

## Letter to Senate Leaders on Social Security Reform Legislation March 21, 2000

*Dear Mr. Leader:*

I am pleased that the Senate is moving forward with consideration of H.R. 5, a bill that would eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age. On March 1, 2000, with strong Administration support, the House passed H.R. 5 by a vote of 422–0. I now urge the Senate to follow suit and quickly pass H.R. 5. This will ensure enactment of a clean, straightforward bill to eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age, which I will promptly sign into law.

I called for the elimination of the earnings test for seniors in my State of the Union address in 1999. I believe that the test is confusing and outdated. As the baby boomers begin to retire, it is more important than ever that older Americans who are willing and able to work should not have their Social Security benefits deferred when they do.

Our work together on eliminating the retirement earnings test can help establish bipartisan momentum toward Social Security reform. We

should build on this foundation to pass legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security to about 2050 while taking significant actions to reduce poverty among elderly women. Last year, I transmitted legislation to Congress that would have used the interest savings earned by paying down the debt to make Social Security stronger. If we agree to this simple step, we can extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century while also modernizing Social Security to reduce poverty among elderly women.

These simple measures would be a substantial down payment on meeting the long-term Social Security challenge. I hope we can continue to work together on this issue.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to Trent Lott, Senate majority leader, and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader.

## Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Kircheril Narayanan of India in New Delhi March 21, 2000

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, distinguished guests. First, on behalf of the American delegation, let me thank you for your warm hospitality, and indeed, I thank all of you for making us feel so welcome.

As you pointed out, Mr. President, it was 5 years ago next week when my wife and daughter first came to New Delhi. I confess I was a little jealous of them then because I wanted to come. And I am delighted finally to be here today.

One of my country's most beloved writers, Mark Twain, once wrote that India, and I quote, "is the sole country under the Sun that all desire to see, and having seen once, would not trade that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe combined."

India has given profound gifts to the world for thousands of years now. Nearly half of humanity practices the four great religions that were born here, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism. The whole world has been influenced by Indian culture.

Indian thinkers have enriched every science known to humanity. And I welcome the presence of so many of your scientists here tonight. However, I must confess there are many American high school students who wish that "Aryabhatiya" had kept his work on trigonometry to himself. [Laughter] The computer age would hardly be possible at all without the decimal system invented in India. And appropriately enough, 30 percent of the world's software engineers today are Indian.