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20 percent in 2010, and add nearly $20 billion to the Medicare Improvement Fund, which would unnecessarily increase Medicare spending and contribute to the unsustainable growth in Medicare.

In addition, H.R. 6331 would delay important reforms like the Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies competitive bidding program, under which lower payment rates went into effect on July 1, 2008. This program will produce significant savings for Medicare and beneficiaries by obtaining lower prices through competitive bidding. The legislation would leave the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund vulnerable to litigation because of the revocation of the awarded contracts. Changing policy in mid-stream is also confusing to beneficiaries who are receiving services from quality suppliers at lower prices. In order to slow the growth in Medicare spending, competition within the program should be expanded, not diminished.

For decades, we promised America's seniors we could do better, and we finally did. We should not turn the clock back to the days when our Medicare system offered outdated and inefficient benefits and imposed needless costs on its beneficiaries.

Because this bill would severely damage the Medicare program by undermining the Medicare Part D program and by reducing access, benefits, and choices for all beneficiaries, particularly the approximately 9.6 million beneficiaries in MA, I must veto this bill.

I urge the Congress to send me a bill that reduces the growth in Medicare spending, increases competition and efficiency, implements principles of value-driven health care, and appropriately offsets increases in physician spending.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 15, 2008.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso

July 16, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you for coming. I first started my conversation with the President by complimenting him on his leadership in the United Nations and in the region. You've been a constructive force for peace and stability.

And we talked about Zimbabwe. I made my position abundantly clear that, one, we are disappointed with the veto of the U.N. Security Council resolution, for which both our nations worked in concert. Secondly, we deeply care about the plight of the citizens of Zimbabwe, and we hope there's a peaceful resolution soon. I told the President, in the meantime, our Government is looking at, you know, sanctions beyond that which would have been levied out of the U.N. Security Council.

I congratulated the President on the fact that his good nation is a recipient of a Millennium Challenge Account program. It's a program aimed to help farmers, entrepreneurs, and girls and women. It's the right thing to do, Mr. President. This grant would not have been awarded without your commitment to fighting corruption, your willingness to invest in the health and education of your people, and your adherence to marketplace principles. So I congratulate you, sir, on that.

Finally, I talked to him about issues that are dear to my heart, and that are the issues of HIV/AIDS. I congratulated his country for being effective at preventing the spread of AIDS. And we talked about malaria.

It's been my honor to have you here, sir. And I thank you for your leadership, and I thank you for your friendship. [*Inaudible*]—go ahead.

President Compaore. First of all, the President and I seized this opportunity to meet, and the first thing I did was to show gratitude to President Bush for the engagement of the United States in favor of our country, Burkina Faso, and especially in terms of poverty reduction and economic development and all the help.

But I said to the President, other than Burkina Faso, all the continent of Africa is

very grateful to initiatives taken by the United States administration in terms of debt reduction, public aid to development, fight against HIV/AIDS, and building schools in our country.

And we talked about the situation on the whole continent, the need for democracy and stability in Africa, and the urgent need for a true rule of law in Zimbabwe. We also talked about the need for a political solution to the crisis in Darfur, which is weighing very heavily in all Africa.

And again, I congratulate President Bush, Congress, and the American people for their commitment for Africa.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Compaore spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a White House Tee-Ball Game

July 16, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this historic occasion. The commissioner and I—that would be Frank Robinson, the Hall of Fame—[*applause*]—welcome you for the first all-star game here on the South Lawn of the White House.

We've got 50 players from 50 States, plus the District of Columbia, who have shown—come to show off their great baseball skills. And we're excited you're here. We welcome you; we welcome your families.

We want to thank Kenny Chesney for lending his great talent. We're proud you're here, Kenny. Thanks for coming.

I do want to welcome our baseball coaches today. We've got four fabulous coaches who've agreed to come: Ryne Sandberg, Hall of Famer—he's kind of pulling for the Cubs this year; John Smoltz of the Atlanta Braves. Our second game coaches: from the Baltimore Orioles, Kevin Millar—here he is; and finally, two-time all-star, Rick Monday. There he is. Hi, Rick. Thanks for coming.

I do want to welcome our announcers today, Mike and Mike. Yes, sir! Mike Golic and Mike Greenberg, we're proud you guys are here. We expect them to call a good game.

I do want to say that a member of my Cabinet, Carlos Gutierrez, has joined us. Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming.

And finally, Mr. Commissioner, we are so lucky to have Shelby Shayler with us today. She will be presenting you and I with the first ball, but not quite yet. Before we do, we're going to recite the Little League oath.

Are the players ready? All right, here we go.

[*At this point, the pledge was recited.*]

Play ball!

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Kenny Chesney, who sang the national anthem; ESPN radio talk show hosts Mike Golic and Mike Greenberg; and Shelby Shayler, member, Naval Air Station Little League, Norfolk, VA.

Statement on Senate Passage of Legislation To Reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

July 16, 2008

I thank the Senate for the strong, bipartisan vote today to pass important, life-saving legislation reauthorizing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). I appreciate the efforts of Majority Leader Reid, Senators Biden and Lugar, and all other Senators from both sides of the aisle who came together today to ensure that America's generosity in battling HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases around the globe will continue in a manner consistent with the program's successful founding principles.

When we launched this program in 2003, about 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS. Today, PEPFAR supports life-saving antiretroviral treatment for more than 1.7 million people around the world. PEPFAR has also supported treatment and prevention programs that have helped HIV-positive women give birth to nearly 200,000 infants who are HIV-free. PEPFAR is the