devote 15 percent of the Federal budget surplus over the next 15 years to Medicare to extend the life of the Trust Fund to 2027.

Second, the plan will use the force of competition and the best practices now in the private sector to keep costs down without sacrificing quality.

Third, the plan will allow Americans between the ages of 55 and 65 who don't have health insurance, on the job or in their retirement, to buy into Medicare in a way that does not compromise the solvency of the Trust Fund. This is a huge issue today, with more and more early retirees and others who don't have health insurance and simply cannot afford it in the private marketplace in the years when they may be most vulnerable.

Fourth, the plan will modernize Medicare's benefits to match the advances of medical science. For example, almost every week researchers seem to develop a new preventive screening to catch diseases in their early stages. Unfortunately, the copayments Medicare charges for these tests leads many seniors struggling to pay rent and utility bills to put off getting those tests done until it's too late. It makes no sense for Medicare to put up roadblocks to screenings and then turn around and pick up the much more expensive hospital bills the screenings might have avoided. That's why our plan will eliminate the deductible and all copayments for all preventive services. We pay for it by requiring modest co-pays for lab tests that are often

overused and indexing the very modest part B premium.

But we must help, if we're going to do this right, we must help seniors to meet their greatest growing need, the need for affordable prescription drug coverage.

Now, many of our friends in the other party say, ''Well, a lot of seniors have drug coverage today.'' Well, that's right, a lot do. But 15 million don't, and more are losing it every single day. And a lot of them are paying an arm and a leg for very modest coverage. For those who have good plans, they're not having any problems because our plan on this is entirely voluntary. It provides voluntary prescription drug coverage, paid for largely with resources we will save from making Medicare more competitive and innovative, plus a small fraction of the surplus that is dedicated to Medicare.

This benefit will cover half of all prescription drug costs, up to $5,000, when fully phased in, with no deductible at all, and all for a modest premium that will be less than half the price the average Medigap policy costs, and will not apply—will not apply—to seniors up to 130 percent of the poverty line. This is a good deal for America, and we ought to do it. It is a program our seniors can afford, provided in a way the rest of America can afford.

Nobody knows better the value of prescription drug coverage than union men and women who have fought hard for drug benefits more generous than those I'm proposing. But retired unionists are among the fortunate few. I say again, nearly 15 million Medicare beneficiaries lack prescription drug benefits altogether. Nearly half of them are not poor; they're middle class Americans. With prescription drug prices rising, the pressure is on employers to cut back or eliminate prescription drug coverage, and it's becoming more intense. Much of that pressure is coming from competing employers who don't offer these benefits. You and your employers should not have to fight this battle by yourselves.

Of course, America works best when we work together to meet our common challenges. Yesterday at the White House, I met with leaders of both parties to discuss the budget and my plan for Medicare. I was pleased that Republican leaders expressed a willingness to work together with us. But they are putting together a tax plan today that leaves no resources available from the surplus for strengthening Medicare. That is why I am asking Republican leaders, in the interest of saving Medicare, to reconsider the size of their tax cut plan. First things first.

We worked very hard in putting this plan together to squeeze every penny of savings we could out of Medicare without harming the quality of care. But to extend the life of the Trust Fund for a quarter century without devoting a portion of the surplus to Medicare would mean—listen to this—would mean holding spending increases in Medicare to a rate that is more than 60 percent below what private insurance is expected to grow. It can't be done. That would severely cut both the quality and the quantity of health care available to seniors on Medicare, and that will not happen on my watch. I won't let it happen. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I am pleased that there does seem to be an agreement between the Republican leaders and our Democratic leaders and myself to devote that portion of the surplus attributable to Social Security taxes just to Social Security. But it is critical that we have a so-called lockbox that actually locks in the debt reduction that we get from not spending that money and gives the benefit of that debt reduction to Social Security, so that we can extend the life of the Trust Fund, as my plan does, the Social Security Trust Fund, to 2053—adding 53 years from here to there. That's important.

I'll be talking more about this later, but the Social Security Trust Fund is expected to last until 2035 now. It's even more important that we devote some of these funds to Medicare right now because Medicare is expected to be insolvent almost 20 years earlier, in 2015.

We as a nation have got some big choices to make in the next few months. We've got to decide what to do with this surplus. Did you ever think a few years ago we'd even be having this conversation? We had a $290 billion deficit when I took office; it was supposed to be up to $380 billion this year. We quadrupled the debt—4 times—quadrupled the debt in 12 years. So I realize that it's

tempting for a Congress to say, ''Well, 16 months before election, let's do what is most immediately pleasing, whether it's right for America over the long run or not.'' This is a big test for us, for our wisdom, for our judgment, for our concern for our people and their future.

I think the right choice is to devote most of the surplus to saving Social Security and Medicare. Let me tell you—and let me walk through this with you again, because under our plan, besides reforming and saving Social Security and Medicare, this plan will allow us to pay off publicly held debt to make America debt-free in 15 years for the first time since 1835.

Now, what does that mean to the Government? It means when you pay your tax money, we're not spending 13, 14, or 15 cents on every dollar of your taxes just to pay interest on the debt. It means that future tax burdens can be lower.

What does it mean to ordinary citizens right now and every year from now on? It means if America is on a path to becoming debt-free, interest rates will be lower. That means businesses can borrow at less cost. That means more new investment, more jobs, and more money for higher wages. It means average families can borrow at less cost. That means lower home mortgages, lower credit card payments, lower car payments, lower college loan payments. I'm telling you, the average family will save a whole lot more under this plan looking after our future than they will under the tax cut plan offered by the other party.

Now, because their plan spends almost all the non-Social Security related surplus on a tax cut, it would not only do nothing to restore Medicare, it would require deep cuts in those things we need to be investing the most in: in education, in hiring those 100,000 teachers, in medical research, in technology, in preserving the environment, in modernizing our national defense. We won't have the money to do that.

And again I say, this is a mistake because our plan has a sizable tax cut, nearly a quarter trillion dollars for middle-income families to meet their crucial needs, for child care, for long-term care, for saving for retirement. It provides tax cuts for building world-class schools, for developing and installing new environmental technologies, for funding the new markets initiative, which I highlighted on my tour to the poorest parts of America last week, simply to say we will give you the same tax breaks to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas overseas. It is the right thing to do.

So here's the choice: We can save Social Security and Medicare and make Medicare better. We can make America debt-free, giving our children a stronger economy and all of you lower interest rates. We can still have a good-size tax cut, but not as large as the one the Republican leaders propose.

Again I say, their plan would spend almost the entire non-Social Security portion of the surplus on tax cuts. It wouldn't extend the solvency of Medicare by a single day. Depending on how they do it, it might not extend the solvency of Social Security by a single day. It would force drastic cuts in education, research and technology, defense, and the environment. It would mean not paying off the debt and leaving us and our children more vulnerable to higher interest rates, a higher level of Government spending for interest payments alone, higher taxes in years to come, a weaker economy, itself more vulnerable to the kind of global financial turmoil we've all seen in the last couple of years.

So that's the choice: an America debt-free, with Social Security intact and Medicare even better, and a substantial tax cut; or a return to the ''spend now, pay later'' approach that will not save and strengthen Medicare, may or may not lengthen the life of Social Security, will certainly cut education and other vital programs, and again I say, over the long run will be far more costly to every person in this room and every working family in the entire United States.

I believe we all want—Republicans and Democrats and independents—the strongest possible America for our children. I'm encouraged by the tone and the substance of the meeting I had yesterday with the leaders of Congress in both parties. So I ask again the Republican leaders in Congress, for the sake of saving Medicare and strengthening our future, to reduce the size of your tax cut and join us in putting first things first.

If we would sit down at the table like responsible family members and figure out how much it would cost us to meet our current obligations to education, defense, and other things, what we have to do to save Social Security and Medicare, not just for the baby boom generation but for their children and grandchildren who otherwise will be spending money they need to get along, to pay for education, to pay for the future on their parents, then we could figure out how much is left over for the tax cut. That's what I've tried to do, because I think it's the right thing for America. First things first, putting people first. It's the American way.

And to my fellow Americans who may think that this is just one of those Washington debates, and one side makes their side sound good and the other side makes their side sound so good, and it's all just a bunch of politics, all I can offer is the record of the last 6½ years.

I ask—think about it—with your help, we have nearly 19 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded. We have declining rates of teen pregnancy, smoking, and drug abuse. We have cleaner air, cleaner water, and safer food. We've got 90 percent of our children immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time. We've had 100,000 young people working in our communities in AmeriCorps, making America better and earning their way to college. The record indicates that when we say something is good for America's future, it probably is good for America's future.

That's why we're trying to pass this Patients' Bill of Rights they're debating up there today. Think how you would feel—that's what I asked the Senators to do today—think how you would feel if it was your child, your wife, your husband, and the question was, your doctor says you need to see a specialist and your HMO accountant says you don't. Should you have to hassle it out for 3 months? And then, if the damage is irrevocable, shouldn't you be able to hold somebody accountable? Think how you would feel.

Think how you would feel if—God forbid—you got hurt in an accident outside this convention hall and the ambulance had to drive you past two or three hospitals until they finally got to one covered by your HMO. Depending on what kind of injury you had, it could just be much more painful or terribly devastating.

Think how you would feel if your small employer changed health care providers in the middle of your wife's pregnancy or in the middle of the husband's chemotherapy treatment, and they said, ''I'm sorry; I know this is traumatic. I know you're 6 months pregnant and you've had a terrible pregnancy, but here's a new doctor for you. I know your life is on the line and you've got great confidence in this doctor supervising your chemotherapy treatment, but here's a new doctor for you.''

I just try to think about what's right for the American people. Oh, they'll tell you how much it costs up there. But we put in the Patients' Bill of Rights for the Federal employees; its cost, less than a buck a month a policy to comply with. The Congressional Budget Office says that, at the most, it would cost $2 a month a policy. Don't you think it's worth $24 a year to know that when you need to see a specialist, you can see one?

So that's what we're trying to do—with our proposal to modernize schools, to finish hiring 100,000 teachers, to put even more police on the street, and take even more guns out of the hands of more criminals. And that's what we're trying to do by shining the light of enterprise and opportunity at America's poorest communities. And most of all, that's what we're trying to do with our plan to save Social Security and Medicare, provide that prescription drug benefit, and make America debt-free.

You know, in a year and a half, I'll retire with a pretty nice pension. I'll be all right, regardless. Thanks to the CWA, most of you will be all right, regardless. But you know, if we haven't learned anything in the last 6 years, it ought to be that the policies that help the least of us help all of us; that when we strengthen America's families and workplaces and communities, we're all better off.

A lot of people that have made a lot of money out of the stock market in the last

6½ years, when it's more than tripled, they'd have been all right if the stock market hadn't gone up. But they're a lot better off because the lives of average Americans have gone up. That's why the stock market's done better.

And so again, I'll say to all of you, we've got this phenomenal opportunity, the opportunity of a lifetime, of a whole generation, to use the last 16 months of this century to get the 21st century off to a rousing start for America. We just have to be faithful to the covenant we made with the people in 1992. We have to put first things first. We have to put people first. And if we do it, watch out, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in Hall D at the Miami Beach Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Morton Bahr, president, Communications Workers of America, and his wife, Florence; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL–CIO; and Robert A. Butterworth, State attorney general.

Statement on the Surrender of the Suspected "Railway Killer"

July 13, 1999

I want to thank all of the State, local, and Federal law enforcement officials whose hard work led to the surrender of the suspected "railway killer" earlier today. As a result of their determined efforts and the cooperation of Mexican authorities, the suspect is now in custody in the United States. All Americans can rest easier knowing that law enforcement authorities will bring the full force of the law to bear in this case.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Paraguay-United States Extradition Treaty

July 13, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Paraguay, signed at Washington on November 9, 1998.

In addition, I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. As the report states, the Treaty will not require implementing legislation.

The provisions in this Treaty follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States.

Upon entry into force, this Treaty would enhance cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of both countries, and thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts. The Treaty would supersede the Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Paraguay signed at Asuncion on May 24, 1973.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 13, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction

July 13, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economics Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, in response to the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons ("weapons of mass destruction") and of the means of delivering such weapons.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 13, 1999.