

After 5 years of waiting, I hope we can also finally reauthorize the Older Americans Act. It has helped, for more than 35 years, millions of seniors to lead more independent lives by funding vital, everyday basics like transportation and Meals on Wheels. And I hope we will reauthorize it and strengthen it by funding our caregivers initiative, as well, to provide families with the information, counseling, and support services they need to sustain their selfless missions.

Finally, I hope that we will succeed in passing a voluntary affordable Medicare drug benefit this fall, which also will be a great help to families. Many of the people providing long-term care are doing it for people with extraordinary medicine requirements. Studies show that seniors who lack this kind of coverage are twice as likely to be admitted to nursing homes as those who have it. So again, this is not only the humane and decent thing to do, it's also common sense. It's good for family ties and good for economics.

We have a golden opportunity, as so many of our fellow citizens move into their golden years, to meet the challenges of the aging of America. We have never had a better oppor-

tunity to do it, because of our prosperity and our surplus. So I hope that we will continue to build on the spirit embodied in this bill today.

The Long-Term Care Security Act is worth celebrating. It is worth celebrating for what it does, for the indirect benefits it will have for people who are not covered by it but whose employers will be able to get this kind of group insurance, and for what it says about our values and what we can do in the future. I hope that we'll take every opportunity to build on it.

And now I'd like to ask all the folks on the stage with me to gather round, and I'll sign the bill.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Joan Madarases, mother of three and caregiver for disabled family members, who introduced the President. H.R. 4040, approved September 19, was assigned Public Law No. 106-265. The Long-Term Care Security Act is Title I of Public Law No. 106-265.

Statement on Signing Legislation on Long-Term-Care Insurance for Federal Employees and Retirees and Members of the Armed Forces *September 19, 2000*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 4040, the "Long-Term Care Security Act." It includes two titles—the "Long-Term Care Security Act" and the "Federal Erroneous Retirement Coverage Corrections Act." This bill authorizes the creation of a new program of group long-term care insurance for Federal employees and annuitants, active and retired members of the uniformed services, employees and annuitants of the U.S. Postal Service and the Tennessee Valley Authority, and relatives of these individuals. It also provides for a more equitable way to correct certain retirement coverage errors affecting thousands of Federal employees and their families.

Addressing the needs of an aging society has been one of my highest priorities. The retirement of the baby boom generation will have profound effects not only on Medicare and So-

cial Security but on long-term care. Millions more seniors will need care from home and community-based providers, nursing homes, and families. Yet, today's system is a patchwork that often does not serve the needs of people with chronic illnesses. To address this, I announced a multi-pronged long-term care initiative in early 1999. It tackles the complex problem of long-term care through: (1) creating a \$3,000 tax credit to help people with long-term care needs or the families who care for them; (2) providing funding for services that support family caregivers of older persons; (3) improving equity in Medicaid eligibility for people in home- and community-based settings; (4) encouraging partnerships between low-income housing for the elderly and Medicaid; and (5) encouraging the purchase of quality private long-term care insurance by Federal employees. H.R. 4040, which

is bipartisan, consensus legislation, implements the portion of the initiative concerning long-term care insurance for Federal employees.

It will improve the availability and quality of private long-term care insurance by allowing, for the first time, families of Federal employees to access a high-quality, affordable long-term care insurance option through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The OPM will contract for benefits with one or more private contractors, enabling the agency to obtain the best value for the entire Federal family. The OPM will ensure that policies have important consumer protections that are generally not available in individual insurance policies, such as full portability, and that enrollees will have the option to purchase policies that include inflation and non-forfeiture protections. By using the size of the Federal workforce family—about 13 million people—as leverage, the Federal Government will be able to provide long-term care insurance at group rates expected to be 15 to 20 percent lower than individual rates. Coverage will be provided for a range of services, including personal care, home health care, adult day care, and nursing home care.

Our hope is that, by making high-quality private long-term care coverage available to the Federal family at negotiated group rates, we will continue to serve as a model to other employers across the Nation. This policy is also the most responsible next step in promoting private long-term care insurance. Building on the financial incentives I signed into law in 1996, this policy will increase both the number of people with long-term care coverage and the quality of such coverage—increasing confidence in this growing market as people start planning for their own future long-term care needs.

The bill also provides a comprehensive solution to the problems faced by many Federal employees and their families who, through no fault of their own, are affected by retirement coverage errors. Unlike current law, which directs how coverage errors will be corrected, it permits those placed in the wrong retirement coverage to choose the coverage that best serves

their needs and preferences. This new authority to correct erroneous retirement enrollments and the new long-term care insurance program will greatly enhance the quality of life for Federal employees and members of the Armed Forces. I applaud the bipartisan congressional coalition and OPM Director Lachance for their yeoman efforts in developing and passing this important bill.

In approving H.R. 4040, I note that section 1002 of the bill (new section 9003(d)(3) of title 5, U.S. Code) provides that “the President (or his designee) shall submit to [specified congressional committees] a written recommendation as to whether the program . . . should be continued without modification, terminated, or restructured.” The Recommendations Clause of the Constitution provides that the President “shall from time to time . . . recommend to [Congress] . . . such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” That Clause protects the President’s authority to formulate and present his own recommendations, which includes the power to decline to offer any recommendation. Accordingly, to avoid any infringement on the President’s constitutionally protected policy-making prerogatives, I shall construe this provision not to extend to the submission of recommendations that the President finds it unnecessary or inexpedient to present.

It gives me great pleasure to sign H.R. 4040 into law. I welcome the opportunity to offer Federal employees, members of the Armed Forces, and their families, this additional option to care for their aging parents, and let their children care for them with dignity and financial security. I look forward to working with the Congress to pass the other critical elements of my plan to improve long-term care for all Americans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 19, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 4040, approved September 19, was assigned Public Law No. 106–265.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Gubernatorial Candidate Heidi Heitkamp September 19, 2000

Thank you. You know, I have a lot of interest in this race. Heidi was attorney general; I was attorney general. And I was Governor for a dozen years. It's a wonderful job. It really matters whether we have a few more Democratic Governors. This year more than ever, I think women should be elected to public office. [Laughter] But the main thing I want to say is, you've got Dorgan, Conrad, and Pomeroy. And you all know how strong I've been for diversity. I just want anyone who doesn't look like a spy during the cold war—[laughter]—representing North Dakota. [Laughter]

I'm convinced that sometime years ago when the Republicans were winning all the races, these brilliant guys made a pact and said, "Listen, guys, if we all have short hair, if we're thin, if we wear glasses, we ain't going to scare nobody, and we can do whatever we want to do." [Laughter] And look, what can I say? It worked. I never carried North Dakota. [Laughter] It was great, but I think they're really stepping out here. [Laughter] I mean, they're really stepping out.

Now, I'll be brief and serious. The two things should always go together. One of the greatest things about this country is its genuine diversity, going beyond even race and religion and all the other things we talk about in Washington, to the way people make a living off the land, the way they organize themselves in their communities, the difference in what it's like to live in a place like North Dakota where Heidi can invite you all to come and mean it, and it's so big we could all be missed if we showed up, and a place where nobody's got any elbow room.

And the genius of our system is that if we all do our part, the country works better. Central to that is what happens in all these States. And North Dakota, too, is growing more diverse and more faced with the challenges of the 21st century. And I can just tell you I have an enormous amount of respect for Heidi Heitkamp, and I know how important it is that we have good Governors.

I'll give you just one example. I could give you 20, but after she scared me by saying I talked an hour and a half in North Dakota,

I'm not going to do that. [Laughter] I started to bring a cup of coffee up here, too, and I couldn't. [Laughter] But anyway, I'll give you one example. We passed in the balanced budget bill in 1997, with a bipartisan vote in both Houses, big majorities, the largest expansion in federally funded health care for children since Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program. And we knew that the number and circumstances of the children were different from State to State. So we reached a bipartisan agreement that instead of just expanding Medicaid, we would allow the States to build and design these programs and enroll the children.

Now, there's enough money in that program to enroll 5 million kids. And if the program really identified all the people who were eligible, it would also pick up another 2 million or 3 million kids who could be served by Medicaid. There is a drastic difference in how well the different States have done in identifying and enrolling their children. It matters who the Governor is in a State.

I'll give you another example. Under the leadership of Secretary Riley over the last 7 years, we have cut Federal regulations on States and local school districts by two-thirds, but we have increased the focus of Federal spending on certain standards, so that for example, all the schools—all the States that get Federal funds have to have some standards, have to identify failing schools, and have to have strategies to try to turn them around. As some of you know, I've tried to get Federal funding tied a little tighter, to say you've got to turn them around, shut them down, or give the kids some other alternative. But already, we have required them to identify failing schools.

Now, some States have said, "So what?" Some school districts have said, "So what?" But I was in an elementary school in western Kentucky the other day that was one of their failing schools 3 years ago that's now one of the 20 best schools in the State. Lots of poor kids, lots of problems—it worked.

I was in a school in Harlem the other day, to take a totally different culture, that 2 years ago had 80 percent of the kids reading and doing math below grade level, elementary