
Presidential Documents

Proclamation 7092 of May 4, 1998

Older Americans Month, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In just over a decade from now, the first of America's 77 million baby boomers will celebrate their 65th birthdays. Fortunately, visionary programs like Social Security, Medicare, and the Older Americans Act will help to make life easier for them as they reach this milestone.

For more than 60 years, Social Security has provided our older citizens with a measure of economic security. For more than 30 years, Medicare has given them access to quality health care and the latest in medical advances. And older Americans in need of greater assistance have been able to look to programs under the Older Americans Act for the critical home and community-based care services that have enabled millions of elderly men and women to live independently. Together, these farsighted measures have played a major role in dramatically reducing the poverty rate and extending the longevity of older Americans, allowing our citizens to grow old with dignity and peace of mind.

This year's Older Americans Month celebration centers around the theme "Living Longer; Growing Stronger in America." As we enter a new century and address the challenges of an aging America, we must commit ourselves to the health and welfare of our older Americans and to protecting and strengthening Medicare and Social Security. One of the most important achievements of the Balanced Budget Act that I signed last summer was its unprecedented reform of the Medicare program. This bipartisan effort extends the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for a decade, includes new health plan choices, and adds coverage of preventive benefits. The legislation also established the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare to, among other things, review and analyze the financial condition of Medicare so that it remains as strong for our children as it has been for our parents.

We must respond with equal resolve to the increasing strains on the Social Security system. Now that we have succeeded in dramatically reducing the Federal budget deficit, I have called on the Congress to reserve all of the anticipated budget surplus until we have a comprehensive plan to strengthen Social Security for the 21st century. We are holding a series of regional conferences throughout the year to engage in a national discussion on the future of Social Security, both to raise awareness of the problem and to allow all Americans to contribute their ideas for a solution. At the end of the year, I will host a bipartisan White House Conference on Social Security to summarize the lessons we learn from this dialogue and to map out an effective strategy that will enable us to ensure that Social Security will be there for future generations of Americans.

During Older Americans Month—and throughout the year—I encourage all Americans to pay tribute to our older citizens and to follow their example by planning for the future. As individuals, we should take care of our health through proper diet, exercise, and appropriate preventive care, and we should plan for our future financial security by participating in retirement and savings programs. As families and communities, we can help older Americans to remain active and independent members of our communities.

And as a Nation, we must recognize our obligation to those who will come after us by preserving and strengthening Medicare and Social Security for the 21st century and beyond.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 1998 as Older Americans Month. I call upon Government officials, businesses, communities, educators, volunteers, and all the people of the United States to acknowledge the contributions older Americans have made, and continue to make, to the life of our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.



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