

Statement on World Day Against Child Labor

June 11, 2010

Childhood is a time that should be spent in classrooms and on playgrounds, but for 215 million children around the world, it is a time spent working, often in dangerous and deplorable conditions. And while reports indicate that child labor continues to decline, much work remains to be done.

I applaud my Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, who has helped increase our efforts to address child labor abroad and here at home. My administration is committing \$60 million this year to support efforts to reduce child labor around the world. The Department of Labor has also taken steps to improve protections for child workers in the United States, and we have dramatically increased our child labor law enforcement efforts. And this week, the De-

partment of State and the Department of Labor jointly hosted a conference on child labor that demonstrated our intention to take a whole-of-Government approach to this issue. Participants from multiple Federal agencies and the National Security Council, alongside NGOs and multilateral organizations, all reaffirmed a commitment to take action against child labor in the year ahead. We must address the root causes of child labor by ensuring access to education for all children and helping families to secure sustainable livelihoods and to overcome the poverty that contributes to child labor. On this World Day Against Child Labor, all of us must recommit ourselves to creating a world where our children have a brighter future, free of exploitive labor.

The President's Weekly Address

June 12, 2010

More than a decade ago, Congress set up a formula that governs how doctors get paid by the Medicare program. The intent was to slow the growth of Medicare costs, but the result was a formula that has proposed cutting payments for America's doctors year after year after year. These are cuts that would not only jeopardize our physicians' pay but our seniors' health care.

Since 2003, Congress has acted to prevent these pay cuts from going into effect. These votes were largely bipartisan, and they succeeded when Democrats ran Congress and when Republicans ran Congress, which was most of the time.

This year, a majority of Congress is willing to prevent a pay cut of 21 percent, a pay cut that would undoubtedly force some doctors to stop seeing Medicare patients altogether. But this time, some Senate Republicans may even block a vote on this issue. After years of voting to defer these cuts, the other party is now willing to walk away from the needs of our doctors and our seniors.

Now, I realize that simply kicking these cuts down the road another year is not a long-term solution to this problem. For years, I've said that a system where doctors are left to wonder if they'll get fairly reimbursed makes absolutely no sense. And I am committed to permanently reforming this Medicare formula in a way that balances fiscal responsibility with the responsibility we have to doctors and seniors. In addition, we're already taking significant steps to slow the growth of Medicare costs through health insurance reform, not by targeting doctors and seniors, but by eliminating 50 percent of the waste, fraud, and abuse in the system by 2012. This not only strengthens Medicare, it saves taxpayer dollars.

I'm absolutely willing to take the difficult steps necessary to lower the cost of Medicare and put our budget on a more fiscally sustainable path. But I'm not willing to do that by punishing hard-working physicians or the millions of Americans who count on Medicare. That's just wrong. And that's why in the short term, Congress must act to prevent this pay cut to doctors.