

for the inevitable health and demographic challenges it faces in the 21st century. No one would create a Medicare program today without a prescription drug benefit. With the announcement of the completion of the human genome and the revolutionary impact it will have on the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of most, if not all, human disease, the importance of pharmaceuticals as a clinical tool will only increase.

That is why I have proposed a comprehensive plan that would take the Medicare Trust Fund off budget, extend the life of the Trust Fund to at least 2030, make the program more efficient, provide for increased health care provider payments, and modernize it to include a long overdue Medicare prescription drug benefit option. This benefit would be available and afford-

able to all beneficiaries, no matter where they live or how sick they are.

I am pleased that there is growing momentum on Capitol Hill to provide a real Medicare prescription drug benefit, not a flawed insurance model. Because we have managed the program so efficiently, due to the leadership of the longest serving Secretary of Health and Human Services in history, Donna Shalala, we can use our success in reducing the cost of the program and reinvest the savings to help finance a meaningful Medicare prescription drug benefit. I urge the Congress to work together in a bipartisan fashion to meet the challenges this program faces and to ensure that it continues to provide the critically important insurance coverage for the 39 million seniors and people with disabilities the program serves.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Hate Crimes Prevention Legislation

July 12, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I write to urge you to bring the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) to the floor for a vote before the August recess. Last month, the Senate, in a strong bipartisan showing, voted overwhelmingly to pass this legislation that would strengthen federal hate crimes law. As the Senate vote demonstrates, passing hate crimes legislation is not a partisan issue. It is a national concern requiring a national response. Now it is time for the House to do its part to ensure that strong hate crimes legislation becomes law this year.

Since this legislation was introduced in November 1997, our country has witnessed countless acts of bigotry and hatred. In June 1998, James Byrd, Jr., an African-American man, was brutally dragged to his death. In October of that year, Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, died after being beaten and tied to a fence. In July 1999, Benjamin Smith went on a racially motivated shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana. At the end of this hate-fueled rampage, Ricky Byrdson, an African-American who was former basketball coach at Northwestern University, and Won-Joon Yoon, a Korean graduate student at Indiana University, were killed,

and eight others were wounded. In August 1999, Joseph Ilete, a native of the Philippines and U.S. postal worker, died at the hands of a gunman in Los Angeles. This same gunman also injured five persons, including three children, at a Jewish community center. Finally, this year there were two killing rampages in Pennsylvania. In March, an African-American man shot and killed three white men. In April, another man murdered an African-American man, a Jewish woman, two Asian-American men, and an Indian man. We must take action now to stop these acts of violence.

This legislation is absolutely necessary because hate crimes are fundamentally different from other crimes. Victims are targeted simply because of who they are—whether it is race, color, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or gender. These acts of violence affect entire communities, not just the individual victims. This legislation would provide more tools to State and local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. It would also expand protection to include hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability.

I ask the House of Representatives to follow the bipartisan example of the Senate by passing

July 12 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

hate crimes legislation before the August recess. We must send a message that hate crimes will not be tolerated, and that one more hate crime is one too many.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks to the NAACP National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland July 13, 2000

Well, let me say it's good to see you. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. Thank you, Julian; thank you, Kweisi. Thank you, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Ben Hooks, Elaine Jones, the whole board. Thank you, Wendell Anthony, for letting me come to Detroit to the biggest dinner in the history of the world.

I know I had dinner with Wendell in Detroit with over 10,000 people, because he told me so, but I couldn't even see the people at the other head table, it was so big. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Mayor O'Malley, for welcoming us to Baltimore and for being such a great leader. Thank you, Representative Elijah Cummings, for representing Baltimore so well. And thank you, Mayor John Street, for representing Philadelphia so well and making it true to the Founders' dreams.

I have, I know, oh, a dozen or more members of the White House staff here, but I would like to mention a few: Thurgood Marshall, Jr., whose father was a native of Baltimore; my chief speechwriter, Terry Edmonds, a Baltimore native. I thank Mark Lindsay; Mary Beth Cahill; Ben Johnson, who runs our One America office; my political director, Minyon Moore; Janis Kearney; Broderick Johnson, a Baltimore native; Orson Porter; and we have at least another half a dozen folks who are here because they wanted to be here with you today.

This has been a remarkable week for African-Americans. Venus Williams became the first African-American woman since Althea Gibson to win the Wimbledon. Perhaps even more remarkable for those who know the mysteries of the church, Baltimore's own Dr. Vashti McKenzie became the first woman bishop in the history of the A.M.E. church.

And you have had an amazing conference. I'm really glad Governor Bush came. *[Laughter]* I am. But I thought the other fellow gave a

better speech. *[Laughter]* And I liked especially the speech that that Senate candidate from New York gave. I caught that one on Tuesday.

I want to tell you, I'm very proud, as we look back on the last 7½ years of all the work that my wife has done, not just for those but for 30 years for children, for families, for education, for health care. But as First Lady, she has done so much to increase adoption and improve foster care, to increase the access to children to health care and to early education. And one thing that ought to be of particular importance to the African-American community—for the celebration of the millennium, she started—she had this theme, we were going to honor the past and imagine the future. And part of honoring the past was setting aside millennial treasures, a lot of which are important landmarks of the civil rights movement, Abraham Lincoln's summer home at the Old Soldiers' Home, Harriet Tubman's cottage up in New York, a lot of other places.

And the head of the National Historic Preservation Trust came up to me the other day when we were protecting Mr. Lincoln's home, and he said, "Mr. President, I want you to know that your wife came up with this idea of the millennial treasures. It has now raised \$100 million in public/private money. It's the biggest historic preservation movement in the history of the United States of America." So I'm very proud of her for that.

Now, as all of you know, I came here from Camp David this morning, where we are meeting with the Israelis and the Palestinians in an effort to resolve the profound differences that have kept the people of the Middle East apart for a very long time. I know that in our quest for a full, fair, and final peace—which Dr. King reminded us is more than the absence of war, but the presence of justice and brotherhood and