

The original documents are located in Box 23, “2/19/76 - Remarks at Community Center Drop-by at Harper's Acres, Keene, NH” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

TALKING POINTS FOR COMMUNITY CENTER DROP-BY AT HARPER'S ACRES
KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, FEBRUARY 19, 1976

It's a pleasure to be with you today. This is a very fine community center, and I'm happy to see so many of you utilizing the facility.

I'm especially pleased to see you all so active and involved in the center's activities. I've always believed that just because we aren't teenagers anymore, we don't have to retreat from an active, eventful and enjoyable life.

I also believe that growing older should not inevitably mean being overwhelmed by health problems, growing poorer or being isolated from the rest of society.

After the many years of sacrifice and hard work you have contributed to America, America owes you more than the prospect of poverty in your retirement years.

The debt we owe is far greater than we can ever fully repay, but as long as I'm President, we're going to keep up the payments on that debt every month.

The Social Security Program -- the largest of its kind in the world -- will pay almost 83 billion dollars to more than 32 million beneficiaries in the next fiscal year. That's more than a ten billion dollar increase over the current year.

I am recommending that those of you on Social Security get a full cost-of-living increase in your benefits this year.

And let me assure you of one thing very emphatically: my Administration fully intends to preserve the integrity and the solvency of the Social Security system for your benefit and that of all working Americans now and in the future.

In the field of health care, the Federal Medicare Program in 1976 will provide more than 17 billion dollars for the health care of 24 million older and disabled Americans.

I have proposed major improvements in this program.

I want better and more comprehensive medical coverage under this program to protect people from the economic hardships of serious or prolonged illness.

There is no reason that older Americans -- or their loved ones -- should have to go broke just to get well or stay well in the United States of America.

These programs, and others, were designed to help people like you, and while I am President they will continue to help you, they will continue to be improved, and we'll give you all the support we can.

~~I've enjoyed seeing you all today, and talking with you.~~

~~Now I'll get out of your way and let you get back to serious business.~~

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