

REMARKS OF SENATOR JOHN HEINZ
PENNSYLVANIA WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING
HARRISBURG, PA.
MARCH 23, 1981
(AS ACTUALLY GIVEN ACCORDING TO JH NOTES)

PENNSYLVANIA WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

MRS. TUCKER, SECRETARY BLACK, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES, AND FRIENDS OF AGING PROGRAMS:
I AM PLEASED AND HONORED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY AS YOU BEGIN
THIS VERY IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

AS I WAS THINKING ABOUT WHAT I MIGHT SAY TO YOU TODAY
AS YOU BEGIN DELIBERATING ABOUT FUTURE NEEDS AND DIRECTIONS
FOR OLDER AMERICANS, I WAS REMINDED OF THE WORDS OF ALEXIS
DE TOCQUEVILLE.

WRITING ABOUT THE AMERICA OF A CENTURY AGO, HE SAID:
"DEMOCRATIC NATIONS CARE LITTLE FOR WHAT HAS
BEEN, BUT THEY ARE HAUNTED BY VISIONS OF WHAT
WILL BE."

HE COULD SEE CLEARLY, OUR NATION'S PASSION FOR PROGRESS,
OUR FAITH IN OURSELVES AND OUR ABILITIES, AND OUR HISTORIC
STRUGGLE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OF OUR PEOPLE.

AND I BELIEVE THAT MUCH OF THIS COUNTRY'S STRENGTH
HAS DERIVED FROM THE VISIONS -- THE DREAMS OF OUR PEOPLE.

(AND WHEN I SAY, . . .)

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AND WHEN I SAY THAT, I MEAN, IN LARGE MEASURE, ITS OLDER PEOPLE -- FOR THEY ARE THE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH AND THE FOUNTAINS FROM WHICH SPRING NEW GENERATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND COMPASSION.

YOU ARE HERE TODAY TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE -- PARTICULARLY THE FUTURE OF OLDER AMERICANS IN THE DECADE AHEAD. THIS STATE CONFERENCE, OTHERS LIKE IT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND THE NATIONAL WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE, WILL BRING TOGETHER OLDER PERSONS TO ADDRESS MAJOR ISSUES. A VITAL TASK OF THE CONFERENCE IS TO EMPHASIZE THE UNTAPPED SKILLS AND CREATIVITY OF OLDER PERSONS AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT OLDER PEOPLE CAN AND DO MAKE TO OUR SOCIETY.

PREVIOUS WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES HAVE BEEN MOST PRODUCTIVE IN IDENTIFYING GAPS IN SERVICES AND IN STIMULATING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY. A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS HAS RESULTED -- INCLUDING MEDICAID, MEDICARE, TITLE XX, SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME AND THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT.

(ALTOGETHER, TODAY, . . .)

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ALTOGETHER, TODAY WE HAVE MORE THAN 160 PROGRAMS PURSUED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALONE ON BEHALF OF OLDER CITIZENS.

BUT THE CHALLENGES THAT WE CONFRONT IN THE DECADE AHEAD DIFFER FROM THOSE OF THE PAST TWO DECADES. YOU HAVE THE UNENVIABLE TASK OF LOOKING TOWARD TWO HORIZONS. THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS A HORIZON CLOUDED BY SPIRALLING INFLATION THAT THREATENS TO ERODE THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE, BOTH FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS. AND BEYOND THAT, THE MORE DISTANT HORIZON IS ONE MARKED BY RENEWED GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY -- A VISION WHICH WILL ONLY BECOME A REALITY IF WE AS A NATION MAKE THE NECESSARY SACRIFICES NOW.

TODAY, IN GOVERNMENT, WE ARE CHALLENGED AS NEVER BEFORE TO MAKE FAR REACHING PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS. THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION IS THAT THINGS AREN'T GOING RIGHT AND THE MOOD IS STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE OF CHANGE.

THE PERCEPTION AND MOOD IS BASED ON AN UNDERLYING REALITY. OUR COUNTRY IS FACED WITH THE UNPRECEDENTED TRIPLE BURDEN OF DOUBLE-DIGIT INFLATION, HIGH INTEREST RATES, AND

(HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. . .)

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HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. IN THE SUPPOSED YEAR OF THE BALANCED BUDGET WE FACE, INSTEAD, A \$75 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT AND OUR PEOPLE -- PARTICULARLY THOSE LIVING ON FIXED INCOMES -- ARE THREATENED AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE FUTURE THAT INFLATION CREATES.

OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE NOT ENTIRELY NEW. SINCE 1973, WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING A MAJOR FALL-OFF IN PRODUCTIVITY, AND FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS, VIRTUALLY NO REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH.

WHAT HAS BEEN GROWING, BY WHATEVER MEASUREMENT YOU CHOOSE, IS THE SIZE AND COST OF GOVERNMENT -- BEYOND THE WILLINGNESS OF PEOPLE TO PAY FOR THE COST OF THAT GOVERNMENT.

THE RESULT IS THE CURRENT DEBATE ABOUT CUTTING THE BUDGET. THERE IS VERY LITTLE ARGUMENT THAT THE BUDGET SHOULD BE CUT. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT REDUCING THE RATE OF GROWTH IN THE BUDGET BY ABOUT HALF -- FROM AN INCREASE OF ABOUT \$100 BILLION TO AROUND \$50 BILLION -- IS BOTH REASONABLE AND DESIRABLE. WHERE PEOPLE DIFFER IS OVER WHAT SHOULD BE CUT.

(WE DO NOT. . .)

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WE DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG SUCH BUDGETARY LIMITS WILL LAST -- BUT THE MORE SUCCESSFUL WE ARE IN LIVING WITHIN THESE LIMITS TODAY, THE MORE WE WILL BE ABLE TO EXPAND THEM IN THE FUTURE.

WHAT WILL BE DIFFICULT, BUT IMPORTANT, IS ASSURING THAT NO REGION OR SINGLE GROUP OF PEOPLE IS ASKED TO SACRIFICE UNFAIRLY.

AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, WE CAN READILY IDENTIFY SOME OF THE AREAS OF MAJOR CONCERN BOTH TO THOSE OF US IN WASHINGTON AND TO YOU, THE DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES TO THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE. AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT ARE ECONOMIC SECURITY, HEALTH CARE, SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND ENERGY.

THE SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING, WHICH I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF CHAIRING THIS CONGRESS, HAS ALREADY BEGUN WORK ON THESE ISSUES. WE HAVE SET AN AMBITIOUS SCHEDULE OF HEARINGS TO ASSESS THE IMPACT ON THE ELDERLY OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET.

IT IS OUR INTENT TO INSURE THAT THOSE CUTS THAT ARE MADE DO NOT UNJUSTLY AFFECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OLDER AMERICANS

(AND THAT . . .)

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AND THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S SAFETY NET OF PROGRAMS HAS NO GAPING HOLES.

BUT I URGE YOU NOT TO BE AMONG THOSE WHO DWELL ONLY ON THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING US AND NEGLECT TO CONSIDER THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE ALSO PRESENT. THE REALIZATION OF LIMITED RESOURCES CAN BE A POSITIVE FACTOR -- IT CAN SPUR US ON TO GREATER INNOVATION AND MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS. IT IS IN OUR RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES THAT WE WILL BE JUDGED.

OUR CURRENT EFFORTS TO CONTROL INFLATION DO NOT MEAN THAT WE MUST ABANDON PROGRESS: ONLY THAT WE MUST CONSIDER LESS TRAVELED PATHS ON OUR JOURNEY. ROBERT FROST FOUND THE LESS TRAVELED PATH THE "ONE THAT MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE"; WE CAN DO LIKEWISE.

LET ME SHARE WITH YOU A FEW OF THE IDEAS I HOPE YOU WILL CONSIDER AT THIS GREAT CONFERENCE.

(THE FIRST HAS. . .)

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THE FIRST HAS TO DO WITH ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. THERE IS NO HIGHER PRIORITY THAN GIVING OLDER PEOPLE THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO INSURE THE CAPACITY TO BE ECONOMICALLY SECURE.

AND IN THE VERY FIRST PLACE WE MUST BEGIN TO SHIFT OUR THINKING ABOUT THE OLDER PERSON AWAY FROM AN IMAGE EXCLUSIVELY BASED UPON DEPENDENCY AND BEGIN INSTEAD TO FURTHER THE RECOGNITION OF THE SIGNIFICANT AND PRODUCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OLDER AMERICANS. OUR SOCIETY NEEDS THE TALENTS, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE THAT OLDER AMERICANS CAN OFFER; TO IGNORE THIS IS TO IMPOVERISH OURSELVES, YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE.

IN PRACTICAL TERMS, WE SHOULD BE LOOKING AT WAYS TO EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR THROUGH INCENTIVES TO RETAIN AND HIRE OLDER WORKERS.

WE SHOULD ELIMINATE OR SUBSTANTIALLY RAISE THE EARNINGS LIMITATION UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY. THIS IS A NEEDLESS DETERRENT TO EMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS.

WE MUST STRENGTHEN OUR FIGHT AGAINST AGE DISCRIMINATION AND ELIMINATE ARBITRARY AGE LEVELS FOR RETIREMENT, RECOGNIZING

(THAT THE . . .)

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THAT THE MAJORITY OF OLDER PEOPLE WANT -- AND NEED-TO-FEEL THAT THEIR TIME IS SPENT IN MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY.

CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO INCREASING THE "DELAYED RETIREMENT CREDIT" UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY. CURRENTLY, BENEFITS ARE INCREASED BY ONE PERCENT A YEAR FOR WORKERS WHO DELAY RETIREMENT BEYOND AGE 65. IN 1982, THIS WILL BE INCREASED TO 3 PERCENT. PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE PAST TO INCREASE THIS INCENTIVE TO 6 2/3 PERCENT WHICH WOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO THE ANNUAL PERCENTAGE BY WHICH BENEFITS ARE NOW REDUCED FOR THOSE WHO ELECT TO RETIRE BEFORE AGE 65.

WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO CREATE MORE PART-TIME AND TEMPORARY JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE.

PERHAPS THIS CAN BE DONE THROUGH REVISIONS TO STRENGTHEN TITLE V OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT -- THE SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM. TITLE V COULD BE USED NOT ONLY TO SUBSIDIZE PUBLIC-SECTOR EMPLOYMENT, AS IT NOW DOES, BUT ALSO TO ACTIVELY PLACE OLDER WORKERS IN PRIVATE-SECTOR JOBS

(THAT HAVE THE. . .)

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THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME SELF-SUSTAINING. WE SHOULD WORK WITH MAJOR EMPLOYERS TO ESTABLISH A PATTERN OF EXTENDED, PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR OLDER AMERICANS. EFFECTIVELY CARRIED OUT, THE RESULT COULD BE A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF THOSE EMPLOYERS TOWARD THE OLDER WORKER.

THIS CONFERENCE SHOULD ALSO CAREFULLY ANALYZE THE CONTROVERSIAL BUT COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSALS MADE ONLY LAST MONTH BY THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON PENSION POLICY. ITS REPORT COVERS PROPOSALS TO BROADEN PRIVATE PENSION COVERAGE, TO STRENGTHEN THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF SOCIAL SECURITY, AND GENERALLY TO ENSURE THE FUTURE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF ALL OLDER AMERICANS. THE COMMISSIONS REPORT IS FAR REACHING, IT IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WORK OF ITS TYPE AND IT DESERVES YOUR SERIOUS REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION.

IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC PENSIONS, WE MUST ADDRESS THE LONG-TERM PROBLEM OF SOCIAL SECURITY. TODAY THERE ARE

(OVER 3 PRODUCTIVE. . .)

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OVER 3 PRODUCTIVE WORKERS FOR EVERY PERSON RETIRED ON SOCIAL SECURITY; BUT IN 40 YEARS, THAT RATIO WILL DECLINE SO THAT ONLY 2 PERSONS WILL BE EMPLOYED FOR EACH SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARY. IN OTHER WORDS, NEITHER YOU NOR I CAN IGNORE THE QUESTION OF WHAT WE MUST DO TO ASSURE A FISCALLY SOUND SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE FUTURE.

YOU MAY WONDER WHY I HAVE SPENT SO MUCH TIME TALKING ABOUT EMPLOYMENT. THE REASON IS THAT FOR MOST OF US, WORK PROVIDES NOT ONLY ECONOMIC SECURITY, BUT DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT. I BELIEVE IT IS ALL IMPORTANT FOR OLDER PERSONS TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE TO LEAD PRODUCTIVE LIVES AND TO RETAIN THE DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT THAT SHOULD BE THE RIGHT IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE, OF EVERY AMERICAN. THE TRUTH IS WE NEED YOUR TALENTS AND SKILLS OF A LIFETIME. TO DENY YOUR FULL ROLE IS NOTHING LESS THAN TO DIMINISH THE VISION OF WHICH DE TOCQUEVILLE SPOKE.

(IT IS NOT ONLY. . .)

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IT IS NOT ONLY IN WORK THAT WE FIND MEANING, BUT THROUGH SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES AS WELL.

PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP) AND THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM ARE JUST TWO EXAMPLES OF THE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS THAT OLDER PEOPLE ARE MAKING EVERY DAY TO HELP OTHERS. ONE ONLY NEED LOOK AT THE LOVE THAT IS EXCHANGED BETWEEN A FOSTER GRANDPARENT AND A MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD TO INSTANTLY KNOW THAT FEW CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MORE IMPORTANT TO THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO NEED HELP.

THE NEED FOR CAREGIVERS IS GREAT AND THE OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND.

AND ALONG THESE LINES, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE FAR MORE INVOLVEMENT OF OLDER PERSONS IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMS AND IN THE OPERATION OF AGING PROGRAMS.

THERE ARE TWO OTHER ISSUES I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS TODAY.

THE FIRST IS HEALTH CARE. FIRST WE NEED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF REFORMING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM TO MAKE IT MORE

(RESPONSIVE AND. . .)

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RESPONSIVE AND MORE COST-EFFECTIVE, AND SECOND WE MUST DEVELOP A RATIONAL NATIONAL POLICY ON LONG-TERM CARE.

ALONG WITH SENATOR DURENBERGER OF MINNESOTA, WHO SERVES WITH ME ON THE HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, I HAVE CO-SPONSORED THE "HEALTH INCENTIVES REFORM ACT." THIS BILL IS DESIGNED TO REFORM THE FINANCING OF HEALTH CARE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO GET QUALITY CARE AT A REASONABLE COST BY ENCOURAGING COMPETITION BETWEEN HEALTH CARE INSURERS AND PROVIDERS BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS GIVING CONSUMERS A CHOICE IN MEANINGFUL CHOICE IN HEALTH CARE INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS.

I AND OTHERS ON THE AGING COMMITTEE HAVE ALSO INTRODUCED LEGISLATION DIRECTED AT INCREASING CHOICES UNDER MEDICARE BY PERMITTING MEDICARE TO PAY THE COST OF ENROLLMENT IN HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS (HMOs) AND OTHER PREPAID HEALTH PLANS. THIS REFORM IS DESIGNED TO EMPOWER MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES BY PUTTING THE TOOLS OF ECONOMIC LEVERAGE - THE

(CHOICE AS TO . . .)

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CHOICE AS TO HEALTH PROVIDER AND THE PACKAGE OF HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS -- INTO THE MEDICARE BENEFICIAIRES OWN HANDS. I BELIEVE PREVENTIVE AND HOME HEALTH CARE BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND DEVELOP A SENSITIVITY AND RESPONSIVENESS THAT, TO DATE, HAS TOO LONG BEEN LACKING.

FOR THOSE OLDER PERSONS WHO NEED LONG-TERM CARE, WE MUST ALSO STRENGTHEN OUR EFFORTS TO DESIGN A MORE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL APPROACH. OUR PRESENT REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES UNDER MEDICAID HAVE PRODUCED A SYSTEM EMPHASIZING NURSING HOME CARE THAT OFTEN RESULTS IN INAPPROPRIATE INSTITUTIONALIZATION THAT IS UNNECESSARY, EXPENSIVE AND WHICH REMOVES PEOPLE FROM THE HOME, FAMILY OR COMMUNITY THEY LOVE AND WANT TO REMAIN A PART OF.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM IS A VERY LARGE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPENDING ON LONG-TERM CARE DOUBLED BETWEEN 1975 AND 1980 AND IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE AGAIN BETWEEN 1980 AND 1985 WITHOUT ANY EXPANSION OF POLICIES OR

(PROGRAMS. PUBLIC. . .)

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PROGRAMS. PUBLIC EXPENDITURES FOR NURSING HOME CARE ALONE -- \$800 MILLION IN 1965 -- ARE EXPECTED TO REACH \$9.5 BILLION BY 1985 IF THE PRESENT TREND CONTINUES.

IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT LONG-TERM CARE IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY MEDICAL OR INSTITUTIONAL. WE NOW KNOW THAT IT INVOLVES MAINTENANCE SUPPORT AND SOCIAL SERVICE DIMENSIONS. FOR MOST PEOPLE, SUCH SERVICES CAN BE PROVIDED IN THE HOME AND COMMUNITY -- AND OFTEN AT LESS OR NO GREATER COST THAN INSTITUTIONAL CARE. TO RECOGNIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY, SENATOR PACKWOOD, I AND OTHERS HAVE INTRODUCED TITLE XXI OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT. I HOPE YOU WILL GIVE US YOUR CONSIDERED VIEWS ON IT.

THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF CONCERN ABOUT OUR LACK OF A LONG-TERM CARE APPROACH AMONG MY SENATE COLLEAGUES. BUT IN ALL CANDOR LET ME OBSERVE THAT UNLESS WE SUCCEED IN HALTING THE RUNAWAY INFLATION OF THE COST OF OUR CURRENT HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS, CONGRESS WILL BE RELUCTANT TO COMMIT

(ADDITIONAL DOLLARS. . .)

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ADDITIONAL DOLLARS TO ANY NEW HEALTH PROGRAM -- REGARDLESS OF HOW COST EFFICIENT IT MAY SEEM INITIALLY. THEREFORE, WE MUST EXAMINE TOGETHER AND MOVE RAPIDLY TO REFORM OUR ENTIRE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. I CAN THINK OF NO HIGHER HEALTH PRIORITY FOR THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING OR FOR THIS CONFERENCE.

THE LAST ISSUE I WILL CALL TO YOUR ATTENTION TODAY IS THAT OF HOUSING AND ENERGY. THE SKYROCKETING COST OF FUEL IS A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER TO THE ABILITY OF PEOPLE LIVING ON LOW INCOMES -- PARTICULARLY THE LOW-INCOME ELDERLY WHO MUST LIVE WITHIN A FIXED BUDGET -- TO SURVIVE. THESE HIGHER FUEL COSTS MAKE THE NEED TO CONSERVE A DRAMATIC REALITY FOR MOST AMERICANS; FOR THE ELDERLY IT TOO OFTEN BECOMES A HOBSON'S CHOICE OF HEATING OR EATING. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT I AND MY COLLEAGUES ON THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOUGHT HARD TO USE THE WINDFALL PROFITS TAX ON THE OIL COMPANIES TO FUND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS FOR (THOSE WHO NEEDED. . .)

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THOSE WHO NEEDED IT, PARTICULARLY THE ELDERLY, IN LIGHT OF THIS CONCERN.

NOW THAT THIS PROGRAM IS PROPOSED TO BE INCORPORATED INTO A BLOCK GRANT TO THE STATES, WHAT ABOUT THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY? HOW WILL THESE PAYMENTS BE TARGETED TO THOSE MOST IN NEED? THE COMMITTEE ON AGING INTENDS TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE SHORTLY IN HEARINGS (APRIL 9), AND IT IS AN ISSUE WORTHY OF YOUR ATTENTION AND YOUR CONCERN.

A PARALLEL ISSUE EXISTS REGARDING THE WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM, PROPOSED FOR INCORPORATION INTO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS. IT SEEMS TO ME ESSENTIAL THAT WE MAKE THE CASE THAT OUR ELDERLY, WHOSE ABILITY TO GET CREDIT IS SEVERELY LIMITED, SHOULD BE PRIME BENEFICIARIES OF THIS PROGRAM, AND THAT IT SHOULD BE TARGETED IN EVERY CASE TO THOSE WITH THE HIGHEST HEATING BILLS AND MOST ENERGY INEFFICIENT HOMES.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR ISSUES I HOPE THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE WILL ADDRESS. I'M SURE YOU WILL ADD MANY

(MORE AND I HAVE. . .)

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MORE AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU AS DELEGATES WILL ADDRESS YOURSELF SERIOUSLY TO ALL OF THESE ISSUES; I HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE OF 1981 WILL ACHIEVE ITS GOALS. BUT THERE IS ONE TASK THAT GOES BEYOND ANY ONE PROGRAM AND THAT TASK MAY RESULT IN THE MOST IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ALL. THAT TASK IS NOTHING LESS THAN AN ALL OUT EFFORT TO CHANGE THE WAY IN WHICH OUR NATION PERCEIVES OLDER PEOPLE: WE MUST SHATTER THE STEREOTYPE THAT OLDER PEOPLE ARE SOMEHOW A BURDENSOME, DEPENDENT, UNPRODUCTIVE SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY.

HOW DID WE, AS A NATION, ALLOW THIS STEREOTYPE TO DEVELOP? BEHAVIORAL SCIENTISTS UNDOUBTEDLY COULD WRITE VOLUMES ON THE SUBJECT, BUT THREE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: WORK, HOME AND THE POLITICAL ARENA, COME READILY TO MIND.

IN THE WORLD OF WORK, WE HAVE PROPAGATED THE MYTH BASED ON EARLY RETIREMENT PLANS DESIGNED TO MOVE PEOPLE OUT AND MAKE WAY FOR YOUNGER WORKERS. THIS HAD LED TO A VIEW OF

(ALL AMERICANS. . .)

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ALL AMERICANS, AS THEY APPROACH 60 OR 65 AS NON-PRODUCTIVE AND NOT USEFUL. THIS REMAINS A PERNICIOUS ATTITUDE.

IN THE HOME, CHANGES IN FAMILY ROLES AND THE INCREASED MOBILITY OF OUR POPULATION WHICH DIVIDES FAMILIES GEOGRAPHICALLY, HAS TOO OFTEN LED TO A VIEW OF THE OLDER PERSON AS A BURDEN TO BE TOLERATED RATHER THAN AS AN INTEGRAL AND VALUABLE PART OF AN EXTENDED FAMILY WITH IMPORTANT SUPPORT TO OFFER.

AND IN THE POLITICAL AREAN, I BELIEVE THERE ARE TOO MANY POLITICIANS WHO WANT THE ELDERLY TO FEEL DEPENDENT ON THEIR LARGESS.

TO BE HONEST ABOUT IT, MY FEAR IS THAT TOO MANY OF OUR OLDER PEOPLE HAVE ACCEPTED AND INTERNALIZED THESE ATTITUDES: I BELIEVE THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO TURN THAT AROUND.

MAGGIE KUHN, CONVENOR OF THE GRAY PANTHERS, ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE WHEN SHE SAID: "TODAY'S OLDER PERSON IS INVOLVED IN A WORLDWIDE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW HUMANITY, A STRUGGLE WHICH

(HAS THE POTENTIAL. . .)

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HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR A NEW COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OF HUMAN COMPASSION AND SELFHOOD. OLD PEOPLE HAVE A LARGE STAKE IN THIS NEW COMMUNITY -- IN HELPING TO CREATE IT AND EXTEND IT. THE WINDS OF CHANGE ARE IMPELLING AND EMPOWERING. THEY CAN FREE US OR DESTROY US."

IF THERE IS ONE SINGULAR, ALL IMPORTANT GOAL I COULD SET FOR THIS CONFERENCE, IT WOULD BE TO SHATTER ONCE AND FOR ALL THE HIDEOUS AND DEBILITATING STEREOTYPE OF AGEISM THAT CREEPS INTO EVERY FACET OF OUR LIVES.

I BELIEVE THAT HISTORY JUDGES A SOCIETY BY THE WAY IT TREATS ITS VERY YOUNG AND ITS VERY OLD.

I BELIEVE THAT TODAY, WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN WRITE A CHAPTER ON OUR CIVILIZATION THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL BE PROUD OF.

I BELIEVE THAT HERE IN HERSHEY THIS WEEK YOU WILL START MAKING HISTORY HAPPEN.

(FOR THIS PRIVILEGE. . .)

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FOR THIS PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE I THANK YOU AND FOR
YOUR WORK I ESPECIALLY COMMEND YOU.

THANK YOU.