

from any burden and which asks the Congress to impose unprecedented cuts, including reducing the Federal work force by 150,000 over the next 4 years and cutting over 200 specific Government programs. This is a balanced program. We also invest in jobs, in technology, and education and training. If we can get our house in order, if we can bring our deficit under control, reduce it, make some room for targeted investments in jobs and people, we can turn this country around.

I think that the auto industry has showed us what it takes. You've seen reduction in spending, you've seen painful cuts, you've seen dramatic increases in investment, you've seen American workers not just working harder but smarter, and you have seen years and years and

years of disciplined effort rewarded by something 5 years ago or 6 years ago most people would tell you would never happen: American-made cars winning the quality race and regaining market share. That's what we're going to do with our country.

Thank you and bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the National Air and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Owen Bieber, president, United Auto Workers; John F. Smith, Jr., president, General Motors Corp.; Harold A. Poling, chairman and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co.; Robert J. Eaton, chairman and chief executive officer, Chrysler Corp.

Exchange With Reporters on the Economic Program

May 25, 1993

Q. Mr. President, is the House going to pass your tax bill?

The President. I think they're going to pass the budget bill, yes, which has a lot of cuts in it, and it also has some good things for these folks, good for manufacturing, good for small business. Good bill.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2 p.m. at the National Air and Space Museum. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing the Older Americans Month Proclamation

May 25, 1993

Thank you very much, Senator Pryor and Secretary Shalala. Let me also acknowledge in the audience the presence of Senator Bill Cohen from Maine, Congressman Marty Martinez, and Congressman William Hughes. We're glad to see them. And I also want to pay a special word of respect to my good friend, our Vice President's mother, Mrs. Pauline Gore. She's a little too young to be here, but I'm glad to see her here anyway.

You know, Senator Pryor told that story about the 100-year-old man who had been against all the changes he'd seen. One of the things I think that age does for all of us is it gives us the ability to laugh at things that once we would have cried about, something I've needed more and more as I've taken this job. *[Laughter]*

But David told this story. It reminded me, there's a town in Arkansas that has my name, called Clinton, and I was invited there once to a nursing home to celebrate the 107th birthday of this lovely woman. And I showed up, and she had a beautiful pink dress on. And I said, "Gosh, you're pretty today." And she said, "Don't you go flirting with me. I'm not looking for a husband." *[Laughter]* And so I said, "Well, I appreciate that." I said, "You know, I already have one wife. Don't you think that's enough?" And she said, "I guess so, hard as times are." *[Laughter]* Sometimes I think about that.

This is the 30th anniversary of Older Ameri-

cans Month. And I can't think of anybody I'd rather be up here with than Secretary Shalala or with Senator Pryor. When I was attorney general and David Pryor was Governor, I just reminded him up here, 18 years ago we sponsored our State's first conference on long-term care and how to provide long-term care for senior citizens. Well, we're still chipping away at it, but I just want you to know at least we've got some credentials for being in the vineyards.

We are committed to keeping faith with the senior citizens of this country, and we are trying to fulfill that commitment in two very important ways that are specific to our senior citizens and one that is very important for the responsibility we all seem to feel for the future. The first is the White House Conference on Aging to discuss providing for older Americans and also for making better use of the time and talents of our senior citizens. I feel very strongly that both those things are important. Most people I know who are in their later years want to be challenged to do more, to bring to bear their energy, their experience, their judgment, and their perspective on a lot of the very thorny problems and challenges we face today. And I hope our administration can do that not only here in Washington but all across America.

I am, in that regard, proud that we have for the first time an Assistant Secretary for Aging in the Department of Health and Human Services, and I'm proud of Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil who was introduced and who received such a warm reception from you.

The second thing that we hope to do is to deal with some of the terrific health care challenges facing our senior citizens while keeping faith with the obligations we now have to maintain the integrity of Social Security. The fastest growing group of Americans are people over 80. The largest number of people I met on the campaign trail last year with really heart-breaking stories were elderly people just above the Medicaid eligibility line who had massive drug bills every month. And literally, I met people in State after State after State that made the weekly choice between food and medicine because they were just above that Medicaid eligibility line and had no way in the wide world to pay for medicine that was absolutely necessary to maintain their health.

So in this health program—I know a lot of you have already heard a speech about this from my wife, and she's gotten a whole lot better

on this subject than I have—but we are committed to a health care plan which will provide coverage for all Americans, which will lower the cost of health care, which will lower the cost of health care for our country in the years ahead—we're already spotting our competitors 35 percent of every dollar spent on health care—and which, at the same time, will begin to address the problems that I saw out there for a wider range of long-term care services and for dealing with the drug problem that our elderly people have who are not Medicaid-eligible. These are the things that we must have in a comprehensive, long-term care package.

I also want to say to you that I believe any responsible health care plan must encourage and indeed have incentives for health care maintenance and for the prevention of bad things happening. With the fastest growing group of people being people over 80, with more and more senior citizens coming into really dominant positions in our country, with the Social Security system starting in a few years to raise the retirement eligibility limit by a month a year, as all of you know, as a part of the 1983 resolution to resolve the crisis that then existed, it is absolutely imperative that we not only think about giving health care services but maintaining strong, healthy people. And that has got to be a critical part of our health care plan, and I know all of you will be out there lobbying for that. We so often strain at a gnat and swallow a camel when we don't have enough prevention and maintenance of healthy people in our health care plans and even in our own daily habits. And so I hope you will all support that.

The last thing I'd like to say is that it seems to me that those of you who represent older Americans are in a unique position, being able to have the benefit of memory, to know what is going to happen to us in the years ahead if we do not move now and move aggressively to get control of this Government deficit, to bring down our interest rates, to enable our economy to grow, to give us some more elbow room. Year-in and year-out for the last several years, my heart has gone out to Members of the Congress in both parties who have struggled to find funds for things they think needed to be funded or to just keep things going along as they are, as we become more and more consumed by an ever-growing deficit, going from \$1 trillion to \$4 trillion in just 12 years.

I believe, as all of you now know, that we

need to have both spending cuts and tax increases to close this deficit and to bring it down. We could all argue until the cows come home about whether every last decision has been perfectly right, but it is perfectly clear that if you don't do both, you can't get where we're going. And it is absolutely imperative that we send a clear signal not only to the financial markets but to our children and our grandchildren that we are thinking about their future, that we are not going to saddle them with so much debt that we won't be able to finance education and economic growth and the kinds of things that every generation of Americans must be free to spend money on, both private money and public funds. If we don't take that opportunity now, we will have squandered our responsibilities to those who come behind us.

You know, I think more about it with each succeeding year that my daughter grows older. I think about how it won't be so long before she and her generation will be making decisions that now we're wrestling over. We owe it to those kids and to the ones who will follow behind them to provide the freedom of movement that any great society needs to reach the challenges of that time. We today, and this Congress, every Member will tell you, those people who occupy Washington today are hamstrung by a lack of freedom of movement because we have permitted paralysis to drive this deficit up, because we have refused to deal with the health care crisis, we have refused to deal with automatic explosions and things that we could have dealt with. And the time has come to face it and face it squarely. And I hope and pray, for the sake of our children and grandchildren, we are about to do just that in the next few days in the United States of America.

I want to say one thing finally. On the tax side of this plan, 74 percent of the burden falls

on the top 6 percent of income earners in America, and a lot of the rest falls on the top 20 percent of Social Security recipients whom we have asked to subject more of their income to taxation so as to avoid reducing cost of living allowances to all the Social Security recipients in the land who need that.

One of the things I think we have not said enough, and I believe most people in the Congress would admit this: We have heard very little opposition from upper income Americans to paying their fair share of taxes as long as they believe we're going to cut spending, bring the deficit down, and provide for the basic needs of this country. And to me, that's been one of the most rewarding things out there. A lot of the opposition is coming from middle class people who think they're going to pay a lot more than they are. But the people who are really going to pay and who know it, by and large, have been immensely patriotic in this last 2- or 3-month period, knowing that they have to make a contribution to securing the future.

All of you here who represent the elderly people of our country, you can reach out and embrace this effort in a way that no other generation of Americans can. This is a difficult time for the Congress, a difficult time for the country. The worst thing we can do is to walk away and do nothing and continue the perilous paralysis of the last few years. So I implore you to shoulder this. Think of our kids and grandkids. Let's move this country forward in a bipartisan and open manner.

Thank you. God bless you. And let's get on with the signing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters on the White House Travel Office

May 25, 1993

Q. Mr. President, are you upset by this whole Travel Office mess? And who's responsible for it, sir?

The President. Well, ultimately, anything that happens in the White House is the responsibility

of the President. And whenever you've asked me a question, I've told you all I knew about it. All I knew was there was a plan to cut the size of the office, save tax dollars, save the press money. I talked to Mr. McLarty about it this