

the ability to choose a Medicare option that includes prescription drug benefits.

My framework for Medicare reform also called for immediate help to seniors through a prescription drug discount card. And I'm pleased that both the House and Senate bills would make a discount card available to seniors. The card would help senior citizens by reducing their prescription drug costs, beginning early next year and continuing until the new prescription drug program under Medicare takes full effect in 2006.

The Congress must now pass a final bill that makes the Medicare system work better for America's seniors. This is an issue of vital importance to senior citizens all across our country. They have waited years for a modern Medicare system, and they should not have to wait any longer.

Earlier this month in Chicago, I met Gene Preston and his wife, Dorothy. They spend about \$300 a month on prescription drugs, and they do not have prescription drug coverage. Gene says, "Everything is going up in price. Before, we could save a couple of bucks at the end of the month. But right now we're just holding even, if not going below even." When Congress completes its work, seniors like Gene and Dorothy Preston can look forward to better health care coverage and relief from the rising cost of prescription drugs.

I appreciate the hard work of Members of Congress who have set aside partisan differences to do what is best for the American people. I urge Members to seize this opportunity to achieve a great and compassionate goal. I urge them to finish the job of strengthening and modernizing Medicare, so that I can sign this crucial reform into law.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:35 p.m. on June 26 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Statement on the Death of Katharine Hepburn

June 29, 2003

Katharine Hepburn delighted audiences with her unique talent for more than six decades. She was known for her intelligence and wit and will be remembered as one of the Nation's artistic treasures. Laura joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to her family.

## Remarks to Senior Citizens in Miami, Florida

June 30, 2003

Thank you very much. Thanks for coming. *Sientese, por favor. Muchas gracias.* I'm honored to be here. Thank you for letting me come by to talk about a subject that is, I know, important to many, and that is the opportunities and the chances of modernizing Medicare. I am really glad to have the invitation to come to the Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers. After all, it gives me a chance to check up on *El Gobernador*—[laughter]—*mi hermanito, mi grande hermanito.* [Laughter]

I'm really proud of Jeb. He's—as you know, we've got a very close family, and any chance we have to get together to visit and compare notes about the latest thing Mother has told us to do, it gives us—it's a great opportunity. So—but thanks for letting me come.

I—as Tommy mentioned, that we're making historic progress in Washington. It's really a matter of will. It's a matter of putting aside politics and focusing on what we're supposed to be focusing on, that is, the people. And so today I want to spend some time talking about the historic opportunity we have to modernize Medicare on behalf of America's seniors.

There's some differences between the two bills. The Senate had one version. The House of Representatives had another. But there's a lot of commonality between them. And I'm confident that the Members, when they get back from their Fourth of July breaks, will