

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum Establishing the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research and an Exchange With Reporters

November 13, 2023

The President. Well, folks, I'm going to be signing a Presidential memorandum in just a minute here to establish the first-ever White House Initiative on Women's Health Research.

It's an effort made possible by Jill, who's been a long champion of women's health, and Jen Klein, Dr. Mazure, Maria Shriver, and others.

Because the fact is that it requires all of Government—not just NIH, but HHS, the VA, the Defense Department, and every agency in the Government having anything to do with health—it requires them to come up with a report to me—for me that lays out what they can do collectively to improve women's health.

Women make up more than half the population. But for too long, they've been underrepresented when it comes to health research and the money spent on that research. That's going to change today.

So this—signing this, I'm setting up this group that within 45 days, all the Government agencies that have anything to do with health have to report on exactly what they're doing now with regard to women's health and the suggestions they may have on how to deal with it.

So let me sign now this and make it official, and then yield to Jill.

Well, let—Jill, let me yield to you first.

The First Lady. Thank you. [*Laughter*] I just want to say, Maria, I am so grateful to you—

Women's Alzheimer's Movement Founder Maria Shriver. Thank you.

The First Lady. —for bringing this to our attention. And it's your leadership that's really going to make the difference and has made the difference already.

And also, thank you, Carolyn, for, you know, your involvement and your willingness to lead this effort.

And you know, Maria, after you came a couple of months ago, and then I spoke to Joe and—I have to say one of the things that I love most about Joe is, you know, you take something to him, and he listens. And he did listen to us, and that's—and it's resulted in this memorandum.

So thank you, Joe. We appreciate this.

The President. Well—[*laughter*].

The First Lady. And women deserve better. And now we're going to get it. So thank you.

The President. You don't have to thank me. I didn't realize how much incongruity there was and how imbalanced it was. So, God willing, we're going to solve that.

All right.

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum.*]

All right. Thank you all very much.

Q. Are you concerned about a shutdown, Mr. President? Are you concerned about a shutdown, Mr. President?

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Federal Government Funding

Q. Mr. President, what's your level on concern that there could be a shutdown at the end of this week?

The President. With regard to a potential shutdown, I understand that the new Speaker of the House has a proposal that's being negotiated with the minority leader of the House, and Senator Schumer and the Republican leader are also talking about it.

I don't know what the outcome is going to be. Apparently, there's a meeting today at 4 or 5 o'clock on the Rules Committee. And we'll see what happens.

Federal Government Funding

Q. Would you veto the laddered CR?

The President. I'm not going to make a judgment on what I'd veto or what I'd sign. But let's wait and see what they come up with.

[Several reporters asked questions at once.]

Q. Sir, any specific concerns—any specific concerns about the hospitals in Gaza, sir? Have you urged Israel to take any specific precautions on the hospitals in Gaza?

The President. Well, I—no, I—

White House Press Assistant Davis B. Conger. [Inaudible]—thank you very much.

Q. The President is going to answer it, Davis.

The First Lady. The hospital in Gaza, Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News] was asking.

Gaza Conflict/Israel Military Operations/Al Shifa Hospital

Q. The hospitals in Gaza—have you expressed any specific concerns to Israel on that, sir?

The President. Well, you know I have not been reluctant in expressing my concerns what's going on. And it is my hope and expectation that there will be less intrusive action relative to the hospital. We're in contact, and we're—with the Israelis.

Also, there is an effort to take this pause to deal the release of prisoners, and that's being negotiated as well, with the Qataris engaged, and so I remain somewhat hopeful. But the hospital must be protected.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Gender Policy Council Director Jennifer L. Klein; Carolyn M. Mazure, Norma Weinberg Spungen and Joan Lebson Bildner Professor in Women's Health Research and professor of psychiatry and psychology, Yale University's School of Medicine, in her capacity as Chair of the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research; Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Michael Johnson; House Minority Leader Hakeem S. Jeffries; and Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : White House Initiative on Women's Health Research, signing the memorandum establishing; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

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