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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1976

SIGNING OF THE OLDER AMERICANS PROCLAMATION

Monday, April 5, 1976

3:00 p.m. (15 minutes)

The Oval Office

From: Jim Cannon

I. PURPOSE

To sign the Older Americans Proclamation designating May as Older Americans Month.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS PLAN

A. Background: Each year a proclamation is issued designating May as Older Americans Month. This year the proclamation discusses the importance of employment and volunteer service for older citizens and for society and the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans prepared by the Federal Council on Aging. The Charter is an update of the Charter for Senior Citizens developed by the 1961 White House Conference on Aging.

B. Participants: List attached at Tab A

C. Press Plan: Open Press Opportunity: to be announced

III. TALKING POINTS

1. It is especially fitting this year that we set aside a period of time to honor our older citizens. Their insight and experience, their wisdom and courage, has contributed beyond measure to the development of our 200-year-old nation.
2. We must make it possible for older Americans to continue their involvement in our national life. One of the best ways we can draw upon their strengths and skills is in the job and volunteer market. Too often older, and even middle-aged, Americans are the victims of myths and prejudices regarding their capabilities. Americans must repudiate these myths and prejudices, as we have repudiated others, and



assure older Americans the chance to prove that time has only enhanced their demonstrated abilities.

3. It is important that our Nation make every effort to recognize the worth and dignity of our older citizens. To this end, the Federal Council on Aging has prepared a Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans. This Charter sets forth principles to guide us in evaluating our nation's response to the problems facing older persons, and in appreciating their response to the problems now confronting our nation.
4. One of these principles is the right to an adequate standard of living in retirement. Let me reaffirm that older Americans have earned the right to live securely, comfortably and independently. As I have said before, the value of our Social Security system is beyond question. I will do all I can to ensure the integrity of the trust fund so that future generations of retirees may continue to rely on it.
5. With these thoughts and commitments in mind, I am happy today to sign this annual proclamation designating May as Older Americans Month. I urge ~~all~~ organizations concerned with employment and volunteer services to observe this month with ceremonies, activities and programs designed to increase opportunities for older persons. And I urge that such programs include public forums for discussion of the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans.
6. I ask all Americans to join me in reflecting upon the achievements and the needs of our older citizens.



## PARTICIPANTS

### Government

Secretary F. David Mathews

Stanley Thomas  
Assistant Secretary for  
Human Development  
Department of Health, Education  
and Welfare

Dr. Arthur Flemming  
Commissioner of Aging  
Department of Health, Education  
and Welfare

Victor Hruska  
Director, Older Americans  
Volunteer Programs  
ACTION

John Martin  
Federal Council on Aging

Cleo Tavani  
Executive Director  
Federal Council on Aging

### Associations

John F. McClelland  
President  
National Association of  
Retired Federal Employees

Nelson Cruikshank  
President  
National Council of Senior Citizens

William Hutton  
Executive Director  
National Council of Senior Citizens

Joseph C. Davis  
Grey Panthers

Austin Kerby  
Director of Economics  
American Legion



Jack Ossofsky  
Executive Director  
National Council on the Aging

Mrs. Alice Van Landingham  
President-Elect  
American Association of Retired  
Persons

Cy Brickfield  
Counsel  
American Association of Retired  
Persons

Miss Harriet Miller  
Executive Director  
American Association of Retired  
Persons

Mrs. Crettie Lee  
National Center on Black Aged

Mrs. Mae B. Phillips  
National Center on Black Aged

Fred Brummitt  
Treasurer  
National Retired Teachers  
Association

Colonel Donald C. Foster  
Executive Director  
Retired Officers Association

Colonel Minter L. Wilson, Jr.  
Director of Communications  
Retired Officers Association

Arthur C. Clinkscales, III  
Director  
National Alliance for Senior Citizens

Others

Mr. and Mrs. James E. Mills  
President Ford Committee

Z. D. Blackistone  
Florist



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH, 1976

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Among our nation's most precious natural resources are the collective wisdom, experience, and productive ability of our senior citizens.

In recent years we have become more aware of the important contributions older Americans have made in the past and in the tremendous potential they hold for the future. We are increasing our efforts to ensure that they have the opportunity for security of income, maintenance of health and continued usefulness.

America's senior citizens have earned the gratitude and respect of our society, as well as our recognition of their worth and dignity. Their rights and obligations have been expressed in the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans prepared by the Federal Council on Aging.

The job market and volunteer services provide some of the best opportunities to draw on the strengths and talents of older Americans. Unfortunately, older, and even middle-aged workers, are too often the victims of myth and prejudice regarding their capabilities. Our society needs the know-how, experience, judgment and eagerness these solid citizens bring to the job.



NOW, THEREFORE, I GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the month of May, 1976, as Older Americans Month.

I urge all private and public organizations that are related to the field of aging to observe this month by arranging public forums where the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans will be discussed and recommendations developed for implementation.

I urge all organizations concerned with employment to observe this month with ceremonies, activities and programs designed to increase employment opportunities for older workers.

I urge all organizations engaged in the delivery of services to persons in need to observe this month by increased emphasis on efforts to recruit, train and place older volunteers.

And I urge all Americans to observe this month by focusing on the achievements of older persons and supporting programs to make the last days of life the best days for increasing numbers of our older Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this  
day of , in the year of our Lord  
nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the  
United States of America the two hundredth.



OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON SIGNING THE PROCLAMATION FOR  
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH - 1976

THE ROSE GARDEN

3:06 P.M. EST

Secretary Mathews and distinguished guests:

It is especially fitting this year that we set aside a period to honor our older citizens. Their insight and experience, their wisdom and their courage has contributed beyond measure to the developments of our 200-year-old Nation. We must make it possible for older Americans to continue their involvement in our national life.

One of the best ways we can draw upon their strengths and skills is in the job and volunteer markets. Too often older and even middle-aged Americans are the victims of myths and prejudices regarding their capabilities. Americans must repudiate these myths and prejudices, as we have repudiated others, and assure our older Americans the chance to prove that time has only enhanced their demonstrated abilities.

It is important that our Nation makes every effort to recognize the worth and the dignity of our older citizens. To this end, the Federal Council on Aging has prepared a Bicentennial charter for our older Americans. This charter sets forth principles to guide us in evaluating our Nation's response to the problems facing older persons and appreciating the response to the problems now confronting our Nation.

One of these principles is the right to an adequate standard of living in retirement. Let me reaffirm that older Americans have earned the right to live securely, comfortably and independently.

As I said before, the value of our Social Security system is beyond question. I will do all that I can to insure the integrity of the trust fund so that future generations of retirees may continue to rely on it.

With these thoughts and commitments in mind, I am happy today to join in this annual proclamation designating an Older Americans Month. I urge all organizations concerned with employment and volunteer services to observe this month with ceremonies, activities and programs designed to increase opportunities for older persons, and I urge that such programs include public forums for discussion of the Bicentennial charter for older Americans.

I ask all Americans to join me in reflecting upon the achievements and the needs of our older citizens.

END (AT 3:10 P.M. EST)



APRIL 5, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH, 1976

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Among our Nation's most precious natural resources are the collective wisdom, experience and abilities of our older citizens.

In recent years we have become more aware of the important contributions older Americans have made in the past and in the tremendous potential they hold for the future. We are increasing our efforts to ensure that they have the opportunity for independent living through security of income, maintenance of health and continued useful involvement in the life of our Nation.

America's older citizens have earned the gratitude and respect of our society, as well as our recognition of their worth and dignity. In this spirit, the Federal Council on Aging has prepared the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans expressing their rights and obligations.

The job market and the area of volunteer services provide some of the best opportunities to draw on the strengths and talents of older Americans. Unfortunately, older, and even middle-aged workers, are too often the victims of myth and prejudice regarding their capabilities. Our society needs the know-how, experience, judgment and eagerness to serve that these citizens bring to the job.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the month of May, 1976, as Older Americans Month.

I urge all State and Area Agencies on Aging and other private and public organizations that are related to the field of aging to observe this month by arranging public forums where the Bicentennial Charter for Older Americans will be discussed and recommendations developed for implementation.

I urge all organizations concerned with employment to observe this month with ceremonies and programs designed to increase employment opportunities for older workers.

I urge all organizations engaged in the delivery of services to persons in need to observe this month by increased emphasis on efforts to recruit, train and place older volunteers.

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And I urge all Americans to observe this month by focusing on the achievements of older persons and supporting programs to make the last days of life the best days for increasing numbers of our older Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of April in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

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