

Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means; William Roth, chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Fi-

nance; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Statement on Assistance for the Homeless

December 24, 1997

Today—on the eve of Christmas and the first day of Hanukkah—it is important for all Americans to come together as one community and remember those who are less fortunate, particularly our fellow citizens without the warmth and security of a home. I applaud the many Americans who dedicate their lives—and the hundreds and thousands of volunteers who work tirelessly—to help provide shelter, food, and dignity to homeless men, women, and children.

As long as there are children waking up in America on Christmas morning without the comfort of a warm home, we have more work to do. Religious and community organizations are doing their part to help alleviate homelessness. The Federal Government must do its share too.

That is why I have asked Secretary Cuomo to announce today that my next budget will provide an additional \$327 million for homeless assistance—if enacted, one of the largest dollar increases ever. My new budget will request \$1.15 billion to help move the homeless from the streets to self sufficiency—a 40-percent increase over this year. This amount includes 34,000 vouchers to help individuals and families who are¹ now homeless celebrate future holidays in a place they can call “home.” These funds will help create safer places for our children to grow up, more stable families, and a stronger American community. I look forward to working with Congress to achieve this needed assistance for the homeless.

The President’s Radio Address

December 27, 1997

Good morning. The holidays are a time when families come together to celebrate the season with love. And they remind us of our bonds of duty to care for one another. Today I’d like to talk to you about how we’re expanding the shield of Medicare protection to honor our parents and grandparents in important new ways in the new year.

Looking back over 1997, it’s clear that we achieved major reforms of the Medicare system that will help Americans live healthier, happier, longer lives. This year’s bipartisan balanced budget agreement reaffirmed our commitment to preserving and strengthening Medicare. We extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund until at least 2010. We made Medicare protec-

tion more affordable for low-income Americans. We modernized the Medicare system by expanding choice, opening up competition, and controlling costs. And we created a blue ribbon commission to examine ways to ensure that Medicare will serve baby boomers and our children as well as it has served our parents.

Now, as part of the balanced budget agreement, we’re also implementing expanded Medicare benefits to provide greater protection to Americans in the fight against cancer. On New Year’s Day, we’ll introduce a series of changes in Medicare that will make screening, prevention, and detection of cancer more affordable and frequent. We’re ringing in the new year

¹ White House correction.