

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order Protecting and Improving Medicare for Our Nation's Seniors in the Villages, Florida

October 3, 2019

The President. Well, thank you very much. Special place. Really special place. But where I'm disappointed: I said, "We could have had 25,000 people if we did it outside." They said—did you see all the people outside? They all want your seat. That's the way life goes. And you're not giving it up. I know you too well. You're not going to give it up. Please sit down. Let's enjoy it. Let's enjoy ourselves.

Audience member. We love you, President Trump!

The President. No, you got tremendous crowds out there—thank you. I love your leg. Look at that, he has my name tattooed on his leg. How did you get to the Villages? How do you get to the Villages? Huh? That's great.

But I'm thrilled to be here in one of the most famous and thriving communities anywhere in Florida and really anywhere in the world, as far as I'm concerned: the Villages. In fact, I was thinking about moving to the Villages, but I just couldn't leave Mar-a-Lago. I couldn't leave it. *[Laughter]* I got stuck at Mar-a-Lago. I don't know.

But this has been a great area for us, and it's been a great part of our victory. I don't know if we got a hundred percent, Ron, but it was pretty close, right? Anybody in there didn't vote for us, right? No, we love it. And we met the folks that built the Villages and that run the Villages, and they're out here someplace. And they've done a fantastic job. Where are they? Where—they're here some place. *[Applause]* Stand up, please. What a job you've done. Great job. Great job. And that was started with your grandfather and your father and you folks. And what a great job you've done.

You know, in my old days, I would have been jealous. Now I couldn't care less about them. *[Laughter]* It's amazing. It's amazing how being President can do that to you. *[Laughter]*

So, in my campaign for President, I made you a sacred pledge that I would strengthen, protect, and defend Medicare for all of our senior citizens. And you see it's under siege, but it's not going to happen. Today I will sign a very historic Executive order that does exactly that: We are making your Medicare even better, and we are not letting anyone—it will never be taken away from you. We're not letting anyone get close.

You see these people on the other side? These people are crazy, by the way. They're totally crazy. *[Laughter]* But they want to take it away and give you lousy health care. It's pretty incredible. You want to keep your doctors, right? Remember, with Obama—President Obama, right? He said: "You can keep your doctor. You can keep your plan." That didn't work out too well for the people.

Audience members. Boo!

Audience member. We're trying to forget.

The President. Twenty-eight times. He said he's trying to forget. *[Laughter]* You'd better never forget, okay? Never forget.

As long as I'm President, no one will lay a hand on your Medicare benefits. And that's what we're here to do today. This order is the latest step in my administration's drive to ensure the world's best health care for all Americans. Together, we're creating a health care system that

protects vulnerable patients, makes health care more affordable, gives you more choice and control, and delivers the high-quality care Americans deserve. And that's what we're doing: We're strengthening our health care system to a level that nobody thought would be possible.

Our economy is booming. We're doing fantastically well. I think it gets a little bit hurt by politics. But our country is so strong and our economy is so powerful that even politics, and even when you have the—the "do-nothings"—I call them the—really, the "do-nothing Dems." They can't even affect it very much. *[Laughter]*

We've created over 6 million new jobs since the election. The unemployment rate has reached a 51-year low. Two point—think of that. Think of that. Then, soon, it's going to be a historic number, like so many of the other numbers.

Two-point-five million people have been lifted out of poverty. That means more Americans that now have—and that's what it's all about—they have a great way of life. They have affordable health care options, and millions of seniors are enjoying better, healthier, and more prosperous retirements. I should be retiring with you. I should be in this audience, clapping. But I didn't trust anybody to be standing here, because I know what you have.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you very much. It's true. I didn't trust anybody. It's very important.

And nobody has done more in 2½ years—their first 2½ years—than what we've done. Whether it's "right to try," whether it's tax cuts—no matter what it is—nobody has done we've done. Not even close.

We're delighted to be joined today by a man who is really, really good at—he ran one of the largest drug companies and really successfully, and I took him out. Look, that's where, you know, like, that's where the money is. Well, that's where the knowledge is.

He ran one of the biggest, most successful companies. I said: "Alex Azar, come on out. I want to get you to be the top person in charge of this." I said, "So let me ask you, how much bigger is this than the company you're in?" It's like hundreds of times bigger. It's a monster. It's a monster. And what a job. Alex Azar, you know who he is. Where is Alex? Wherever you are. Alex, thank you. And he works with Administrator Seema Verma, who has been so incredible. Seema, you have to stand up. What a job.

They know the most intricate little quarter sentences. You wouldn't believe it. I'd say, "What about this?" And they'd tell me, "Unfortunately, it's always like a little roadblock, but we figure our way around."

And somebody else who is going to be lowering your drug prices with us in a very, very short distance. We're going to buying them from a slightly different source. A little bit unconventional. A lot of people say I'm unconventional; sometimes you have to be unconventional.

And, Alex, when are we are going to let Governor Ron DeSantis and your incredible First Lady Casey DeSantis—when are they going to be—when are they going to be able to do what we want to do? Alex, when are they going to be able to do what we have to do? "Soon." Alex says, "Soon." Because they're going to have a big fat, beautiful surprise for you. And that has been an incredible couple and a great Governor, and the job they're doing is phenomenal. And I was honored to be very much involved in that campaign.

And if he was doing a lousy job, I'd probably just wouldn't have shown up today. *[Laughter]* But he's doing one of the best jobs in the whole country. Ron DeSantis. And also helping Ron and Casey: Jeanette Núñez, your Lieutenant Governor. Jeanette, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thanks, Jeanette. Great job. Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody. Ashley, I saw you down there. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

And a few warriors we have with us. You know, Ron was one of our warriors. He was in Congress, and he was fighting the Russian hoax. That was the Russian witch hunt hoax. And he was so impressive that when he said, "You know, I'd like to run for Governor," I said, "I'd rather keep you right where you are, because they'll come up with another crazy idea." But I'm glad I did it. And it worked out well.

But we have warriors back in Washington, and you have five of them right here. Gus Bilirakis. Gus. Where's Gus? Thank you, Gus. Great job. The legendary Neal Dunn. Neal, thank you. These guys are warriors. Ross Spano. Thanks, Ross. Michael Waltz. Michael. Great job he does on television. All of them, they do a great job. They're defending us. They're not defending me; they're defending us, because that was the greatest election victory maybe in history. And they're defending us.

And a man with one of the best names in the history of politics: Daniel Webster. What a name. If I had that name, I would've been President 10 years ago. *[Laughter]* Thank you. Thanks, Daniel. Thanks, everybody. Great job.

They really are: They're warriors. They go back, and they fight, and they fight corruption. And it's corruption, what's going on right now. When you see this going on, it's pure corruption.

As we gather this afternoon, Medicare is under threat like never before. Your know that. You have people that are running for office who—if it ever happened, you will not be very happy here. Almost every major Democrat in Washington has backed a massive Government health care takeover that would totally obliterate Medicare. These Democrat policy proposals may go by different names—they have all of these wonderful names like——

Audience member. Wacko! *[Laughter]*

The President. It will never end. I'm sorry I smiled. They'll have me—the fake news is back there. Look at all of them.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They'll say: "It's terrible. It's terrible. The President's smiled." You know, they want me to admonish you. Who said that? "Lock her up." Stand up, please. I'm admonishing you. Never ever say that again. That's okay. Sit down. *[Laughter]* He's admonished, so now they can't do their fake number on us. *[Laughter]* Thank you.

But they may go by different names, whether it's "single-payer" or the so-called "public option," but they're all based on the totally same, terrible idea. They want to raid Medicare to fund a thing called socialism. Any Socialists in the room? I don't think so. Not too many. Anybody?

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No? No? Not too many in the Villages. You don't—you're not big on socialism down here, right? These geniuses—these real estate geniuses that know we're not—not too good.

Every one of these plans involves rationing care, restricting access, denying coverage, slashing quality, and massively raising taxes. They want to raise your taxes.

They also want to have open borders, so the people can just come in and do whatever they want to do.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And they have no idea who's coming in, by the way. They have no idea. But you know, when these countries—and now we're getting along great with the countries. Mexico gave us 27,000 soldiers guarding our border and the numbers are way down. Twenty-seven thousand. I want to thank Mexico, the Government and the President.

Congressional Democrats' extreme agenda would destroy our booming economy very quickly. One of the most disturbing proposals from left-wing politicians involves draining your health care to finance the open borders that we just discussed. That's how they want to finance it. Leading Democrats have pledged to give free health care to illegal immigrants. They put foreign citizens who break our laws and endanger our country, they put them way ahead of American citizens like you who obey our laws.

I will never allow these politicians to steal your health care and give it away to illegal aliens. And now, in New York, I hear they passed a new regulation that, if you use the word "illegal immigrant"—did I hear correctly?—they want to charge you a fine of \$250,000. In other words, sell your home in the Villages because you happened to say, "We don't like illegal immigrants pouring into our country illegally." We want people to come into our country legally, through a process. And we're all in favor of that.

And by the way, the fake news will cut that last part of the sentence off. [*Laughter*] They'll just put the first part. And they'll say: "Man, is he rough? He's too tough. I can't vote for him."

A nation must put its own citizens first. My administration is standing up for American seniors. And we'll always protect the Medicare benefits you earned and paid for.

In the last administration, Democrats slashed Medicare by \$800 billion dollars to pay for Obamacare. Not too good, Obamacare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now one of their new proposals, backed by more than 130 Democrat Members of Congress, would cost—listen to this number—\$32 trillion dollars. And that's on the low side, \$32 trillion, with a "t". We're beyond the "b's," the billions. And reduce Americans' household income by \$17,000 per year. Is there anybody in this room that doesn't mind losing \$17,000 a year? No? In order to get lousy health care.

Though they use many labels, all of the Democrat plans would devastate our health care system. The fake moderates on the left are telling the same lies they did under the last administration. But the last administration, frankly, was moderate compared to the maniacs that you're hearing from today. These are maniacs.

Elizabeth "Pocahontas" Warren. You know, when I used to hit her, I thought she was gone, Ron. I thought she was gone. She came up from the ashes. She emerged. [*Laughter*] Now, we're probably going to have to do it again, because I don't see Sleepy Joe making it, I'll tell you. [*Laughter*] No, I thought she was gone.

Under this administration, we believe that every American family has a right of choice—you have a right to choose. Choice, so important. Like what we did with the vets. Choice. Where they can go out and get a doctor instead of waiting in line for 3 weeks, 4 weeks, 2 months. Choice. And you look at the doctor and you look at the plan that is best for you.

The truth is, there is no longer a moderate wing of congressional Democrats. They've gone crazy. They've been hijacked by the radical left. I mean, these people on the left, these people are——

Audience member. Wacko! [*Laughter*]

The President. [Laughter] Is that the same guy? I think so. [Laughter] I sort of like him. I can't admonish him again. [Laughter] I think it's the same guy. He's got a powerful voice.

Democrat lawmakers are not trying to build up the country; they only want to wreck and destroy all of the things that we've built up over the last 3½ years, 4 years, 5 years—prior to us getting in here. You look at the stock market numbers from the time of the election, from that November 9 date, go a day later. Wasn't November 8—was that one of the great times? Huh? 2016.

But go a day later, and you look at the numbers in the stock market up way over 50 percent. The 401(k)s are doing unbelievably well. One of these people gets in, your 401(k)s are going to hell, the stock market is going to hell. Frankly, I think—and I hate to say it—the country is going to go to hell.

They're consumed by rage and radicalism and insatiable lust for power. How about Justice Kavanaugh? They talk about a woman—they talk about a woman, about horrible things that he never even thought about. Horrible, horrible things. And the following day—they want to impeach him. And then, the following day, she said, "No, I don't remember anything. I don't remember that." And they say: "We don't care. We want to impeach him anyway." Now, what they're trying to do is turn his vote liberal. But he's a much tougher guy than that. I hope. [Laughter] He's a much tougher guy.

Audience member. So are you!

The President. Thank you. Yes, I'd better be. I'll tell you. If I weren't, I wouldn't be up here right now. With all that we have to put up with these people, we wouldn't be here.

Democrat health care proposals would put everyone into a single, socialist, Government-run program that would end private insurance for over 180 million Americans. I'm sort of smiling to myself as I go through these numbers. And I'm dealing with people that I know. I mean, I know the people in this room. Those are the people. I grew up with you. When we were young, I grew up with you. And now we're, sort of, still young at heart, at least.

And that I'm even talking about socialism is like—it's just—it's sort of a weird feeling to be talking to you about "you don't want to be Socialist." And you're probably saying, "Why is he wasting his time?" [Laughter]

But there's a movement on. And it's not so easy to be beat them when they get up in a debate and they say: "We're going to cut your college tuition to nothing. We're going knock off \$1.6 trillion. We're going to do all these other things. Everything is free, except for your taxes." Your taxes are going to go up at a level that nobody has even seen before, and that won't be nearly enough to pay for it.

But I'll not let any of this bad stuff happen. It's very important that we win this race. You know, when we won last time, I said, "That's the most important election in our country's history." Because we were ready to go over the edge.

And now our country is doing great. But you know, it's like a plant; it's like a tree. It has to grab—those roots have to grab hold. We still need more time. We've done so much, but we need a little more time. That thing has to grow, and it's got to get in there, and then nobody is going to be able to take it down no matter what happens later on. So important.

In America, we believe in freedom and liberty, not government domination and government control. Today, standing in solidarity with our Nation's seniors, I declare once again that America will never be a socialist country; it will never be. [Applause] Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You want to drive them crazy? Don't do: "Four more years." Say: "Eight more years." You'll drive them crazy. [Laughter]

One of these crazy maniacs on a show was interviewing somebody—radical left—and he goes, "You know he's going to win, don't you?" Big show. And the guy goes: "No, no. We're going to fight him. We're going to . . ." "No, no, no. He's going to win. And you know he's never getting out. You know that don't you?" [Laughter] "He's not going to get out. You know he's . . ." And I thought, like, you know, he's a comedian. I thought he was like kidding and having fun. He meant it. [Laughter] These people are sick. They meant it.

Anyway, but no, if you want to drive them crazy, just say "8 more years" or "12 more years"—[laughter]—or "16." Sixteen would do it good. They would—[laughter]—you would really drive them into the loony bin.

And that's why they do the impeachment crap, because they know they can't beat us fairly. That's the only reason they're doing it. They can't win. They can't win. If they won, it would be a sad day for our country. It will be a sad, sad day for our country if they ever won.

Among those who would be hit hardest by the socialist takeover are 24 million seniors on Medicare Advantage, a lot of you. One out of two Hispanic seniors, one out of three African-American seniors is enrolled in Medicare Advantage. This very popular Medicare program—been around for a long time—allows private plans to compete to offer senior citizens the absolute best health care. They want to destroy it.

While many Democrat plans would eliminate Medicare Advantage, my administration is fighting to make it even better and much, much stronger. And thanks to our efforts, there are nearly 1,200 more Medicare Advantage plans today than there were just 2 years ago. Think of that. Premiums have plummeted by 28 percent; they've gone down. And they're now at the lowest level in over 10 years.

With us today is Corey Spangler. She lives just up the road in Summerfield. Corey, please tell us some of what we've been discussing on Medicare Advantage and your plan, and how important it is to you. Please, come up, Corey, wherever you may be. Oh, Corey.

Summerfield, FL, resident Socorra "Corey" Spangler. I'm right here. [Laughter]

The President. Thank you, Corey.

Ms. Spangler. Okay. My family came to America from Mexico when I was 5 years old because my father did not like the corruption and we had socialized medicine there. He came to this country legally.

And when I turned 65, I had some heart issues. I went to the doctor. They scheduled me with a cardiologist. He scheduled me for a stress test on a Wednesday. Pass—I didn't—I failed that test. So he scheduled me for a heart cath the next day. I failed that. They told me you need to have a bypass and I was going to have five bypasses done.

The following Monday, I was in surgery with my five pass—five bypasses, and I went home the following Friday. This would never happen with "Medicare for all." I love my Medicare Advantage plan, because I can choose the doctor, when I need it, and get the care I need in a quickly manner. And it wouldn't happen with "Medicare for all."

The President. That's beautiful.

Ms. Spangler. Thank you, Mr. President, for saving my care—health care.

The President. Thank you, Corey.

I see a future politician there. *[Laughter]* That was—boy, she was so, like, calm. No nerves. You know, sometimes I'll see people, they get a little bit nervous. Very good.

What a job they've done. Great doctors. Did you choose your own doctor or you get lucky with a good doctor that was recommended?

Ms. Spangler. They were wonderful.

The President. They were wonderful. That's fantastic. And you're wonderful. Thank you, Corey. Appreciate it.

The Democrat plans for socialized medicine will not just put doctors and hospitals out of business, they'll also deny your treatment and everything that you need. Government-run health care systems always end up imposing rationing. You see what happens.

You look at Venezuela; take a look at that. Fifteen years ago, it's one of the wealthiest countries. Now they don't have food. They don't have water. The hospitals are a disaster. No electricity. No anything. It's very sad. And we're helping the people as much as we can. But we're watching that whole situation—beyond this, we're watching it very, very carefully. We're watching it very carefully. And Cuba—we're watching Cuba very carefully. Very, very carefully.

But as an example, under the United Kingdom's single-payer system, patients wait 117 days to receive, as an example, a knee replacement. One hundred and seventeen days. In Canada, wait times for orthopedic surgery are over 270 days. But currently, in the United States, wait times for these surgeries are—we've speeded it up a lot—are typically less than 2 weeks. Is that right, Alex?

And I have many people coming down from Canada, and I say, "What are you doing?" They're getting an operation of some kind. "Why don't you get it up there?" They said, "There's nothing like what you've been able to do in a short period of time." And we're making it even better.

With us today is Charles McLaughlin, a 71-year-old Floridian and a Marine veteran of the Vietnam war. Charles, please come up and tell us your story. Please.

Lighthouse Point, FL, resident Charles McLaughlin. Oh, man. Oh, man. Hello to the Villages. What a great place you guys have here. Wow. I understand that approximately 60 percent of all of you are veterans. I want to say thank you for your service. And to my Vietnam brothers and sisters: Welcome home. Welcome home.

My name is Chuck McLaughlin, and I'm a Vietnam combat marine. I'm also a cancer survivor, stage 4 style. I know a lot about Medicare and the supplement. I used it for breathing tubes, feeding tubes, stitches, staples, MRIs, PET scans, CAT scans, blood tests, hydration shots, chemo treatments, radiation treatments, 6 months of hypobaric chamber—to name a few.

Anyone that's cured, like me, loves their doctors. Loves their doctors. I also want to say: My family, financially, would've been destroyed without Medicare. Destroyed. The facts are now—the new day—the politicians on the left are pushing "Medicare for all." I say the result will be no Medicare at all. It will collapse under the load, the load of the system. It will overload it. The lines would be incredible. Who knows? I probably wouldn't be here.

As far as free stuff, it may be free stuff, but it's going to come out of somebody else's pocket. There's no such thing as "free." Period. Is the Medicare system perfect? No. But it worked for me. Remember, I paid my share.

Just a few thoughts: President Trump's plan of Medicare Advantage will give me more flexibility for options to this system. I can pick and choose my needs. Secondly, a program that

helps protect us seniors for a fair shake as our bodies fail us. And number three, we must get rid of the waste and fraud that seems to be in the newspapers weekly.

Finally, thank you, President Trump, for all you do. I want to personally thank him for what he does for our veterans. Finally, and may God bless you and your family for loving America and giving us a renewed hope for our children and our grandchildren. Thank you.

The President. What a great job. Well, thank you very much, Charles. And it's incredible. You've gone through a lot.

Mr. McLaughlin. Yes.

The President. You don't look it. *[Laughter]* He's looking handsome to me, I'll tell you. *[Laughter]* Thanks, Charles. That's incredible.

Like you, all of us today understand the truth. Socialism is not about improving the health of American people; it's about wielding power over the American people, taking things away from American people.

In a few moments, I will sign an Executive order to strengthen Medicare for seniors and very substantially. I'll provide Medicare Advantage plans with new tools and options, and it will help Medicare beneficiaries gain faster access to the very latest and greatest medical devices and therapies.

My order also pursues reductions in the unnecessary regulations that you don't need, you don't want to see, that never come into effect, and that cost a lot of money, enabling doctors and nurses to spend less time on paperwork and more time with their patients that they love.

To further protect seniors, we are taking action to stop fraud and to stop abuse. It's tremendous amounts of money saved with that. And we'll be able to put that money right back into what we want to have it to take care of you.

I'm directing Secretary Azar to crack down on criminals, cheaters, and dishonest providers who rob Medicare of the funds you have and the money that you've paid into the system all of your lives. Charles said it. Charles said, "You know, I paid for it." He said he paid for it. And now they want to say, "Let's give it to everybody else." And it's going to be gone in a very short number of years. But you did pay for it. You both paid for it.

Today's action is the only really great action that we can take. It's the only choice we have because this is going to be something that's better than any place anywhere in the world. It's the latest of many important steps that we're taking to dramatically improve health care for the American people.

Our vision for the future of health in America has four crucial parts. And we will protect vulnerable patients, number one. We will protect those patients that are so terribly vulnerable. We will deliver the affordability that you need. Prices coming down. As I said, prescription drug prices—first time in over 50 years, Alex, that drug prices have come down for the year. Your average prescription drug price—first time in 50 years—over 50 years.

And we're going to get them a lot lower. And I think Ron is going to have some big surprises. We'll be announcing that pretty soon. Some—for really, really big reductions. People are already—they're not even going to know what happened. So that's what we want.

And we're going to give you options and control that you want. And we will provide the quality you deserve. First, we're protecting vulnerable Americans. We've made a clear promise to America's patients: We will always protect patients with preexisting conditions. The Republicans will always protect preexisting conditions.

To stop families from being blindsided by outrageous medical bills—and this is something that's one of the most exciting things to me—I have challenged Congress to send a bill to my desk that stops the horrendous practice of surprise medical billing. So many of you, you go in, and you have something, and then you get a bill, and you say, "How is it possible?" And we're going to end that practice. That practice is not a fair practice.

And we're also confronting the opioid and drug addiction epidemic that is plaguing too many American communities. And thanks to our efforts—and we've worked so hard on it; the First Lady worked so hard. Kellyanne Conway—where's Kellyanne? Where's Kellyanne? Where is she? Kellyanne, thank you. Thank you, Kellyanne.

Last year, drug overdose deaths declined for the first time in nearly three decades. Early data shows that drug overdose deaths dropped 10 percent last year in the State of Florida. Now, think of that. That's—you know, we'd like to better. It's a very, very tough situation. And one of the things we're doing with the "pain pills"—we could call them—we're trying to find, and we're really working hard, and we're funding a lot of research to find pain pills that aren't addictive. You go into to a hospital with a broken arm, and you come out and you're drug addict. And we're trying to find, and we're getting closer—I think we're getting very close, actually—to finding painkillers that aren't addictive. And we'll have that in the not-too-distant future.

And to care for our great veterans, we passed VA Accountability. You know what that is, right? This is where the great heroes and tough people—but—and by the way, in their super prime, nobody touched them.

But they're more vulnerable, and people would take advantage of our veterans. You had sadists. You had people that would rob them and rob the system. You had some horrible people. We couldn't fire anybody. They had, in Arizona, people that got stealing—they got caught stealing \$400,000. They couldn't fire them. So now we have VA Accountability. You think that was easy? They've been trying to get it for 50 years. And I got it. I'm good at getting things.

So now, when they don't take proper care of our vets, we say: "Jim, get the hell out of here. You're fired. Get out of here." We can fire them. Get them out. We get them out. We don't have to ask questions. We get them out. If they're bad, they treat our veterans badly, we fire them. That's why you don't hear about—you know, before me, every night you'd see these stories, these horror stories about the VA. I haven't seen one in a long time.

Now, I don't want to wish it because the fake news will search the system—[laughter]—to find somebody that's not happy. "We found somebody. We found a vet in Florida who isn't quite happy with everything. Let's do a major story."

But do you remember all of the bad stories that used to be about the VA? Now you don't see that, because they have accountability. We can fire bad people. We fired a tremendous number of really bad people that should've been fired years ago.

I don't like firing people, but I like firing people that don't treat our vets great, that aren't doing their job. And they were protected, frankly, by the unions, and they were protected by civil service—very powerful. Do you think it was easy beating unions and civil service? Not too easy. But I explained to them too. I said: "This is good for all of us. It's good for America."

And the other, as I said, is VA Choice, where our veterans no longer have to wait for endless, endless hours, days, even months. We've had cases where a person is on line—not bad; could be fixed up very easily with whatever treatment it may be—and they end up being terminal by the time they see a doctor. That's not happening anymore. Because now you go out, you find a great local doctor, we pay the bill.

And you know, it's interesting, it's totally less important, but we also save a lot of money on that. Hard to believe, we save a lot of money. It's much less expensive for us to do that than the other way, and it's saving tremendous numbers of lives. And we have great doctors, frankly, that need the business. Not so bad.

To protect health care for our seniors and all Americans, my administration is taking strong actions to ensure that newcomers to our society do not drain our health care system or burden the services that you depend on. You see these people in California, the Governor of California: "Come on in, everybody." Then, you wonder why people are flooding our borders. "Come on in. You have free education, free health care. Everybody gets a Rolls-Royce." [Laughter] "Come on in. Come on in."

You know, to show you how corrupt CNN is, when I used that expression, they said, "The President wasn't telling the truth. He said they get a Rolls-Royce, and they don't." [Laughter] Ahh, they don't get it, do they? They never got it.

Some idiot at CNN said, "You can't win without CNN." I guess we showed them. [Laughter] I guess we showed them. And their ratings are so low now that they are no longer the big difference at all. They have really bad ratings.

But you know what is bad for our country? When CNN—so often I go to a foreign country. I go to a country. I meet leaders. And he said, "Why do they hate your country so much?" I said, "Who?" You know, CNN outside of the United States is much more important than it is in the United States. And a lot of what you see here is broadcast throughout the world. And we used to have Radio Free—I think Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. And we did that to build up our country. And that's not working out too well.

But CNN is a voice that really seems to be the voice out there. And it's a terrible thing for our country. And we ought to start our network and put some real news out there, because they are so bad. They are so bad for our country. They are so bad for our country. I go out there, and they say, "Boy, the media hates your country." And it's just a shame. It's just a shame. And we really are; we are looking at that. We should do something about it too. Put some really talented people and get a real voice out there, not a voice that's fake.

When Americans are struck by natural disaster, like they were in Florida where I was with you, Hurricane Michael—did I do a good job, Governor? Did I do a good job? Man.

Your Governor came to my office once a week. He always needed more money—[laughter]—and I always gave it, right? He didn't stop. I hated it. I said: "Keep DeSantis. I don't want to see him anymore." [Laughter] But we always gave it, and you got it. And your people worked so hard. And FEMA and the military, they all worked with you. The Coast Guard is incredible, what the Coast Guard has done. I think Coast Guard has really done a great job.

The second part of our health care agenda is to promote the affordability of America's needs. Thanks to our focus on lower drug prices, the FDA approved more low-cost generic drugs in my first 2 years than ever before in the history of our country. Think of that. Think of that.

And every time I'd see the folks over at FDA, I'd say: "Come on, fellas. Let's go. Faster. Faster." You know, don't forget, when somebody was dying and we had a drug that looked like it was really good, but it wasn't going to be approved for like 4 more years—it used to be 12 years and we brought it way down. I mean, it's too long. But we brought it way, way down. But a person is dying, and they said, "No, sir, we can't give that because it may harm the person." I said, "Wait a minute, you don't understand." [Laughter] "A person is terminally ill, they've got 4 weeks to live, and you don't want to give them a drug because you think it's going to harm them? I guarantee you I can get them to sign a document." [Laughter]

Now, we got that approved—"right to try." And by the way, miracles are happening. Right? Miracles. Miracles are happening. Hopefully, it never happens to anybody in this room. But frankly, people would go to Asia, they'd go to Europe, they'd go all over the world seeking a cure, if they had money. If they didn't have money, they'd go home, and they'd die. But now they don't have to do that.

And it wasn't easy, because the drug companies didn't want it, because they didn't want to have terminally ill, because it looks bad on the percentage record, right? The insurance companies didn't want it, because there are a lot of reasons. You know what the reasons are. Our Government didn't want it, because they didn't want to be sued by a patient that died that would've died anyway. So I said: "Here's what we do, folks: We sign an agreement. And the agreement holds everybody nonliable."

We took the drug companies and we created a separate list, so they're not on that list—because it is, right? It's a problem. And we took a separate list. So now we have a totally separate list—confidential list—but they don't get hurt by somebody that was so sick that this person may not make it. And I got everybody to sign it, and we were done. It was pretty amazing. And then we got it approved in Congress because of these five great Congressmen back there, including Ron, who at the time was in Congress. Right? With Greg and everybody, we got it done, and we got the Senate to approve it. And I signed it. And I was really happy: "right to try." Hopefully, you never need it.

We also ended the terrible gag clauses that prevented pharmacists from telling you about cheaper options at the pharmacy counter. Do you believe it? I thought this was—I thought they were kidding me the first time. Don't forget, I've only been doing this for 3 years, okay? So you know. *[Laughter]*

These guys have been doing it a long time. But they're not allowed to talk to you about pricing. I said: "Wait. You've got to be kidding." And they weren't. But I got rid of that. Now they can talk about pricing. You can go out and price. You can go to different places. They have to be open and transparent. That was a big deal. That was a big deal.

And all of these things, you know, they sound so simple; they're tough to get. They've been that way for many years for a reason. You have very powerful lobbyists. You have drug companies, frankly, that don't want that. Why would they want that, where you can negotiate price? Why would they want a thing like that?

My administration is also working to require drug companies to disclose prices in their television advertisements. And we're almost getting to a point where we're going to be able to get that. So you're going to know what you're paying up front. They can't triple-hit you. Essentially, we're holding Big Pharma accountable. And that's okay; they do just fine.

Earlier this year, we announced another groundbreaking action seniors have wanted for decades. We will soon allow the safe and legal importation of prescription drugs from other countries, including the country of Canada, where, believe it or not, they pay much less money for the exact same drug. Stand up, Ron. Boy, he wants this so badly.

No, I mean, you go to some countries and the price is like 50-, 60-percent lower—even more than that, I guess, Ron, in some cases. And it's 50-, 60-percent lower—the exact same pill, from the exact same factory, from the exact same company. And I say, "Why is it that in Europe—certain places, in particular—it's 25 percent of what we pay back here?" I said, "It must be a different manufacturer." "No, sir, it's the same one." "Must be made in a different factory." "No, sir, it's the same one." Everything is identical; they pay 25 percent. We pick up all of the research and development. We pick up everything like a bunch of, excuse me, schmucks. *[Laughter]* Schmucks. Right?

Not anymore, folks, because in a little while—in a little while—your Governor is going to be able to go out and negotiate until his heart is content. And he's going to go to Canada. I know he's gone there already, and he's looking at their pricing, and he's going to some of the European countries and others, and he's going to get his drug price down to a level that you can't believe. It's going to be a great thing. And we'll see what happens. It's going to be very interesting.

And I have a feeling when that happens, the drug companies are just going to say, "We can't have this." And they're going to drop their price, I think. Now, they're very smart. They may go the other way, and if they do, don't blame me, okay? *[Laughter]* But I'm pretty sure you're going to do fantastically, Ron. You feel good about it? Huh? You'd better do good; otherwise, you're making us both look bad. *[Laughter]* You hear that, Casey?

American patients must no longer be forced to subsidize lower drug prices in other countries through higher prices in America. That's what we were doing. We were paying a much higher price. My administration will never stop fighting for lower costs for American patients and American seniors.

The third part of our health care vision is to provide the choice and control Americans want. We eliminated Obamacare's horrible, horrible, very expensive and very unfair, unpopular individual mandate. A total disaster. That was a big penalty. That was a big thing. Where you paid a lot of money for the privilege of not having to pay a lot of money for the privilege of having no health care. You paid not to have health care. It was a penalty. And how it ever held up in Supreme Court, I don't know, but it did. But we just got rid of it. We just did it the old-fashioned way: We got rid of it.

We vastly expanded affordable insurance options, including association health plans, short-term plans, and health reimbursement arrangements, which are incredible. And many of these options are up to 60-percent less expensive than "O-bomb-a-care." Nobody got that. *[Laughter]* Nobody. Nobody got that. That's okay. "O-bomb-a-care." I didn't say "Obamacare." I said "O-bomb-a-care." *[Laughter]* President "O-bomb-a-care." He can have it.

But we've done a great job in running it. We almost had it done. We unfortunately had one vote—middle of the night—just went thumbs down. That wasn't good. After years and years of campaigning—"repeal and replace," right? But we've done a great job, because we get rid of the individual mandate. And we're running it better. It's still no good, because it's too expensive. The premium is way too high and all of the elements of it. It's just not good. But we're coming up with an incredible plan that if the Republicans take back the House, keep the Senate, keep the Presidency, we're going to have a fantastic plan. Right?

Following my administration's recommendation, Florida has taken an important step to lower cost and increase choice by repealing a misguided "certificate of need" law, used by hospitals to block competition. We encourage other States to follow Florida's example. They've done a great job right here.

And I also signed, just recently, a revolutionary Executive order requiring price and quality transparency. And the man who's really the leader in the world of this—it's transparency. You can pick your doctor; you can look at their records; you can see how well they did. You can go and negotiate. A man—what really sold me on it—the man who's the best in the world at it, who we used, and we gave you the max plan. Did we give that? The max plan, right? That's the maximum plan. We gave it to you. And he said something that I loved. He said, "Sir, this is more important and will go down as more important than any health care that you'll ever come up with." And I said, "I like the sound of that." Now, who knows if it's true, but I guess, from what I'm hearing, they've done it in certain limited areas, and it's phenomenal.

And it's really transparency. And you'll be able to negotiate all over the place. And you'll be able to pick everything you want, from the hospital to the doctor. And it's going to save you a tremendous amount of money. And there are those that say it's more important than even health care at a high level.

And fourth, my administration is fighting to ensure the high-quality care that Americans deserve. Americans have to get the highest quality. So we have the highest quality that Americans deserve.

On behalf of 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease, I signed into law a \$1 billion increase in funding for critical Alzheimer's research. And we've made a lot of progress.

And just one other thing I will tell you—because it even surprised me—but we've funded it now, and, within 10 years, our country will be AIDS-free. Can you believe that? AIDS-free. Tremendous progress has been made.

And when we were talking about that, I said: "I don't understand. How does this . . ." It's like somewhat of a secret, but it's incredible—the tremendous progress that we've made over the last few years on AIDS and AIDS research. And we should be essentially AIDS-free. Do you agree with that, Mr. Secretary?

In my State of the Union, I announced a plan to invest—[laughter]—she liked it—\$500 million dollars in new treatments and cures and all of the things that we have to go through with our incredible children, in some cases, for childhood cancers. It's a tremendous problem.

And to bring new hope to the nearly 100,000 Americans currently awaiting a kidney operation, I signed an Executive order that will significantly increase the supply of kidneys available for transplant. It's such a big deal. It's so big. You have no idea.

And we worked hard on that. And you know, what a lot of people don't know, a lot of it is just the work. The people die fairly quickly because it's not—they could go on forever. But it's—it's unbelievable amounts of work, going in all the time for step by step—what you have to do.

And so, with kidney transplants, we're making tremendous progress. And we funded a lot of money toward it. And I think it's going to be a tremendous thing for people that are just literally suffering with something they can really do very well with.

We're delivering better, fairer, and more affordable health care for all Americans, especially our cherished senior citizens. And we will stop at nothing to deliver better health care for you and for your family. I will never let you down. You have been incredible to me, and I will never ever forget you. I will never let you down. I promise that. [Applause] Thank you. Thank you very much.

We're lowering the cost of prescription drugs, taking on the pharmaceutical companies. And you think that's easy? It's not easy. It's not easy. They come at you from all different sides. I wouldn't be surprised if the hoax didn't come a little bit from some of the people that we're taking on. They're very powerful. They spend a lot of money, spend, I think, more money than any other group in the world actually, in terms of lobbying and lobbying abilities.

And I wouldn't be surprised if some of the nonsense that we all have to go through, but that I go through—wouldn't be surprised if it was from of these—some of these industries like pharmaceuticals that we take on because I want—I don't care. I did great. I've had a great life. I want to get drug prices down. I don't care about the companies I want to get drug prices down.

I want to continue to give them the incentive to come out with new and better answers, but got to get drug prices down. And they've made a fortune over the last 40 years. They've made so much money. And they've got the system wired. Because everything you do, their stock goes up.

I said: "What the hell is going on? Their stock just went up." They said, "Sir, it's going to be wonderful." I said, "It's not going to be wonderful." Let their stock go down a little bit. *[Laughter]* But their stock goes up. And what we've done is incredible.

And by the way, you have some incredible companies. The answers that they—we want to keep them strong and powerful and wealthy, and we want them to really continue to do that research. But we got to get those prices down. They're far too high, especially when you compare them to other countries.

And we want to ensure access to the doctors of your choice. And every day, we are going to—as I said, we are going to defend Medicare like Medicare has never been defended again. And it's never needed the defense. It's always been incredible. It's something that worked, and they want to destroy it.

In my administration, we know that Medicare is personal. Great health care is about more time with the ones you love, more days with your grandkids, and more freedom to enjoy the most rewarding years of your life—or what should be, by far, the most rewarding years of your life. You've worked hard. You've worked so hard. And you paid for it. And you've got to enjoy it. It's about getting better when you're sick, it's improving your well-being, and it's getting the treatment you need, right when you need it.

That's why, in everything we do, we are defending the principles that made America the envy of the world and the American way of life the greatest in our history. And our country has never been greater than it's been right now. Our military is the strongest it's ever built—we rebuilt our entire military. And even medical research is at a new level. It's at a level that we've never had it before.

We stand for freedom. We stand for choice. We stand for justice and fairness and accountability. We stand for loyalty to our citizens, love for our country, allegiance to our flag, and long and healthy lives for our great seniors.

And with your help, we are going to continue building the best, most advanced, most cutting-edge health care system anywhere in the world. We are going to expand our growing economy to make retirement easier and better and far more secure. We're going to defend American lives, American values, American families, and America's glorious destiny. There is no country like our country. We see and read things, but there is no country like our country. Right?

With every ounce of strength and every bit of soul, we are going to protect Medicare for you: for everyone at the Villages and for every senior across this magnificent land. You are going to be protected in many ways, but you are going to be protected.

Thank you very being here. Thank you for this incredible enthusiasm. God bless you, God bless our senior citizens, and God bless America. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Okay. Should I do it? I'll do it. All right.

[At this point, the President signed the Executive order.]

Thank you, everybody. Here, grab these, fellas. Pass them around. The Congressmen don't want one, I know that. Here you go. I love that. I love that. I love those guys. "Bikers for 45." These guys. *[Laughter]* They've been there from the beginning, right? Here. Pass them around. Pass these around, fellas. Pass them around.

Come here. Attorney General, get over here. Come on. Get over here. Lieutenant Governor, come on. Please, both of you. Come on up here. They're doing a good job, right? Should we give them a pen? I think so. Come on up here. That's great.

I want to thank you all. Really a special time. And this is very meaningful for me and for you and for everybody. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:47 p.m. at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. In his remarks, he referred to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma; Reps. Gus M. Bilirakis, Neal P. Dunn, V. Ross Spano, Michael G. Waltz, Daniel A. Webster, and Gregory P. Walden; President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico; Sen. Elizabeth A. Warren; former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; Bill Maher, host, HBO's "Real Time With Bill Maher" program; Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway; Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California; Jeffrey A. Zucker, president, CNN; and R. Lawrence Van Horn, associate professor of management (economics) and executive director of health affairs, Vanderbilt University.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Medicare strengthening efforts, signing the Executive order in the Villages, FL.

Locations: Villages, FL.

Names: Azar, Alex M., II; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bilirakis, Gus M.; Conway, Kellyanne; DeSantis, Casey; DeSantis, Ronald D.; DeSantis, Ronald S.; Dunn, Neal P.; Kavanaugh, Brett M.; López Obrador, Andrés Manuel; Maher, Bill; McLaughlin, Charles; Moody, Ashley; Newsom, Gavin C.; Núñez, Jeanette; Obama, Barack; Spangler, Socorra "Corey"; Spano, V. Ross; Trump, Melania; Van Horn, R. Lawrence; Verma, Seema; Walden, Gregory P.; Waltz, Michael G.; Warren, Elizabeth A.; Webster, Daniel A.; Zucker, Jeffrey A.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; California : Governor; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Congress : House of Representatives :: Impeachment inquiry; Diseases : Cancer research, prevention, and treatment; Diseases : Kidney disease, prevention and treatment efforts; Drug abuse and trafficking : Addiction treatment and reduction efforts; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Poverty; Elections : Voter participation; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Florida : Governor; Florida : Lieutenant Governor; Florida : President's visits; Government organization and employees : Accountability and transparency, strengthening efforts; Government organization and employees : Federal regulations, review; Health and Human Services, Department of : Medicare and Medicaid Services, Centers for; Health and Human Services, Department of : Secretary; Health and medical care : Affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Experimental drugs and therapies; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Health insurance, protection of coverage; Health and medical care : Individual insurance mandate, tax penalty; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Research and development; Health and medical care : Seniors, prescription drug benefits; HIV/AIDS : Domestic prevention and treatment strategy; Homeland Security, Department of : Coast Guard, U.S.; Immigration and naturalization : Illegal immigration; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Mexico : Immigration enforcement, cooperation with U.S.; Mexico : President; Natural disasters : Response and recovery efforts; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Taxation : Tax relief; Venezuela : Poverty and economic instability; Veterans : Health and medical care; Veterans Affairs, Department of : Personnel management, improvement efforts; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Counselor.

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