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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE  
ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
TEXAS NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL

10:18 A.M. CDT

It is nice to see some more friendly faces here.

Mr. Pendergast, Senator John Tower, members of the Texas Nursing Home Association:

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to stop by and make some observations and comments and thank you for the good job that you have done, not only here in Texas with your organization but with comparable organizations throughout the United States.

I know from personal experience in my State of Michigan that the organization of the Association there has done a good job, and I am sure that is likewise true here, and I congratulate you and compliment you.

But let me talk for just a few minutes about some of the things that I am trying to do to make certain, to make positive that the 32 million or 33 million Americans who are the beneficiaries of Social Security and other Federal programs are properly taken care of.

You, I am sure, know that in the State of the Union message that I submitted to the Congress in January of 1976, I recommended the full cost of living increase for Social Security recipients, and it is my understanding that based on the calculations that have been made by the proper authorities that will be 6.4 percent, as I recall, as of July 1 of this year.

I believe that we, as a Nation, hold an obligation to that part of our society. They bought and paid for the benefits that are coming and ought to be given to them under the law.

Another program that I feel Congress ought to act on is what is commonly known as catastrophic insurance. It has been my experience as I traveled around the country to see in many, many instances individuals who were good citizens and saved their money and planned for their retirement all of a sudden be hit with a catastrophic illness where the costs were great, where the time that they had to spend in a hospital or a nursing home was very, very extended.

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I am told under Medicaid that there are roughly 3 to 4 million of our fellow citizens who are adversely affected by the catastrophic illness. I think we owe an obligation to them because they, under no circumstances, could pay the cost to maintain adequate care during this tragedy.

So I recommended to the Congress that something be done about it. Unfortunately, no action has transpired at the present time. Unfortunately, the prospects do not look good. Believe me, I feel an obligation, and I think those of us who are healthy, whether you are young or old, owe an obligation to that segment of our society that are tragically hit by these unfortunate illnesses.

I likewise know that your organization has raised a good many questions about HEW's 1972 regulations. I am sure you are not the only organization, because I am informed that other State organizations comparable to you have done likewise.

It does appear to me -- and I have talked to the Secretary of HEW about it -- that there is an overzealous interference attempted by those regulations, and I hope we can do something affirmatively to change them.

I have repeatedly said that we want to get the Federal Government off the backs of people and out of their pockets. We have recommended tax decreases, additional tax reductions. We are making some headway in reducing Federal paperwork.

About six months ago I directed the Office of OMB to make a 10 percent reduction in the total paperwork as far as all Federal agencies and departments are concerned. That 10 percent reduction is to be achieved by July 1 of this year.

Let me put it as simply, but I think it is as safely as I can, as it affects what all of you are trying to do: Your emphasis should be on taking care of patients, not making out forms.

It has been a great privilege and pleasure to be here and to say hello to you and to give you the benefit of some of my views and programs, policies that we are seeking to implement for the benefit of all of the 215 million Americans.

I thank you for the opportunity to be here,

END (AT 10:25 A.M. CDT)