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~~THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECHES~~

SIGNING OF THE OLDER AMERICANS PROCLAMATION

APRIL 5, 1976

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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.

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.

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.

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 RETIRES MAY  
CONTINUE TO RELY ON IT.

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.

I ASK ALL AMERICANS TO JOIN ME IN REFLECTING  
UPON THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE NEEDS OF OUR OLDER  
CITIZENS.

END OF TEXT