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citizens who never before have had a chance to show what they can do.

Third, in conjunction with the nonprofit Council for Excellence in Government, we're launching a major competition to spur new innovative ideas for how Government can serve and connect with our citizens electronically. The Council will award up to $50,000 to those students, researchers, private sector workers, or Government employees who present the most creative ideas.

In the early years of our Republic, Thomas Jefferson said, "America's institutions must move forward hand in hand with the progress of the human mind." Well, today, the progress of the human mind is certainly racing forward at breakneck speed. If we work together, we can ensure that our democratic institutions keep pace. With your help, we can build a more perfect, more responsive democracy for the information age.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President's webcast was recorded at 3:15 p.m. on June 23 at a private residence in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10 a.m. on June 24. In his remarks, he referred to Eric Brewer, cofounder, Inktomi. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

## The President's Radio Address

*June 24, 2000*

Good morning. This week we mark the beginning of summer, another summer of national prosperity, continuing the longest economic expansion in our history. The big question now is what we intend to do with this economic prosperity. One of our most pressing needs, clearly, is providing voluntary prescription drug coverage under Medicare for older Americans. We should do it this year.

The American people have made their feelings clear. They know our seniors are paying too much for prescription drugs that help them live longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives. Three in five older Americans don't have dependable insurance coverage for prescriptions, and too many seniors simply aren't getting the drugs they need.

Again and again I've said it should be a high priority to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare this year. But we must do it the right way, by making the benefit affordable and available for everyone who needs it.

I'm deeply concerned that the proposal House Republicans put forward this week will take us down the wrong road. What they have proposed is not a Medicare benefit; it's a private insurance program which many seniors and people with disabilities simply won't be able to afford. It will not offer dependable coverage to every American in every part of the country. Rural Americans will be at particular risk because private insurance is often unavailable to them or very, very expensive.

The plan doesn't ensure that seniors will be able to use the local pharmacist they trust. Insurance companies have already said this model won't work. It benefits the companies who make the drugs, not the older Americans who need to take the drugs.

There is a better way. I propose giving all our seniors the option of a prescription drug benefit through Medicare, wherever they live, however sick they may be. My plan would be affordable and dependable and give every senior equal coverage.

Because our economy is so strong and because we worked hard to put the Medicare Trust Fund back on sound footing, we have the money to do this now and do it right. We should use a part of our hard-earned budget surplus to meet America's most pressing priorities, like paying down the national debt, strengthening Medicare, and providing a prescription drug benefit.

That's why next week I will propose using the surplus to improve my plan. I will unveil specific protections for catastrophic drug expenses to ensure that no senior pays more than $4,000 in prescription drugs and keeping premiums at $25 a month. And I'll propose making that benefit in the full prescription drug initiative available in 2002, instead of 2003. To do that, I'll ask Congress to add about $58 billion to our funding for Medicare over the next 10 years.

Providing a voluntary prescription drug benefit is only one of the challenges we must

face to keep Medicare healthy for generations to come. We also have to increase payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, home health care agencies, and other providers, to make sure Medicare patients get high-quality care. Earlier this week, I proposed that we use $40 billion of the surplus to do that.

We should also follow Vice President Gore's proposal to take Medicare off budget, like Social Security, so that the Medicare taxes you pay cannot be diverted for irresponsible tax cuts or other Government spending that could lead us back to the bad old days of deficits and give us higher interest rates. This will protect Medicare and make a major contribution toward paying down the debt. And I propose using the savings from debt reduction to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund through at least 2030, when the number of Medicare people will be double what it is today.

We're fortunate—very fortunate—to live in a time of budget surpluses and remarkable prosperity, but we didn't get there by accident. We maintained our fiscal discipline, invested in our people, made good on the commitments that matter most. We can't let up now. And we have few responsibilities more important than helping our older Americans live out their lives with quality and in dignity.

We have the opportunity to meet that responsibility with a straightforward plan that all seniors can buy into. We have growing bipartisan agreement in the Senate that this is the way to go.

I hope as we mark the 50th anniversary of the Korean war tomorrow we'll remember that a generation of Americans who did not let us, their children and grandchildren, down. And in return, we owe it not to let them down.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:45 p.m. on June 23 at a private residence in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

## Remarks to the Democratic National Convention 2000 Host Committee Breakfast in Los Angeles

*June 24, 2000*

Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. And Nancy, thank you for having us in your home. Since you said I had done pretty well for a young fellow from Arkansas, I can't resist—I have a lot of friends here, but I cannot resist the temptation at this apt moment in history to introduce another contribution that my State made to your success: Mr. Derek Fisher of the Los Angeles Lakers.

I was watching one of the Lakers games, actually, one of the games against Portland. And Derek comes in at the end, steals the ball five or six times, and confuses everybody. And somebody says, "God, that guy is aggressive." I said, "If you come from Arkansas, you have to be." [*Laughter*] It's just sort of our deal. You did us proud, and congratulations.

I want to thank the host committee, every one of you. And I thank my good friend Terry McAuliffe. And I thank Secretary Daley—I don't know why I'm thanking Secretary Daley for leaving my administration; he was doing such a great job. But he's doing—it's a very important thing for us to continue our work, and I thank him for taking over the leadership of the Vice President's campaign.

I want to thank Joe Andrew and all the people here from the Democratic Party and recognize two of my very old friends, Henry and Mary Alice Cisneros. Thank you for the help you've given us on the convention, and thank you for being my friends, and congratulations on being new grandparents—most important thing. They will shamelessly show you the pictures if you ask. [*Laughter*]

I also want to congratulate Governor Roy Romer on his new job here in Los Angeles and thank him. When this was announced, I told—Hillary and I were talking. I said, "This is really what Romer's always wanted to do. He's the only guy I ever knew who ran for Governor and served 12 years just so he could be a school superintendent." [*Laughter*] But you could go all the way across the country and not find a single