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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
BY THE PRESIDENT OVER MUTUAL RADIO
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1976

I want to talk to you today about some of the most remarkable people in this country. These people brought us from the horse and buggy era to the space age -- from widespread illiteracy to the finest educational system in the world -- from the threat of many crippling and killing diseases to the cure for those diseases -- from the early days of the telegraph to instant global communication -- from a largely rural Nation to the greatest industrial power in the history of mankind.

These remarkable people, who have done so much for our country, are now America's senior citizens. I believe that advancing years should not mean retreating from an active, enjoyable, productive life -- a life of security and dignity. Older Americans have some special problems -- which concern us all. First, let's talk about inflation. Many of our older citizens live on retirement income. Inflation is the deadliest enemy of those fixed incomes. When inflation goes up, our retired workers suffer the most.

That is one important reason I am absolutely determined to win the fight against inflation. That is why I have vetoed 66 extravagant bills sent to the Oval Office by a reckless Congress -- and why I am proud to say we cut inflation from 12 percent to less than five percent in the last two years. Second, older Americans are concerned about the integrity of the Social Security system. Social Security benefits are funds that have been earned by retired workers. The Federal government is legally and morally bound to make sure that the fund is secure. The Social Security fund is now paying out more than it takes in. As long as that condition exists, the integrity of Social Security is endangered. We must take firm steps to erase this danger -- steps which I proposed last January but which Congress has refused to follow. With your help and your support, we can make the next Congress see the light.

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Third, older Americans are concerned about rising medical and hospital costs. I have proposed a health insurance program to cover all but the first \$750 of the cost of treatment for a catastrophic or prolonged illness. There is no reason a lifetime of savings should be lost to pay medical bills. There is no reason older Americans should have to go broke just to get well. Fourth, older Americans are concerned about crime. I believe greater emphasis should be placed on protecting the potential victim of crime. The Career Criminal Program which I initiated in several key cities last year identifies habitual criminals, sets up special prosecution procedures, and in 95 percent of the cases, results in the conviction of those brought to trial with prison sentences that average more than 20 years.

Finally, older Americans are concerned with the moral direction of our country. They believe, as I do, that we are only as strong as the moral foundations on which we stand. They believe, as I do, that private morality and public service can -- and must -- go hand in hand. Older Americans have given us everything we have. They have made this country what it is today. I invite them, and all Americans, to join me on November second, as we begin a new generation of freedom for America.

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