

Chapter 6:

Health Care and Retirement

Health Insurance

Bush Gore

Social Security

Bush Gore

Medicare and Prescription Drugs

Bush Gore

Veterans' Benefits

Bush Gore

Health Insurance - Bush

George W. Bush

Sun City, Florida

September 22, 2000

More Money for Medical Research

As president, I will fund and lead a medical moon shot to reach far beyond what seems possible today and discover new cures for age-old afflictions. This is a great goal for our great country.

If elected president, our government will promote medical advances with new resources and new resolve. For more than a century, the federal government has played a role in medical research. Many of the cures and treatments of modern medicine began with the work of the National Institutes of Health. Discovering an effective treatment for Lupus, new ways to prevent strokes, new treatments for burn victims, and the role of cholesterol in heart disease.

The NIH now supports more than 50,000 scientists, working at 2000 institutions across the United States, and conducts pioneering research at its own facilities. Just this year it led the way in a milestone for all of mankind, helping map the entire human genome. Pursued in the right spirit and guided by the high ethical standards that must guide all research, this knowledge promises great good in the battle against disease.

In Congress, the National Institutes of Health enjoy strong bipartisan support. And your own senator who just introduced me, my good friend Connie Mack has been one of the great champions.

Yet while the budget for the NIH has increased in recent years, too many promising projects go unfunded and unexplored. Almost three-

fourths of the research proposals sent to the NIH do not receive funding.

Faced with the lack of support and funding, young scientists are thinking about and some are leaving research for other careers.

Here's what I'm proposing: A dramatic increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health from the current \$18 billion a year to more than \$27 billion a year by the year 2003.

This is an investment in the health and hope of Americans and of people across the world. And this funding will be a priority of my administration. This new commitment will help spur advances in basic research that applies to all diseases.

Let me describe one area where additional research -- resources might just make a huge difference. At the National Institute of Aging, an arm of the NIH, researchers are pressing the battle against diseases of the aged, diseases that determine the quality of life for seniors, diseases that impose massive costs and increase their dependence on long-term care.

Every success in this battle brings us closer to the goal of making old age a time of health and security and contribution. Diseases like Parkinson's and arthritis grow more common with age. Ten million Americans have osteoporosis, which is responsible for so many serious falls and fractures that raise the risk of disability or death among the elderly.

And Four million Americans, included a beloved former president, live in the fading light called Alzheimer's Disease.

But help and hope are on the way. The last decade has seen many important advances in the fight against Arthritis. Last spring, the "Journal of American Medical Association" reported new insights into the causes of Alzheimer's Disease and studies testing innovative treatments could be completed very soon.

In just the last few years, brand new medications have been developed to ease the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease and give more complete lives to those who suffer from it.

Progress is accelerating. And the goal of my proposal is to accelerate it even further.

The funding I am proposing today will help make progress on a variety of diseases. It will also help us renew a special national commitment to fight one disease in particular: cancer. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in America, claiming more than half million lives every year. And few families are spared some tragic contact with this disease.

Cancer knows no bounds of age, spreading suffering across generations. Of the more than two million new cases of cancer diagnosed every year, nearly 80 percent are people 55 and over. Cancer is also the leading cause of death in children under the age of 15.

Now, three decades ago, President Richard Nixon declared a war on cancer. And since that time, researchers have developed better and earlier methods of detection and promising treatments for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, breast cancer, and Leukemia.

Today, the relative five-year survival rate for people with cancer is 60 percent, far higher than it was 30 years ago.

For hundreds of thousands of people, the word "cancer" no longer spells a death sentence. Cancer sufferers are becoming cancer survivors. This is a great achievement and all Americans share in it.

The National Cancer Institute, a part of the National Institutes of Health, is leading the public effort in the fight against cancer. Their scientists tell us we are beginning to understand the nature of cancer and its genetic causes. The next five or 10 years might actually bring new cures for some forms of cancer.

We must sustain our momentum in this important fight. Under my proposal, by the year 2003, the budget of the National Cancer Institute will more than double for its level in 1998. With this unprecedented commitment, we make take years off the quest for cures. And this may add years to the lives of so many different Americans.

I'm especially pleased to be joined today in supporting these goals by my friend Nancy Brinker founder of the Susan G. Coleman Foundation and Race for the Cure, a great American citizen who is helping raise money in the private sector.

We are joined by Dr. Andrew Von Echenbach, a leading oncologist and vice president of the American Cancer Society.

We must also recognize the crucial role of the private sector in the fight against cancer and other diseases, and we do everything we can -- and must do everything we can to encourage it. Literally, thousands of new medicines are now in various stages of research and testing. These efforts are conducted over many years and require billions of dollars.

And tax policy can either help or hurt in research. I proposed making the Research and Development Tax Credit permanent, encouraging the basic science behind the achievements of medicine.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Affordable, Quality Health Insurance

“We will not nationalize our health care system. We will promote individual choice. We will rely on private insurance. But make no mistake: In my administration, low-income Americans will have access to high-quality health care.” — George W. Bush

Let’s give credit where due: More than 100 million American workers and their families have sound health insurance through their places of employment. The job-creating dynamism of our free economy has thus done more to advance health care than any government program possibly could. The tie between good jobs and good insurance coverage is the single most important factor in advancing health care for those who need it.

That’s why the Republican party remains determined to change federal law to give small employers the liberty to band together to purchase group insurance for their employees at reduced rates, thus providing them that important security. The tragedy is that this urgent expansion of coverage has this far been blocked by veto threats. With a Republican president, that will change.

Uninsured Americans do not have a single face. Their situations vary tremendously, with changes in family status, age, and income. It makes sense to let them decide what kind of coverage best suits their needs. To give them that power of choice, we propose an unprecedented tax credit that will enable 27 million individuals and families to purchase the private health insurance that’s right for them. We also support full deductibility of health insurance premiums for the self-employed.

Truly positive market forces occur when individuals have the ability to make individual marketplace decisions. We therefore strongly encourage support of the emerging concepts of defined contribution plans and medical savings accounts. Individuals should be free to manage their own health care needs through Flexible Savings Accounts (FSAs) and Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs). These initiatives make a government takeover of health care as anachronistic as surgery without anesthesia. We will make these accounts the vanguard of a new consumer rights movement in health care. Individuals should be able to roll over excess FSA dollars from one year to the next, instead of losing their unspent money at the end of each year. MSAs should be a permanent part of tax law, offered to all workers without restriction, with both employers and employees allowed to contribute.

Still, more needs to be done. A major reason why health insurance is so expensive is that many state legislatures now require all insurance policies to provide benefits and treatments which many families do not want and do not need. It is as if automakers were required by law to sell only fully equipped cars, even to buyers who didn't want or need all the extras. These mandates, extending far beyond minimum standards, increase costs for everyone, price low-income families out of the insurance market, and advance the interests of specific providers. They have no place in a health care system based on consumer rights and patient choice.

One area of health care that is sadly ignored is the role of primary and preventive care. This is particularly important in our inner cities and rural communities, where the emergency room may be the only avenue for assistance. People in rural and underserved areas need access to critical primary care. We will boost funding for community health centers and establish stronger public-private partnerships for safety net

providers and hospitals in rural and underserved communities.

When Congressional Republicans established the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) program in 1997, they enabled us to secure health insurance coverage for approximately 8 million youngsters. Republicans want to ensure that children have access to quality health care, and that states have the flexibility to innovate, expand family coverage without interference from the Health Care Financing Administration, and reach out to eligible households that are currently not enrolled in a health insurance program or in Medicaid. In a Republican administration, the first order of business at the Department of Health and Human Services will be to eliminate regulations that are stymieing the effectiveness of S-CHIP program and to stop imposing unwarranted mandates, so states can make sure children who need health care can get it. A streamlined enrollment process and energetic outreach efforts will finally fulfill the promise of S-CHIP. All it takes is caring.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Improving the Quality of Health Care

Protecting Patients' Rights

The tremendous growth of managed health care was driven by a market response to the fractured system of health care delivery that preceded it. One result of that growth has been a welcomed slowing of the rapid increases in health costs that were a regular occurrence of the 1970s and 1980s. However, this has come at the cost of patient dissatisfaction with the at times impersonal or insufficient health care delivery mechanism. Simply put, patients deserve more protections if we are to achieve a patient-centered system that offers high-quality, affordable care. The parents of a sick child should have access to the nearest emergency care. A patient in need of a heart specialist's expertise should be allowed to seek that opinion. A woman with breast cancer should be able to participate in a potentially life-saving clinical trial, and patients should have prompt access to independent physicians, or when appropriate, other health care professionals, to override any wrongful denial of treatment.

The traditional patient-doctor relationship must be preserved. Medical decision-making should be in the hands of physicians and their patients. In cases when a health plan denies treatment, a rapid appeals process geared toward ensuring that patients receive the right treatment without delays that might threaten a patient's health — as opposed to a lengthy trial — must be readily accessible to everyone in all health plans. We believe a quick and fair resolution to treatment disputes without going to court is the best result. However, as a last resort, we also

support a patient's right to adjudicate claims in court to receive necessary medical care. In the interest of fairness to the thousands of businesses that purchase health benefits for their employees and for physicians who care for patients, employers and physicians should not be liable for the actions of the health plan and should be shielded from frivolous and unnecessary lawsuits.

Our overall philosophy is to trust state and local government to know what best suits the needs of their people. We believe the federal government should respect the states' traditional authority to regulate health insurance, health care professionals, and health practice guidelines through their medical boards.

Medical Errors and Malpractice Reform

Our goal is to reduce the rate of medical errors, especially those that result in a patient's death. We will support scientific research to provide the public and health care providers with information about why these errors occur and what can be done to prevent them. We should not displace the current, very effective hospital peer review system.

Another key step will be reform of malpractice law. In its current form, it encourages health care providers to conceal even innocent mistakes, lest they be subject to vilifying publicity through the trial lawyers' system of jackpot justice. That is why a cloak of secrecy envelops operating rooms. We must open up the free flow of information concerning medical errors, both to protect patients and to reduce the cost of modern medicine. Patients who are genuinely injured should be rightly compensated, but the punitive and random aspects of today's litigation lottery cry out for reform. Just as we hold all health care personnel to the highest standards, so too must public policy respect their ethical conscience. No individual or institution should be compelled to assist in providing any medical service that violates their moral or

religious convictions.

Women's Health

As Republicans, we hold dear the health and vitality of our families. Our efforts to build healthier families must begin with women — our mothers, daughters, grandmothers and grand-daughters. This nation needs far greater focus on the needs of women who have historically been underrepresented in medical research and access to the proper level of medical attention. We are reversing this historic trend.

Across this country, and at all levels of government, Republicans are at the forefront in aggressively developing health care initiatives targeted specifically at the needs of women. The enormous increases in the NIH budget brought about by the Republican Congress will make possible aggressive new research and clinical trials into diseases and health issues that disproportionately affect women as well as into conditions that affect the elderly, the majority of whom are women. And we are leading efforts to reach out to underserved and minority female populations, where disparities persist in life expectancy, infant mortality and death rates from cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

Republicans are dedicated to pursuing comprehensive women's health care initiatives that include access to state-of-the-art medical advances and technology; equality for women in the delivery of health care services; medical research that focuses specifically on women; appropriate representation of women in clinical trials; and direct access to women's health providers.

The increasing focus upon health problems of the very elderly, the great majority of whom are women, holds the promise of advances concerning osteoporosis and other ailments which should no longer be considered the inevitable price of old age. Because nutrition is intimately related to health, we advocate state flexibility in managing the various

federal nutrition programs for low-income families, especially those receiving TANF assistance, most of whom are female-headed households. Their transition to jobs and independence should include nutritional improvement both for mothers and for their children.

The united efforts of Republican leaders at all levels of government and within our communities will make sure that women gain greater access to relevant care, research, and education on health care issues important to them.

Children's Health

The huge strides we have already made in improving children's health must be balanced against sobering statistics. Asthma affects nearly five million children, and the incidence is dramatically increasing. Childhood obesity has jumped 100 percent in the last 15 years and can be a forerunner of the most serious illnesses later in life. Diabetes is now the second most common chronic disease in children. Youth drug abuse has more than doubled in the past eight years. Smoking rates for youth have risen alarmingly. Every year, 2,500 babies are born with fetal alcohol syndrome. So much of the suffering caused by childhood diseases can be prevented — by increasing immunization rates; by increasing resources for biomedical research, not by crippling pharmaceutical progress; by sensible strategies against teen smoking rather than the folly of prohibition; by a real war on drugs in place of the white flag policies of recent years. Our commitment is to address the emotional, behavioral, and mental illnesses affecting children. With parental involvement as the critical component, we can help our youth make the healthy and the right choice in avoiding risk behaviors involving alcohol, drugs, premarital sex, tobacco, and violence.

Biomedical Research

Recognizing the critical importance of research, the Republican

Congress, rejecting the administration's lower figures, has already begun to fulfill its pledge to double funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This is one of the few areas in which government investment yields tangible results; and those benefits can be greatest for currently underserved and minority populations, in which disparities persist in life expectancy, infant mortality, as well as death rates from heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. With one out of four Americans contracting cancer, we need to increase not only research but also early detection and prevention efforts. Since Republicans took control of Congress in January 1995, our party has led in setting sound HIV/AIDS policy, including increased research funding and access to health services. We remain committed to, and place a high priority on, finding a cure for HIV/AIDS. With the enormous increase in resources for biomedical research comes accountability for its use, as well as responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards. We applaud congressional Republicans for the steps they have taken for protection of human embryos and against human cloning, the trafficking in fetal tissue organs, and related abuses.

Academic Medical Centers

Adequate government reimbursement for medical services is critical to our nation's comprehensive academic medical centers, which serve as the primary health care resource for our poorest citizens, provide cutting-edge medical discovery, and teach and train our next generation of physicians.

Medical Privacy

The revolution in information and medical technology has created concerns about who has access to personal data — and how it might be used. Patients and their families should feel free to share all medical information with their doctor, but they will feel safe in doing so only if

that information is protected. A related concern is genetic discrimination, now that genetic testing will become a routine part of medical health care. Well-conceived, thoughtful action is clearly needed, action that will protect and not harm patients. In both Congress and the Executive Branch, Republicans will work with patients, health care providers, researchers, and insurers to establish new rules for dealing with these new challenges.

Safe Clinical Trials

Ensuring the safety of patients who participate in investigational clinical trials is fundamental to the future of medical innovation. The lack of oversight by the current administration in gene therapy trials put patients at risk and undermined critical research. A Republican administration will require the Food and Drug Administration and NIH to make patient protection a priority in clinical trial research.

Emerging Threats and Bioterrorism. The current administration has left our public health system inadequate to respond to the threats of emerging infectious diseases and the possibility of bioterrorism. We pledge to ensure the ability of the public health service to detect, track, and prevent infectious outbreaks, whether natural or provoked by those who hate America.

Wellness. We repeat our statement that America has the finest health care delivery system that is still the envy of the world. We also recognize that an individual's health is often a reflection of the everyday choices made.

While government's role is to help ensure a quality health care system, only individuals can make healthy choices.

Health Insurance - Gore

Al Gore

June 20, 2000

TV Ad: "Patients"



[Announcer]:

The issue: a real patients' bill of rights.

[Gore]:

You better believe that there are insurance companies out there that don't want to see changes that will give the decisions on your health care back to the doctors and the nurses.

[Announcer]:

The Al Gore plan ensures patients access to specialists, safeguards to make sure doctors -- not bureaucrats -- make medical decisions, stops HMOs from withholding information on treatment options to save money.

Taking on the insurance companies to pass a patients' bill of rights once and for all.

(On screen: The Gore Plan: A Real Patients' Bill of Rights; www.1-877-leadnow.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)



IN THEIR OWN WORDS
SOURCEBOOK FOR THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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Al Gore

American Federation of Teachers

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

July 5, 2000

Universal Health Coverage

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Today, I want to talk with you not only about the health of America's schools, but about the health of America's families. You and I both know that our future begins in the classroom. So when I hear politicians trying to tear down America's teachers, I have to wonder: How long would they survive in a room with 25 fourteen-year-olds.

...

One of the proudest boasts of the AFT is that you not only fight for progress in the classroom - you fight for progress for working families all across the board. One of your top priority issues this year is health care. And that's something else I share with you, because it's one of my top priority issues, too.

All week long—all across America—I am pressing the case for quality, affordable health care for all of America's families.

We must use our prosperity for this great purpose. We must take steps, both practical and bold, that move us to universal health coverage for everyone in the United States of America.

Parents should never have to sit up at night, worried about how they will pay the bill if one of their children gets sick. I am committed to bring access to fully affordable health coverage to every child in this nation by the end of the next Presidential term.

And then we should cover the millions of uninsured parents of those children.

...

As President, I will fight for health coverage for those who work in small businesses. I'll offer tax breaks to help individuals pay for health insurance. I believe we must move step-by-step toward access to health care for 100 percent of our people. I would rather have targeted tax cuts to help working families pay for health insurance than a massive tax cut that primarily benefits the top ten percent.

But it's not enough to expand coverage; we must ensure that Americans who have coverage get the best care, not just the cheapest care.

I don't want any more life-and-death decisions made by HMO bureaucrats at the other end of a telephone line—people with no license to practice medicine, and no right to play God.

...

There's an emergency in America, alright—and it's the lack of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

Our opponents try to pretend they have an answer. They even dare to call it the Patients' Bill of Rights. They stole the name - but not the commitment. Because it is really a bill of omissions. It leaves out 110 million Americans. It leaves out a real guarantee of a right to see a specialist. It leaves out a real guarantee that you can go to the nearest emergency room, not just the one, miles away, paid for by the HMO.

This is not a Patients' Bill of Rights; it's a blank check for the insurance industry to keep doing what's wrong.

I have taken on that industry in the past, and I will take it on again as President until we make a real, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights the law of our land - and give medical decisions back to doctors, nurses, and families.

Finally, we must address the health care needs of our mothers and

fathers. That begins with a rock-solid commitment to Medicare. We know what the other side really thinks of Medicare. They were so determined to slash it that they shut down the government. But the American people shut them down - and we're never going to let them do that again.

We'll put both Social Security and Medicare in an iron-clad lock-box where the politicians can't touch them. We'll take them both off-budget, so the Social Security and Medicare trust funds can never be used as a piggy bank to pay for other spending.

Let's not just lock Medicare down, let's build it up. Let's update Medicare with a prescription drug benefit for all our seniors - so they can afford the life improving - often life-saving - medicines they depend on.

You know as well as I do: prescription drugs today are not at the margins of health care; they are often the heart of treatment and cure.

I have met seniors who cut their dosages, gambling with their health to save precious pills and dollars. I have met seniors whose monthly prescription drug costs are greater than their monthly Social Security checks.

We know that one part of the problem is drug company price-gouging. Don't get me wrong: I'm all for reasonable profits. But it's a fact that the pharmaceutical industry today has higher profits than just about any other industry in America. And not all of that money is going back into research; in fact, millions of dollars are going into a phony coalition called "Citizens for Better Medicare" - which is polluting the public airwaves with special-interest TV ads designed to deceive the American people about a prescription drug benefit.

You know, at least there ought to be a little truth in advertising; they ought to call it "Citizens for Bad Medicare." And that's what they are promoting - our opponents' plan, which tells seniors to go beg the HMO's and the insurance companies for help with prescription drugs.

Join with me, and we will stand up to the big drug companies, and we will guarantee prescription drugs as a matter of right—for every senior in America.

You and I know that expanding health coverage and raising its quality will not be easy. It will take real, determined, persistent leadership. It will take a commitment to stand up to entrenched interests, and put the health of our people first.

I say to you today: on behalf of the hard-working people of this country, I want to lead this fight, and I intend to win this fight.

And every step of the way, I ask you to fight alongside me. Consider this fact: there are four million kids who are in our school lunch programs today who don't have any health insurance. And so I'll make you an offer: as President, I'll make sure they are covered—and then let's work together to make sure they then get enrolled.

We have come a long way together since 1992. America has done well. But America can do better. We can shape a future where a family's health is never again determined by a family's wealth.

If you believe, as I do, that we can give our kids not just the best education, but a healthy start in life—then join with me and we will cover every child in America.

If you believe, as I do, that medical decisions can be based on medicine, and not on an accountant's spreadsheet—then join with me, and we will pass a Patients' Bill of Rights.

If you believe, as I do, that our parents and grandparents deserve all the remarkable breakthroughs of medical science, right in their own medicine cabinets—then join with me and we will secure a prescription drug benefit under Medicare for all our seniors.

If you believe, as I do, that we can be better off still - not just in terms of our affluence, but in terms of our spirit—four years from this

day, then join with me. We will take on the vested interests, we will move toward universal health coverage, and in every area we will give all our people the power to make their own lives better.

And if you allow yourselves to believe, without reservation, that we can do what's right and be the better for it, then we will accomplish what we set our minds to do.

Al Gore

The National Council of La Raza

San Diego, CA

July 7, 2000

Heath Care for Latinos

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Latinos are the most underinsured and uninsured population in the United States of America. And Latino children are more likely than any other children in America to go without any health insurance. We have to make up our minds: Is that a priority for our nation or not? Let me tell you. The future of the United States of America depends upon the health and well-being and educational quality of this generation of Latino children. We need to take care of their health. We need to give them a good education. We need to give them a clean environment. We need to make sure that they have the health coverage that they need 'cause they're our future.

Today more than one-in-four Latino children have no health insurance whatsoever. How many parents stay up through the night worrying about a sick child knowing that the family doesn't have the resources to do what's needed? Now you will hear from my opponent and you will hear some beautiful (Spanish word spoken), but I want you to look at the record of health care for Latinos and Latino children in the state of Texas. The record stands out as the worst record of any of the 50 states. Compare the record to the (Spanish word spoken). Compare the record to the rhetoric.

...

Al Gore

The AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department Convention

Washington, D.C.

July 21, 2000

Setting Priority – Health Care

...

And a strong America must be a healthy America. It's time to move step by step toward universal health insurance, starting with every child in America within the next four years. I'll give them health insurance that's affordable and high quality. And incidentally, I think it is obviously long past time for us to pass a law that takes the medical decisions away from the accountants for the HMOs and the insurance companies and gives those decisions back to the doctors – and the nurses and the health care professionals. We need a real patients' bill of rights in this country.

And I'll tell you another thing. I have talked to seniors all across America who have told me of the hardships they encounter in trying to pay for their prescription medicine. I talked with a woman in New England who told me of her regular habit of occasionally taking all the pill bottles out and putting them on the breakfast table and going through them one by one and counting pennies as she counted the pills, and unilaterally making decisions to cut some of the doses in half and eliminate entirely some of the other medicines. You know, we shouldn't put our seniors in that situation.

I talked with a woman in Connecticut who showed me her prescription drug bills, and they amounted to more each month than her entire Social Security check. I talked with a woman in St. Louis two weeks ago who described the same conflict that she had, and told me how she had gone to buy food at a discount food warehouse and ended

up with 16 boxes of macaroni and cheese because it was on sale, and she was eating that every meal. I talked with a woman in Pennsylvania who had just lost her eyesight due to advancing diabetes; she was in her 70s, and the sweetest person. But it turned out that she did not have enough money left over for any meals, so she was eating one meal a day served at the senior center.

Well now, you know, this is the generation that won World War II and fought our way through the Depression and now, in an era when prescription medicine has become much more expensive and plays a much bigger part in health care, I think it's time to have a prescription drug benefit under the Medicare program and help our seniors with these bills. I'm for it, and the other guy is against it. He wants to give the money to the insurance companies. I want to give it to the people. It's a very clear contrast.

Now, Governor Bush has a different approach. I fight for the people, he is with the powerful. All week long, I've been talking about the record in Governor Bush's Texas, and this is why. What matters in this race isn't nice-sounding speeches, but whether or not you're willing to roll up your sleeves and fight for the people. What matters to our country's future isn't personalities and photo opportunities, but whose side you're on and what you're willing to do about it.

One year ago, Texas had the biggest budget surplus in that state's history. Governor Bush's top priority was a big tax break for the powerful interests, and now, in the midst of the strongest national economy ever in history, Texas has virtually eliminated that surplus and has a budget shortfall. Now, Governor Bush wants to bring those same budget-busting tax policies to the nation as a whole. Which do you think is more important, his rhetoric or his record? Listen to these facts:

Texas is second in the nation for children living in poverty; second in

the nation for people who live in hunger; worst in the nation for families that have no health insurance; third-worst—it's rated third-worst place in America to raise a child; first in the nation in industrial pollution; third in asthma deaths; and I could go on.

And I want you to know I am not blaming him for all those problems, because many of them have been building for a while. But the—but it is fair to ask: What did he do about those problems? What did he do, for example, to help poor children?

If you were—just think of it. If you were governor of a state that had the worst record of any state in giving health care to the families of your state, and then all of a sudden you found yourself with the biggest budget surplus in the history of your state, don't you think you would consider using some of that surplus to maybe move your state from number 50 to, say, 45 or maybe even higher? I mean, seriously. I mean, wouldn't you think that? I would, of course, and shoot higher than that.

But his top priority was a tax cut for the powerful interests. And the first measure he signed was a tax cut for the oil industry, and he—and it was labeled an “emergency measure.”

Well, I talked with some families yesterday whose children need health care, and even though they're eligible for the so-called CHIP program, they're not getting it because the Bush administration there has erected so many obstacles to them getting health care that they haven't been able yet to fight their way through it.

Al Gore

August 2, 2000

TV Ad: "Health Comparative"



[Announcer]:

The issue: health care. Al Gore is for a real patients' bill of rights and a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

George W. Bush says no.

(Source: CNN, 7/14/99; L.A. Times, 6/6/00)

He sides with the big drug companies, the HMOs and the insurance industry.

(Source: Los Angeles Times, 10/30/98)

In Texas, Bush even opposed health coverage for 200,000 more children.

(Source: Austin American-Statesman, 2/26/99 & 2/27/99)

Texas now ranks second to last in America for children with health insurance...

(Source: Dallas Morning News, 4/1/00)

... and last for people with health coverage.

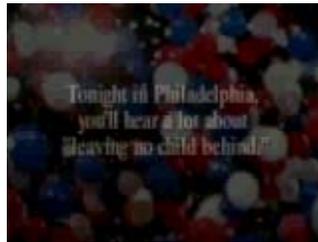
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 10/99)

George Bush -- his plan protects special interests instead of working families. *(On screen: 1800thefacts.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)*

Al Gore

August 2, 2000

TV Ad: "Texas Children"



[Announcer]:

Tonight in Philadelphia you'll hear a lot about "leaving no child behind."

Meanwhile, back in Texas, George W. Bush opposed health coverage for 200,000 more children.

(On screen: Meanwhile back in Texas... George W. Bush opposed health coverage for 200,000 children in need. Source: New Republic, 7/12/99)

The state ranked second to last in children with health insurance.

(On screen: Texas ranked second to last in children with health insurance. Source: Dallas Morning News, 3/5/99)

Get the facts.

(On screen: For the facts, visit www.texasunderbush.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

Al Gore

Atlanta, Georgia

August 10, 2000

Giving Medical Decisions back to the Doctors

...

It means finally taking those medical decisions away from bureaucrats who work for HMOs and don't have a license to practice medicine and don't have a right to play God and give the medical decisions back to the doctors and the nurses and the health care professionals. It means recognizing that our seniors in America now have prescription drug bills that sometimes rival their Social Security checks. The other side wants to give money to insurance companies and then give you the option of going to insurance companies and saying, please help me with my prescription drug bills.

Well, we're having enough trouble with the insurance companies as it is, but even the insurance companies say that wouldn't work.

Joe Lieberman and I fight for people and we stand for the proposition: You elect us and we will give senior citizens a prescription drug benefit under the Medicare program so they can afford to pay their bill.

...

Al Gore

Rio Bravo Park

Albuquerque, New Mexico

August 29, 2000

Affordable Health Care for Every Child in America

...

I'll be talking about the need for a patients' bill of rights to take the medical decisions away from the bean counters who work for the HMOs and the insurance companies and give the decisions back to the doctors and the nurses, and the health care professionals, the people who have the expertise to make those decisions.

But today, I want to talk about how we can get to universal health care, step-by-step, starting with every child in America in the next four years. We need to cover every single child within this next presidential term.

And with your help, we will do this.

(SPEAKING IN SPANISH)

And for all of the families in this South Valley, whether you come from an Indian family, whether you consider yourselves Chicano, Spanish, Mexican, Hispanic, Anglo, whatever, African-American, whatever you consider yourselves you're an American, you live here, you are part of our nation, and every single child and every family ought to have health care -- good, high-quality health care -- every child.

Now, here is how I propose to do it: by making it a top priority and by refusing to go along with a proposal to squander the entire budget surplus on a giant tax cut for the wealthy at the expense of the middle class that stops our prosperity and progress; and instead, using the surplus to invest in people, balance the budget, keep paying down the

national debt, keep our prosperity going and make sure that we invest in education, health care, a secure retirement, and the kind of quality of life that people here in the South Valley and in all parts of America, have a right to expect.

Now we have a beginning for the effort to ensure every child. It's called the CHIP program, the Child Health Insurance Program. But it doesn't go as far as it should.

I want to the expand it dramatically. I want to make a commitment to every child, and then raise the eligibility levels for that CHIP program to two and a half times the poverty rate. And all families under that level, will be able to get health insurance for the parents of the children, as well as just the children, so that the entire family can receive coverage.

And those above 250 percent of the poverty rate will be able to buy into the program with affordable premiums.

Now right now, what you have is a very uneven situation state-by-state. In some states -- and incidentally I want to thank those who had that hot air balloon up and going at the beginning of this event. Tipper came out for the great balloon festival and went up in a balloon a few months ago. And it's one thing that all of us associate with Albuquerque, and I appreciate that.

Now, right now, in America, there are many states that put up barriers to participation in this child health program, because it's a partnership between the national government and each state government, and some states don't really want to put their own money into the program. And so they make it difficult for families to participate, and they erect road blocks and barriers that require regular renewal of eligibility. Some states require you to come in and have a face- to-face meetings like it was a job interview instead of just getting health care for children. A lot of states make it very difficult, to the point where millions

of children who are eligible today, don't get what they're eligible to receive.

We need to change that. We need to make these children presumptively eligible. In other words, we should assume that they're covered until it's established that they're not covered. And we should prevent states from requiring a recertification every six months or so.

I think that once we cover every child and the parents of those children up to two and a half times the poverty rate, we will be much closer to having universal health insurance for all of our people. We can't get everyone at the same time. We need to build on the strengths of the system that we now have and fill in the gaps. And that's what we are going to do.

...

Al Gore

August 31, 2000

TV Ad: "Bean Counter"



[Gore]:

If your doctor says you need a particular specialist or some treatment, if you've got an HMO or an insurance company, a lot of times some bean counter behind a computer terminal, who doesn't have a license to practice medicine and doesn't have a right to play God, will overrule the doctor's orders.

I'm telling you we need a patients' bill of rights to take the medical decisions away from the HMOs and insurance companies and give them back to the doctors and the nurses.

(On screen: Al Gore, Fighting for us; www.algore.com; Paid for by Gore/Lieberman Inc.)

Al Gore

September 6, 2000

TV Ad: "Judge"



[Announcer]:

George W. Bush says he has a plan for children's health care. But why hasn't he done it in Texas? Texas ranks 49th out of 50 in providing health care coverage to kids.

(On screen: "Texas ranks 49th out of 50," Source: Dallas Morning News, 3/2/99)

It's so bad, a federal judge just ruled Texas must take immediate corrective action.

(On screen: "Corrective action," Source: U.S. District Court Opinion, 8/14/00; Associated Press, 8/30/00)

The judge's findings: Bush's administration broke a promise to improve health care for kids.

(Headline on screen: "Texas kids robbed of health benefits" -- New York Daily News, 8/31/00)

The needs of abused kids are neglected. Texas failed to inform families of health coverage available to a million children.

(On screen: Source: U.S. District Court, 8/14/00)

The Bush record. It's becoming an issue.

(On screen: 1800thefacts.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

Al Gore

September 12, 2000

TV Ad: "Ian"



[Announcer]:

Medical errors at birth left Ian Malone needing constant care. But the HMO began cutting them off against doctor's orders.

[Christine Malone]:

We had gotten to the point of complete desperation.

[Announcer]:

Al Gore heard their story and fought back.

[Malone]:

He told the insurance company, 'Don't do this. Don't cut this child's coverage.'

[Announcer]:

Al Gore got the Malone family the help they needed.

(Headline on screen: "Gore's Intervention Restores Care for Ill Baby " -- New York Times, Feb. 29, 2000)

But knowing that all families need protection from HMO abuses, he's fighting for a real patients' bill of rights.

(Headline on screen: "Details bedevil popular patients' rights bill" -- AP, Jan. 12, 2000)

[Malone]:

Even if he fought half as hard for the people of our country as he did for my son, nobody loses.

(On screen: www.algore.com; Paid for by Gore/Lieberman, Inc.)

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Accessible, Affordable, Quality Health Care

For fifty years, the Democratic Party has been engaged in a battle to provide the kind of health care a great nation owes its people. We reaffirm our commitment to take concrete, specific, realistic steps to move toward the day when every American has affordable health coverage. And we will not rest until the job is done.

During the past eight years, Democrats have helped Americans keep their doctor when they lose or change jobs. We passed the Child Health Insurance Program to help states provide health coverage to millions of uninsured children - the largest single investment in children's health in a 35 years. We kept solvent a Medicare system that was scheduled to go bankrupt this year. We brought immunization rates to an all-time high.

In contrast, the Republican Party has refused to use one penny of the surplus to secure the solvency of Medicare and has supported plans that would increase Medicare premiums, force elderly patients into HMOs and raise the eligibility age for Medicare to 67. They have adamantly opposed the Patients' Bill of Rights and proposed instead a mirage "Patient's Bill of Goods" that would leave out a real guarantee of the right to see a specialist and assurances that you can go to the nearest emergency room - and leave out 135 million Americans in the cold.

Instead of the guaranteed, universal prescription drug benefit that Democrats believe should be added to Medicare, Republicans are proposing to leave to insurance companies the decisions about whether and where a drug benefit might be offered, what it would include, and

how much it would cost. Studies suggest that less than half of seniors will be able to use this benefit.

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: A Real Patients' Bill of Rights

Medical decisions should be made by patients and their doctors and nurses, not accountants and bureaucrats at the end of a phone line a thousand miles away. It is time we meaningfully addressed concerns about the quality of care and about the decline of patient, access, trust, and satisfaction. People need to get the health care they need, when they need it, without having to leap endless hurdles. Americans need a real, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights with the right to see a specialist, the right to appeal decisions to an outside board, guaranteed coverage of emergency room care, and the right to sue when they are unfairly denied coverage.

Al Gore will work with a wide range of stakeholders to develop a national strategy to reduce medical errors, including appropriate public reporting, analysis of root causes, and development of error prevention models. Democrats also believe that doctors, nurses, and other health care practitioners must be allowed to advocate freely on behalf of their patients.

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Medical Research & Mental Health

Fighting Diseases

Our newest medical miracles give us the chance to make significant progress in battling some of the most dreaded diseases. Democrats believe that we must invest in biomedical research and continue to fight and conquer everything from AIDS to Alzheimers to Diabetes to Parkinsons to spinal cord injuries. We must speed up the development of new drugs and get them to patients sooner while maintaining essential health and safety standards. We should allow stem cell research to make important new discoveries. We should expand prevention and widen access to clinical trials. And we should devote more resources to eliminating disease disparities among racial and ethnic groups.

Our nation must do all it can to focus its efforts on fighting HIV and AIDS. A top priority for Democrats will be the continued investment in research, prevention, care, treatment, and we are deeply committed to the search for a cure. Democrats continue to support important programs such as the Ryan White CARE Act, the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS program, and incentives to return Americans with HIV/AIDS to work.

For a generation, America has been waging a war on cancer. Al Gore believes it is time we started winning it. Because of astonishing scientific breakthroughs, the day that America is cancer-free is within reach. With the completion of the draft of the Human Genome, we are on the verge of cracking cancer's secret code. Democrats believe in taking advantage of this progress by doubling federal cancer research.

Party Platform: Fighting Teen Smoking

Al Gore is committed to dramatically reducing teen smoking in America. It is time we treated underage tobacco use like the health crisis it is. That's why we need to give the FDA full authority to keep cigarettes away from children. We must match the power of big tobacco's advertising dollars with a counter-campaign that tells kids the truth about the dangers of smoking and the risks of cancer to themselves and to others through second-hand smoke. And we should double our investment in efforts to prevent teen smoking and break the deadly grip of nicotine addiction.

State attorneys general across America have recovered billions of dollars from the tobacco industry for damages caused by tobaccos' advertising directed at our children and for the death and disease created by cigarettes. Now Republicans are trying to stop the United States Justice Department from pursuing similar litigation to hold the tobacco companies accountable for the damages they have caused to American taxpayers. We believe it is wrong to insulate the tobacco companies from liability for their wrongdoing.

Mental Health

Mental illness has long been concealed behind a shroud of silence and shame. Mental illness affects nearly one in five Americans each year, but nearly two-thirds of those Americans affected by mental disorders do not receive help. When mental illness goes untreated, undiagnosed, and unmentioned, people are denied the opportunity to live full lives and our nation is denied their full contribution. Democrats believe in supporting families caring for loved ones with mental illness by strengthening our community mental health system, providing access to full mental health coverage for every child in America, giving teachers and schools more mental health resources, and ensuring that mental illness and physical

illness are treated equally by our nation's health plans.

Social Security - Bush

George W. Bush

June 13, 2000

TV Ad: "Social Security"



[Announcer]:

With our nation at peace and more prosperous than ever, now is the time to find real solutions to America's problems.

George Bush knows that to keep our commitment to seniors we must strengthen and improve Social Security now -- or the retirement of the Baby Boom generation will push it near bankruptcy. He's proposing a bipartisan plan to strengthen and improve Social Security.

The Bush plan guarantees everyone at or near retirement every dollar of their benefits. No cuts in Social Security. You paid into it; it's your money, and it will be there for you. And the Bush plan gives younger workers a choice to invest a small part of their Social Security in sound investments they control for higher returns.

Learn more about George Bush's voluntary plan for personal Social Security retirement accounts. The Bush blueprint: Better for seniors today, better for all of us tomorrow.

(On screen: www.SocialSecurityBlueprint.com; Paid for by the Republican National Committee)

George W. Bush

June 15, 2000

TV Ad: "This Generation"



[Bush]:

Government has made a commitment, and you have made your plans.

These promises will be honored.

[Announcer]:

George Bush's plan strengthens Social Security. It guarantees everyone at or near retirement every dollar of their benefits. No cuts in Social Security. And the Bush plan gives younger workers the choice to put a small part of their Social Security in sound investments they control -- for higher returns.

[Bush]:

This generation will save Social Security.

(On screen: www.SocialSecurityBlueprint.com; Paid for by the Republican Party of [state name])

George W. Bush

July 20, 2000

TV Ad: "Once"



(On screen: georgewbush.com)

[Announcer]:

Once in a hundred years our nation has this chance -- to be at peace, to be prosperous, to do something good with it all. This is the time to tackle the tough things.

Shouldn't our grandkids find Social Security secure? Shouldn't we raise standards so every child learns to read? Shouldn't we keep America strong and rebuild our military? Shouldn't the president unite -- not divide -- and renew America's purpose?

George W. Bush for president.

(On screen: Paid for by Bush for President, Inc.; George W. Bush for President)

George W. Bush

Ohio

July 31, 2000

Conserving Social Security for the Younger Generation

...

I'm running to do the right thing for America, and the right thing for America is to save Social Security.

I want the folks of Ohio, I want the senior citizens of Ohio, to ignore all that old-style politics that's going to go on. You're going to turn on your TV and you're going to hear George W. Bush is going to take away your Social Security check. That's the old style. That's exactly the kind of politics we're going to replace in Washington, D.C.

Here's my promise: If you're dependent upon Social Security, nothing's going to change for you. No way will this, no way will this government not fulfill its promise to the people getting a Social Security check.

But there are younger people here too. And we need a president who understands that unless we think differently, there will be no Social Security system the way we know it in the year 2037. There are some younger folks here, and we better trust younger people to manage some of your own money in the private markets, to take...

...

George W. Bush

Bartlett, Tennessee

August 18, 2000

Social Security for Seniors and the Younger Generation

...

We will seize this moment. We will seize this moment. We will lead this country. It is time to change the entitlement systems, that Social Security system. I want the seniors of Tennessee to hear me loud and clear. Get ready. The campaign of the past is coming your way. They're going to run TV ads that I'm confident will say, "If you elect George Bush and Dick Cheney, they will take away your Social Security check." Don't believe a word of it.

Here's my promise -- here's my promise: If you're getting a Social Security check, the United States will keep its promise. We will not let you down. It is the sacred promise that the Bush-Cheney administration will keep.

But if you're a younger worker, if you're somebody coming up, if you're somebody who's wondering whether there will be a Social Security system available for you in years coming, you better get a president who's willing to think differently from the status quo. Here's my vision: We're going to trust you, at your choice, to manage your own money in the private markets.

Last night they were talking about making sure the Medicare system has prescription drugs. It's amazing that they're still talking about it after seven years of power. It's time to get a president who's willing to work with Republicans and Democrats, that will say there will be a prescription drug program for seniors who need it.

...

George W. Bush

September 5, 2000

TV Ad: "Wanda"



[Announcer]:

Have you heard about Al Gore's raid on your Social Security check?

Every month the government will take the new Medicare drug premium out of your check. Twenty-five dollars a month in 2002, and later it grows to \$51 a month.

I've got a message for Al Gore: Get your hands off my Social Security check! It's not enough now. I want no part of Al Gore's Medicare scheme.

(On screen: Al Gore: Leave our Social Security checks alone; Paid for by Republican Leadership Coalition)

George W. Bush

Florida

September 11, 2000

No Changes in Social Security

I'm running to make sure the budget is properly managed. I'm going to explain loud and clear the budget as I travel the country, that the budget surplus is extra money and what do we do with it.

Today I was with a young couple that's working hard to raise three children. My point of view to them was we're going to spend some of that money on needed projects that I'm going to discuss here in a second, that half the surplus needs to go to make sure the promise of Social Security is kept.

But I want those who are working hard to provide for their families, those who are wondering whether they got enough time during the day to spend time with their children, to have some of the surplus for themselves. I want to send some of that money back, after we meet our priorities. I want to share some of that surplus with the hard-working people in America.

See, I think -- I think -- I think we ought to trust families with their own money to save and dream and build.

Let me say something about Social Security. Look, I understand politics. Jeb got a pretty good lesson of old-style politics in 1994. I don't remember if you remember the scare tactics -- the scare tactics that go on in a state like this.

The easiest thing to do is not have a platform and try to scare somebody. That's not the kind of campaign -- we don't run those kind of campaigns. We run campaigns that are saying, Here's what we're going to do.

Now, I promise you, unless something dramatically has changed, the same old scare tactics politics will come into Florida. They'll be saying, You know, if George W. becomes the president, he's going to take away your Social Security check. Don't believe it. Here's my pledge to the people of Florida: A promise made by our government will be a promise kept when I become the president of the United States.

You can't scare somebody and try to lead them. That's short-term politics. What this country needs is somebody that says, Here's the agenda, here's where our heart is, let's bring people together to get it done.

And that's what I want to discuss today -- and that is the need to make sure our seniors have got peace of mind, after living a full life and doing their duty as Americans, to make sure the seniors who live in this country have got peace of mind.

Ms. Amsterdam here said -- she said, I want to tell you something, Governor, you need to understand how seniors think. She said, We want peace of mind, we don't want confusion in our lives.

Here's my point: The government -- the government has a solemn obligation to help our seniors as they get into the twilight of their years. That's a federal responsibility. It's going to be a priority of mine.

I'm sure you've heard it in the past, but the distinguishing feature about this campaign as opposed to others is that I'm the kind of fellow who does in office what I said I'm going to do on the campaign trail. It's been my record as governor of Texas.

...

George W. Bush

California Republican Party Convention

Austin, Texas

September 16, 2000

Social Security: Gore Plan vs. Mine

...

On Social Security, I will lead bipartisan reform to preserve and protect that program. For seniors, nothing will change. They've earned their benefits, they've made their plans and government will keep its promises.

To younger workers, we will give the option of putting part of their savings into sound investments that they will own and control. It won't just be their program, it will be their property.

Even a worker who chose only the safest investment in the world – an inflation-adjusted U.S. government bond – would still receive twice the rate of return of Social Security.

My opponent has a Social Security plan too. He says he wants to help low income people save for retirement – but his program fails to help those living paycheck to paycheck, who don't have extra money to save.

Social Security has long-term financial problems. His plan does nothing to address them.

He relies on accounting gimmicks and massive IOUs that our children will have to pay.

He calls this plan "Social Security Plus." And it is a good name. The Gore plan is Social Security, plus massive government debt. Social Security, plus a staggering tax increase on the next generation.

...

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Income Security

Income Security

There are those who say Americans must choose between security and freedom. They are wrong. Security and liberty are not enemies. When properly balanced, they are kindred means for advancing individual achievement. In the century past, that balance was not always maintained. There were times when the exercise of independence left too many Americans insecure, especially in their old age. And there were more times when the governmental imposition of security smothered the freedoms that should be at the center of American life.

The Republican vision for a good society restores the balance most Americans seek, by maintaining the structures that guard against unforeseen misfortune and, at the same time, encouraging individual decision-making and personal control.

Income Security for Older Americans

For most of us, retirement holds both promise and problems. Today's elderly have far more economic security than earlier generations; and opportunities for learning, teaching, and leading are greater than ever. Public policy must encourage, not inhibit, this. To that end, for half a century, the Republican Party fought to repeal the Democrats' earnings limitation on Social Security recipients, which took away a dollar for every three they earned. That fight has finally been won, and we salute congressional Republicans for leading it. We likewise note with pride the Republican legislation that has simplified pension law and made it easier for more businesses, especially small ones, to offer pension plans.

We call for full repeal of the death tax, as proposed in Governor Bush's program, Prosperity with a Purpose, and as recently passed by congressional Republicans. Hard-working Americans should not live with the fear that the fruits of their lifetime of labor will fall into the hands of government instead of their children.

The growing need for long-term care calls for long-term planning both by individuals and by government. We encourage, at all levels of government, regulatory flexibility and sensitivity to human needs in nursing homes and related facilities. In this area, as in so many other unheralded corners of American lives, heroic sacrifices are being made by millions of families to care for their mothers and fathers as their parents cared for them. We support Governor Bush's call for a 100 percent above-the-line tax deduction for premiums for long-term care insurance, recognizing and rewarding individual responsibility, and we welcome his proposal to allow an additional exemption for each elderly spouse, parent, or relative a family tends to in their own residence.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Saving Social Security – Helping Individuals Build Wealth

"Social Security is a defining American promise, and we will not turn back. This issue is a test of government's capacity to give its word and to keep it, to act in good faith and to pursue the common good."

— George W. Bush

"A defining American promise" — a strong phrase from a strong leader, with which we strongly agree. The Social Security program is the touchstone by which the American people now gauge the reliability, competence, and integrity of government. Unfortunately, the gauge is registering real problems. This is not breaking news to most Americans. They have known for years of the deterioration of Social Security's fiscal health but fully expected their leaders to address it. But with each passing year leading to an ever grimmer prognosis, the gauge has dropped, notch by notch, into the red zone.

Since 1992, Social Security's unfunded liability has increased from \$7.4 trillion to \$8.8 trillion. Its trustees project that, by the year 2015, there will not be enough cash coming in from payroll taxes to pay currently promised Social Security benefits.

The current administration has treated Social Security as a slogan rather than a priority, demanding billions for new government programs instead of attending to the stability of our most important domestic program. Even worse, their proposal to let the government buy stocks on behalf of the Social Security trust fund was an unprecedented power grab over the entire American economy. Doing nothing is no longer an

option, for it leads to three bitter choices in the near future: crippling levels of payroll taxation, significantly reduced benefits for Social Security recipients, or a crushing burden of public debt for generations to come.

We reject each of those outcomes and accept the mandate which others have abandoned: To keep faith with both the past and the future by saving Social Security. For starters, congressional Republicans stopped the annual raids on the Social Security trust funds by balancing the federal budget without that program's surplus. In addition, government agencies have and should continue efforts to improve the accuracy of economic indicators. Now a Republican president will forge a national consensus on these principles to protect this national priority:

Anyone currently receiving Social Security, or close to being eligible for it, will not be impacted by any changes.

Key changes should merit bipartisan agreement so any reforms will be a win for the American people rather than a political victory for any one party.

Real reform does not require, and will not include, tax increases.

Personal savings accounts must be the cornerstone of restructuring. Each of today's workers should be free to direct a portion of their payroll taxes to personal investments for their retirement future. It is crucial that individuals be offered a variety of investment alternatives and that detailed information be provided to each participant to help them judge the risks and benefits of each plan. Today's financial markets offer a variety of investment options, including some that guarantee a rate of return higher than the current Social Security system with no risk to the investor.

Choice is the key. Any new options for retirement security should be voluntary, so workers can choose to remain in the current system or opt

for something different.

This is a challenge that demands the kind of presidential leadership the country has not seen in almost a decade. Governor Bush has shown his commitment by proposing a bold alternative to the collapse of Social Security. Along with Americans everywhere, we pledge to join him in this endeavor of a lifetime.

George W. Bush

Langhorne, Pennsylvania

October 12, 2000

Agenda for the Greatest Generation

This election is a milestone. For the first time since 1960, neither candidate for president comes from the generation of World War II - what we now call the Greatest Generation.

We honor that generation for its achievements. They won the war, went to Korea, put our flag on the moon, and prevailed in the Cold War. They built universities and highways and they gave us the semiconductor.

We honor the Greatest Generation for its values as well. They confronted problems instead of passing them on to others. They accepted responsibility, both at home and abroad. And they shared an endless confidence in America - rising to every challenge with courage and optimism.

Consider Jack Mekel, who was 17 when the bombs began to fall on Pearl Harbor. He left his high school class, walked down to his recruiting office and volunteered. After amphibious training in Virginia, Private Mekel made his way to the Pacific Theatre. And as the sound of rifle fire lifted, he claimed 4 battle stars.

Jack, you were the same age as many of the boys in this gym, with the joys of life before you. Yet you weathered days of struggle and nights of fear, and were willing to die to preserve our freedom. You are part of a collection of Americans we rightly call our Greatest Generation. And we are honored to be with you this morning.

Today, our nation faces a challenge of our own - a challenge that concerns the Greatest Generation and my generation as well. Social

Security and Medicare are in trouble. The crisis is serious, and it is coming. Not today, but soon. As the baby-boomers retire, these programs will run deficits. Without reform, they'll go bankrupt.

It is the responsibility of my generation to save Social Security and Medicare. It is our turn to lead, our turn to face up to challenges, our turn to act boldly, for the sake of our future and that of our children and grandchildren.

So today I want to talk about my Agenda for the Greatest Generation. We will honor that generation's example of leadership, by showing some leadership ourselves. We will meet our obligation to senior citizens. And we will leave a solid inheritance to our children and grandchildren.

Most seniors understand the problems we face, but many are asking how Social Security might change for them. Here is the answer: You have earned your benefits, you have made your plans, and should I have the honor to serve as your president, I will keep the promise of Social Security. No changes, no reductions, no way.

That is my first principle of Social Security reform. The second is that all Social Security funds will be dedicated to Social Security. They will be kept beyond the reach of politicians.

Third, we will not raise the payroll tax. I don't intend to tax my way to reform. It has been tried in the past. It is not the right course. My opponent is not willing to make that pledge. He won't rule out raising taxes to save Social Security.

And, fourth, for younger workers, we will modernize the system. We will make sure they see their fair share when it's time to retire. Younger workers will be given the option - the choice - of putting apart of their payroll taxes into sound, responsible investments. This will mean a higher return on their money. It will grow into a nest egg to help in their

retirement and pass on to their children. And it will strengthen the system for generations to come.

Right now, Social Security earns only a 2 percent return on taxpayer money. Under my plan, even if a younger worker chooses only the safest investment - inflation-indexed U.S. bonds - he or she will receive twice that rate. And, through the power of compound interest, that will make a real difference during retirement.

Social Security has been one of the most successful domestic programs in American history. We will keep its promises to our seniors. And we will extend its promise to young workers. We will offer a new generation its own new deal - matching the security of our current system with the opportunities of our new economy.

On Medicare my message is the same: We will protect this program for seniors today, and strengthen it for those to come.

Medicare needs to be modernized. It was created in 1965, and has served 80million Americans. But as medicine has advanced, Medicare has not. Every senior knows the problems: No coverage for prescription drugs. No preventive care. Delays in receiving the latest treatments. And, like Social Security, Medicare faces bankruptcy with the retirement of the baby-boomers. So we have a plan - a plan to care for our seniors, give them more options and independence, and preserve the system for tomorrow's seniors.

Federal employees already have a choice of health plans. Every year, they receive a book with a list of options, comparing the benefits. They get to choose the program that suits them best.

If public servants have this option, we should give the same choice to the public. Under my plan, Medicare will continue as an entitlement - a basic guarantee of government. Seniors can choose to stay in the current system. Or they could choose a different plan that meets their particular

needs -maybe eye care or dental care.

All seniors will get help buying prescription drug coverage. And all low-income seniors will have that coverage free of charge.

To give seniors some peace of mind, we will cover catastrophic Medicare costs of more than \$6,000 a year. This applies to all seniors, at every income level. Serious illness is hard enough without the fear of financial ruin.

And we will not increase the Medicare payroll tax.

While we are working with Congress to modernize Medicare, we will begin a program I call an Immediate Helping Hand to help seniors who need help right now. This means that most seniors who depend on their Social Security check to live will have all or most of their prescription drug costs covered immediately. No more choosing between paying for heat and paying for medicine. No more choosing between food and pills.

These reforms are important and urgent. And they have the advantage of keeping government out of the business of setting prices or dictating treatments. We do not need more bureaucracy or more mandates from Washington. We need smart reform, to keep the system solvent and give our seniors better benefits and broader choices.

These are our commitments to the Greatest Generation - responsible solutions to serious problems.

But my opponent, on these issues, takes a different tact. As the election nears, he has fallen back on a familiar strategy: fear, division, and misrepresentation.

I warned of this in my convention speech. It was not hard to predict. These tactics are one last, parting ploy. Mr. Gore represents the party of Franklin Delano Roosevelt - but all he has to offer is fear itself.

When people attack like that, they usually don't have much confidence in their own ideas or their own record. And in this case, that

lack of confidence is fully justified.

Every new attack, every new promise, only raises the same question: Why, in seven and a half years, have they done nothing to address the problems of Social Security and Medicare?

Even when they had the chance - when bipartisan answers looked possible - the Clinton/Gore administration chose to be an obstacle to reform. This is the same administration that taxed Social Security benefits in 1993. And they used almost \$300 billion of Social Security funds for other programs.

In the current campaign, Mr. Gore has pledged not to raid the Social Security surplus again. But his proposals for new federal spending are so large, it's hard to see how he can avoid it. He speaks of a "lock box"; but with all that spending, he would have to pick that lock sooner or later - probably sooner. As one nonpartisan organization (Economic Security 2000, headed by democrat Sam Beard) has put it, Mr. Gore's accounting "defies credibility."

On Medicare, it's the same story.

When they first ran in 1992, Al Gore and Bill Clinton promised to make prescription drugs more affordable. Then nothing. In 1996, they made promises again. Still nothing.

Now Mr. Gore poses once again as a champion of Medicare reform. But he is counting on us to have a short memory.

It was only three years ago that a bipartisan commission was appointed to update and save Medicare. That panel was composed of experts from both government and business, and from both parties. At first, the administration supported the commission - after all, they had helped set it up. But then they turned against it - just as the panel was coming up with an answer. First they supported it, then they subverted it.

The commission's final plan wasn't perfect - but it certainly provided a chance for bipartisan reform. After the administration killed it, the chairman of the commission, Democratic Senator John Breaux, said, "There are entrenched people within the White House who don't want change. "That's exactly why the time has come for a new administration.

On Social Security, and on Medicare, the routine of the Clinton/Gore administration is so predictable, so tired, so partisan. We see the same promises and the same scare tactics. Meanwhile, the problems grow deeper, and the solutions get harder.

We have waited too long, but it is not too late. We can renew the commitments of Social Security and Medicare - but the old politics won't do. It is time for this administration to move along, and let others lead where they have not.

We will also ensure that government honors its commitment to veterans as veterans fulfilled their commitment to our nation. In all matters of concern to veterans - from health care to program funding - you have my pledge that the government's commitments will be kept. And we have obligations to defend liberty and freedom earned by the Greatest Generation. We must keep our military strong and morale high. The mission of the military must be focused.....

Here in this room, and across the country, the Greatest Generation provides examples of leadership and responsibility. You taught us never to shirk our duties. Never to make excuses. Never to leave important work undone. You acted - as soldiers and citizens; as mothers and fathers - so the rest of us could be safe, and prosperous, and secure.

We must do the same. We must show the will and wisdom to save the programs on which our seniors depend. And we must reject an irresponsible politics that saddles our children with debt and insecurity. These goals will take leadership, and a bipartisan spirit, and a bit of

political courage. I am eager to begin this work. I am ready to meet this challenge. And I ask for your support. Thank you.

Social Security - Gore

Al Gore

New York Historical Society

New York, New York

June 13, 2000

“Social Security Plus”

...

The third principle is decency. A decent nation honors and protects our mothers and fathers - and safeguards their old age.

I believe we must show the same restraint and foresight as a nation that families must show in their own kitchen-table budgeting. That means not just living in the moment - and not just paying off our debts - but also seeing our link in the chain of generations.

Decency means living up to our promises. I propose that we set aside enough of the surplus to strengthen Medicare - and then do for Medicare what we have done for Social Security, by putting the Medicare trust fund off-budget and into in an iron-clad lock-box.

If we do that, then Congress can never try to raid Medicare, or take it away. We will keep Medicare strong for decades to come. And we will update Medicare to provide a prescription drug benefit for all our seniors.

We have to guarantee that Social Security is there for you when you retire. As President, I will keep that sacred trust. I will oppose any effort to make Social Security a gamble, instead of a guarantee. I am not going to let anyone take the "security" out of Social Security.

I will oppose the effort to privatize Social Security - which could take at least a trillion dollars out of the trust fund, and could drive our entire budget back into deficit.

And with Social Security as the unshakeable foundation, people should be able to save and invest more for their retirement without gambling away their Social Security. I propose a new way to help them do that: "Social Security Plus" - new, tax-free voluntary accounts that let you save, invest, and build on top of the guaranteed foundation of Social Security.

Let me be clear about what this is: this is Social Security plus, it is not Social Security minus. It doesn't come at the expense of Social Security -- it comes in addition to Social Security. It is the best of both worlds - rather than, as the opposition has proposed, the worst of both worlds. You get the freedom to save more and invest more, but it will not come out of your Social Security. Your Social Security will be there for you to rely upon, no matter how those investments perform.

...

Al Gore

Heritage Hall at Rupp Arena

Lexington, Kentucky

June 20, 2000

“Retirement Savings Plus”

...

So today I want to talk about how we can build prosperity and progress, not just for the present, not just for the next four years, but far, far into the future.

I have good news to share with the American people. In fact, the news is better than good. If we do things right, we can make it far easier for families to save and invest for the future with even greater confidence and security. Private savings and investment are about something more than an IRA or a bank balance. They're about the future of this little baby over here. They form the threshold of hope for the American dream. You cross that threshold and the future belongs to you and your family. Your savings account can open the door to your first house. It's the way a young couple can make that first tough down payment on a first home together. Your savings account can swing open for your child wrought-iron gates that may have been closed to you and your parents and grandparents.

Your savings can help you dream as they grow week by week about sending your child to college, even if your father or mother never went to college; even if you yourself never had that chance. Savings accounts can let your parents build a haven on the bedrock of Social Security so they can not only make ends meet, but also live an old age of peace and plenty. Every hard-working American family deserves to open the door to their dream.

When I was a kid, I had lots of really good friends in two very different places. The ones I went to school with in Washington, D.C. came mostly from well-to-do families with enough money to send them to college and stake them to a good start. And most of them have done well in life.

The ones I spent my summers with in Carthage, Tennessee were at least as smart, but their families weren't nearly as well-off. And I saw the opportunity gap open and widen, and there were times when it broke my heart. They deserved more than they got, and I'll be damned if I'm going to let that injustice continue. We need to have a bright future for all families in this country.

You know who I'm talking about. Everyone in this room knows how hard it can be to save. As a matter of fact, it's hard enough to save even if you're well-off. Expenses have a way of catching up with even high-earning families. But so many families who live month-to-month know how desperately hard it can be to protect that bank account for the dream. They know how easily one car repair, one doctor's bill, one accident, one unexpected sweep of bad luck can wipe it all out so you have to start all over again.

When that happens, sometimes the dream can feel like it's fading, like you'll never catch up with it.

Sometimes, for too many families, it slips away, and then they stop looking up to imagine anymore. They try to accept that their bright child just won't go to college, that that new home with enough room for the baby just won't get bought. Well, I'm here to tell you that is just not right. Never again should a hard-working family see the door slowly closing on their dream. On behalf of those people, not just the ones who think comfortably about their savings over scotch in the club looking out at the golf links, but also the ones who carefully try to make it all add up

to the dream over a pressured half-hour lunch break on the factory floor. On behalf of those families, we will take the White House in November of this year.

That's what it's all about. On behalf of those people, not just the ones whose families have taken for granted for generations that college awaits their children, but the ones whose parents were just as bright, whose kids were just as beautiful and just as filled with promise, who fear that they'll never have the financial strength to pull open those ivied gates for the ones they love. For those families, we will take the White House in November of this year.

And I'm here today to give those families fresh hope and concrete help today. For them today, because of their grit and dignity and trying hard to save and be faithful to the dream, I'm announcing one of the largest programs of tax-free private savings ever proposed. Together, let's put an end to the days when savings are a scramble, if not an unthinkable luxury, for too many families. Together we will make saving one of the easiest things a family can ever do.

Hear me well: My dream is an America in which your family's dream can come true. And it can. And here's how. I propose today here in Lexington that we create new Retirement Savings Plus accounts, tax-free voluntary accounts that let you save, invest and build on top of the guaranteed foundation of Social Security.

Here's how Retirement Savings Plus will work: We will give people tax credits to match their own savings. The hardest-pressed working families will get even bigger tax credits. And here is what this will mean to you and your loved ones:

For a married couple making \$30,000 a year, say a bus driver and a homemaker, we'll match every dollar you save with \$3 deposited right into your account. And you can do it on your tax return and have it done

automatically if you choose. If a young couple saves just \$20 a week, together with our tax credits and the returns on their savings, they could reasonably expect to save as much as \$400,000 extra by the time they retire 35 years later.

You talk about opening up those wrought-iron gates, we're going to do it. This new way to build wealth will mean a bigger nestegg for retirement. It will also help with three of the biggest hurdles that any family faces: buying that first home, sending your kids to college, and paying for major medical expenses. And we'll make saving for the future as easy as checking a box on your tax return. You will be able to deposit your full tax refund, along with a matching tax credit, directly into your own personal account. This new initiative will ensure that millions more families can open the door to their dreams.

Now I want to be clear on another point as well: My plan for private savings and investment is very different from what others have proposed in this election. It does not come at the expense of Social Security, it comes in addition to Social Security. We will protect Social Security.

I have always supported private savings and investment, and I've always supported additional incentives for middle-income and low-middle-income families to save and invest more. After all, high-income families already have generous tax incentives. They get by far the lion's share of the tax credits and incentives that are on the books now. But I have never supported plans that would steer the money that you pay into Social Security into the stock market. That would undermine America's trust in the trust fund. That would take the security out of Social Security. I will not let that happen. I will protect Social Security.

And together we will save Social Security. I will oppose—I will oppose the effort to privatize Social Security which could drain a trillion dollars out of the trust fund.

I will oppose the effort to privatize it. It could not only drain all that money out of the trust fund, it could drive our entire budget back into deficit again. And you know what that means: That could threaten our prosperity. And apart from that harm to our nation's prosperity formula, it would harm individual elderly folks.

People have the common sense to know that, in the stock market, there are good years and there are bad years; there are winners, and there are losers. We will not, on my watch, become a nation that penalizes the elderly people who happen to retire in a bad year; a nation penalizing the elderly people who happen to be on the losing end of the roll of the dice. We will not become a nation that tells a 65-year-old waitress, a 65-year-old janitor or factory worker, too bad if you've worked hard for a lifetime. You need to keep going somehow for two or three or even more years. My plan is Social Security-plus, not Social Security-minus. It's the best of both worlds, not the worst of both worlds.

There's a clear difference, a very clear difference. You get the freedom and the incentive to save more and invest more, but it will not come out of your Social Security. Your Social Security benefits will be guaranteed, and the trust fund will be protected no matter how those investments perform. Under my plan, Social Security will be just the beginning of a family's retirement savings.

...

Al Gore

NAACP 91st Annual Convention

Baltimore, Maryland

July 12, 2000

Protecting Social Security

...

I think you can also see it when you look at the need we all feel to honor our fathers and mothers by protecting Medicare and Social Security. I think it's time to put them both off-budget in an ironclad lockbox. Don't treat them as piggy banks for other things.

And I will tell you this, I am against raising the retirement age and cutting benefits to the seniors who deserve the help that Social Security and Medicare provide. I am opposed to privatizing Social Security and diverting the money into the stock market.

I want incentives to invest on top of Social Security. I'm for Social Security plus, not Social Security minus. I also believe that we have a national responsibility to recognize that opportunity means knowledge, and knowledge means learning, and learning means respecting our schools and investing in them. I think it's time to start treating our teachers like the professionals they are, and reduce the class size, and modernize the schools, and put more money along with new accountability and reform into our public schools.

...

Al Gore

Nashville, Tennessee

July 18, 2000

Social Security & Texas Budget Shortfalls

Yesterday, very serious questions were raised about Governor Bush's plan to privatize Social Security.

Social Security is the most important social program in history, but Governor Bush refuses to answer basic questions about his plan. How many days will he remain silent? The American people deserve answers.

One of his top economic advisers explained that under the Bush privatization plan, the Social Security Trust Fund would “run dry.” Instead of fixing it, he proposes to borrow three trillion dollars, and put Social Security in debt for the first time in its history. Yet Governor Bush will not even address these devastating details.

This is the same borrow-and-hide approach he has used with the Texas budget. Today, we learned about an internal memo that projects a \$600 million shortfall in the Texas health care system—adding another problem to Texas's worst budget situation in almost a decade.

With the strongest economy in our history, it is just plain wrong to turn Social Security into a brand new source of economic insecurity. It is wrong to put Social Security into debt. It is wrong to rely on photo-ops and image while refusing to answer fundamental questions about the fundamental guarantee of Social Security.

Al Gore

Memphis, Tennessee

July 18, 2000

Social Security Trust Fund

...

The state's health care program. This apparently will worsen an already grave budget situation, the worst in Texas in a long, long time. And a state senator in Texas has now called for an independent audit of the budget by a respected accounting firm to get to the bottom of why, five months ahead of time, suddenly there is cooked up a projection that is said to be designed to prevent the state's bond rating from plummeting.

But I don't think it's right to put Social Security at risk or to propose an approach to budgeting for the federal government that probably, if the mathematics can be believed, and I think arithmetic is reliable, would result in the same kind of elimination of the surplus that you have seen in Texas, but at the federal level.

So I call on Governor Bush to provide some details about why his top -- one of his top economic advisers say that the Social Security Trust Fund it would run dry under his plan, and how he can justify proposing that Social Security borrow up to \$3 trillion, and go into debt for the first time in its history.

...

Al Gore

Atlanta, Georgia

August 10, 2000

Social Security: Bush Plan vs. Mine

...

Now, let's talk about Social Security. The other side wants to privatize a big part of Social Security.

You remember what it was like, some of the older folks, when counties had poor houses, when Social Security didn't exist.

Let me tell you what they are really talking about on the other side. They want to take 16 percent of the money that goes into the Social Security trust fund and divert it off in to stock market investments. Now, there are two problems with that.

The first problem is this: Social Security works the way it does, as the best program we've ever had in America, because the money that's paid into the fund this year is the money that's used to pay the checks this year. If you take 16 percent of it away, that means you've got to come up with \$1 trillion over the next 10 years from somewhere else to make it up. Where's that going to come from? The answer on the other side is: We'll tell you after the election.

Hello?

Now, the second problem is those stock market investments are based on the idea that the economy is going to be as good in the future indefinitely as it has been for the last eight years.

Now, I hope it is, but if the country adopted the approach that the other side is recommending, you better hold on to your hat where the economy and the stock market are concerned.

And even if it's strong, there are going to be some good investments

and some bad investments, and the ones that make bad investments, because it's coming right out of their Social Security, they're going to be asking the Congress for help and there would be an S&L-style bail out.

Now, my approach extends the life of the Social Security trust fund with reforms that take it on into the second half of the next -- of this new century, and I believe that we need to keep Social Security sound. If you elect me, I promise you I will fight to keep Social Security sound and in good shape.

...

Al Gore

The United Auto Workers

Detroit, Michigan

August 11, 2000

Strengthening Retirement Security & Medicare

...

Now when it comes to the overall economic policy, we know from experience that what works best for working families is when our economy is on the move; when we're putting the people first, when we're focusing on those who have not been able to get the skills and the job training, and that's the big contrast. Because what they are proposing to do would really take us backwards, instead of forwards.

What they're proposing would actually, in my opinion, lead to a weakening of retirement security in this country. Let's acknowledge something is going to have to be done to strengthen Social Security as the baby boom generation retires but I'll be damned if I'll allow the privatization of Social Security. That's wrong, and let me tell you why it's wrong.

If you take the money out of the trust fund, you've got to make it up someplace else. They won't even say where that trillion dollars would come from, but knowing their priorities, I think it's fair to speculate that they'd take it from places that wouldn't be where we would like to see it taken from, especially since they're spending so much money on their tax giveaway. I believe we need new incentives for savings on top of Social Security.

That's why Joe Lieberman and I are proposing Social Security Plus, which new tax credits to encourage saving for those who have the hardest time saving, instead of Social Security "minus" on the other side.

And the same thing goes for Medicare; I want to strengthen Medicare, not turn it into a two-tier system.

And I am for -- I tell you, it's time to recognize that too many of our seniors have an awful hard time paying their prescription drug bills, when it comes to balancing their own budgets. I've talked to many who go and take the pill bottles out and count the pennies and count the pills and cut out some of the medicine on their own. That's not right. They've earned better than that. This is the generation that won World War II, survived the Depression, and gave us the country that we have today. I'm for a prescription drug benefit under the Medicare Program. The other side is not. With your help, we're going to get it.

And it's time to take the medical decisions away from the bureaucrats for the HMOs and the insurance companies and give them back to the doctors and the nurses and the health care professionals!

It's time to recognize that a lot of the new jobs -- (speaking to chanting from audience members) I appreciate you, my friends. That's exactly what it's going to take, that kind of enthusiasm.

Now, we've got to make education and job training the number-one priority in our country and start treating teachers like the professionals they are, and reduce the class size, and put more resources into our schools and modernize them, and have new ideas and new accountability at the same time.

Now, my friends, I believe that this election will truly shape the 21st century because it will also decide the kind of Supreme Court that we have. You look at all the cases -- labor law, individual rights, women's rights, civil rights -- that are decided by a narrow margin; you consider the fact that the next president is going to appoint three and maybe four justices of the Supreme Court; consider the fact that the other side has had parlays with the more right-wing folks in their party and they've

made pledges, apparently -- it sure appears that way -- that's a big issue that's going to shape the future of bargaining rights, as well as these other rights. I need your help to make sure we have a Supreme Court that has our values!

Now, beneath our differences on specific trade agreements, as Steve said, we do agree on this important principle: We have to use trade to lift up labor and environmental standards around the world, not drag them down. As president, I will insist on and use the authority to enforce worker rights, human rights, and environmental protections in our trade agreements.

Now, I want to close by saying just one other thing. The position of president is the only one in the Constitution that's filled by someone who has an obligation and an oath to fight not just for one state or district, not just for one group, not for the wealthy, not for the powerful; a president is charged with the sacred responsibility to fight for all of the people, including especially those who most need a champion in the Oval Office! That's why it's so important to have a president who will fight for you and fight for your family!

I appreciate your endorsement today, more than I can ever tell you with my words. But you give me the chance in the victory we're working for, and I will tell you in the way I go about the task of rekindling the American spirit and making our country what it's supposed to be.

I ask for your support and votes in November, but I want to close by asking you for -- for one more thing. I want to ask you for something that's difficult for you to give, something that's hardly given anymore. I want to ask you to allow yourselves to believe, without reservation, that we can do the right thing and be the better for it. Don't hold back. Too much is at stake. The future of our country is at stake. I ask for your support to win this election, so can I can fight for you.

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Retirement Security

Americans' golden years should be times of calm and security, not concern and stress. Few achievements testify more to the ability of government to do good than Social Security. It has lifted millions of elderly Americans out of poverty and helped them make ends meet. Social Security is more than a government program. It is a solemn compact between the generations. It is our nation's most important family protection. The choice for Americans on this vital part of our national heritage has never been more clear: Democrats believe in using our prosperity to save Social Security; the Republicans' tax cut would prevent America from ensuring our senior citizens have a secure retirement. We owe it to America's children and their children to make the strength and solvency of Social Security a major national priority.

That's why Al Gore is committed to making Social Security safe and secure for more than half a century by using the savings from our current unprecedented prosperity to strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund in preparation for the retirement of the Baby Boom generation. We now have an extraordinary opportunity to maintain Social Security. In addition, we can reform it - not the wrong way, with proposals such as raising the retirement age, but the right way - with fiscal discipline and by making it fairer for widows, widowers, and mothers.

Retirement security comes on many fronts. Democrats have successfully passed reforms to simplify the pension process for small businesses, expand pension portability, and protect employee pension funds. Democrats believe that workers' pensions should be protected and

more portable. We also believe that changes in every American's pension rights should be fully disclosed. This is becoming increasingly important today, as pensions are progressively being shifted from a workers' benefit plan to a workers' contribution plan. We believe these changes need to be carefully examined by independent agencies to make sure they abide by current federal law. Democrats support President Clinton's veto of the Republican tax scheme that would have diminished anti-discrimination protections for middle-class and lower-income workers.

To build on the success of Social Security, Al Gore has proposed the creation of Retirement Savings Plus - voluntary, tax-free, personally-controlled, privately-managed savings accounts with a government match that would help couples build a nest egg of up to \$400,000. Separate from Social Security, Retirement Savings Plus accounts would let Americans save and invest on top of the foundation of Social Security's guaranteed benefit. Under this plan, the federal government would match individual contributions with tax credits, with the hardest-pressed working families getting the most assistance.

The Republicans have a far different idea - a scheme that would come not in addition to Social Security but at the expense of it. Their Social Security privatization plot would siphon \$1 trillion in payroll taxes away from the Social Security trust fund, take 14 years off the life of Social Security, eliminate the fundamental guarantee of retirement security, and raise the specter of massive government bail-outs. And, according to independent analyses, the Republicans' privatization plan would cut the guaranteed benefits for young workers by as much as 54 percent. It would take the "security" out of Social Security.

Retirement Savings Plus does not threaten Social Security's guaranteed benefit. Social Security may be 65 years old - but it is not ready to be retired. Taken together George W. Bush's \$2 trillion tax cut,

his campaign-season spending proposals, his support for an unspecified but unprecedented missile defense system, and his support for privatizing Social Security add up to an assault on the surplus - causing Americans to have to choose between drastic cuts in education and health care or a return to the days of deficit spending. This is not a choice Americans should have to make. With fiscal discipline and a commitment to honoring our values, we can both save Social Security and give Americans the ability to create a nest egg without turning back the clock on our prosperity.

Medicare and Prescription Drugs - Bush

George W. Bush

August 25, 2000

TV Ad: "No Changes, No Reductions"



[Bush]:

We will strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the greatest generation and for generations to come.

I believe great decisions are made with care, made with conviction. We will make prescription drugs available and affordable for every senior who needs them.

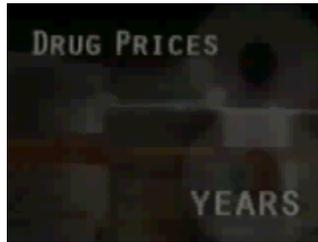
You earned your benefits. You made your plans. And president George W. Bush will keep the promise of Social Security. No changes. No reductions. No way.

(On screen: Paid for by Bush-Cheney 2000, Inc.)

George W. Bush

September 5, 2000

TV Ad: "Priority"



[Announcer]:

Under Clinton-Gore, prescription drug prices have skyrocketed, and nothing's been done. George Bush has a plan: Add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

[Bush]:

Every senior will have access to prescription drug benefits.

[Announcer]:

And Al Gore? Gore opposed bipartisan reform. He's pushing a big government plan that lets Washington bureaucrats interfere with what your doctors prescribe.

The Gore prescription plan: Bureaucrats decide. The Bush prescription plan: Seniors choose.

(On screen: Paid for the Republican National Committee)

George W. Bush

Florida

September 11, 2000

Setting Prescription Drug Benefits for Seniors a Priority

...

And so, when I look you in the eye and say prescription drugs for seniors is a priority of mine, I'm the plain-spoken-enough fellow to mean it. Prescription drugs for seniors is going to be a priority -- not only a priority, we're going to get something done. And it starts with having what's called immediate helping hand -- \$48 billion over four years to make sure low-income seniors have 100 percent of their prescription drugs paid for.

We're not going to have a society where some go without because they can't afford prescription drugs, that horrible choice between food and drugs. No, we're too compassionate a nation. Our prosperity must have a purpose. And one of the purposes is to help seniors. And we're going to do so, should I become the president of the United States.

And so it starts with having immediate cash infusion. Congressmen - - it means when I stand up in front of the Congress, I'm going to be able to say, It's the people who heard me speak, I'm coming representing the people. I remember coming to Top of the World in Florida and telling the people, If you vote for me, this is what's going to happen. Now, let's get together, both Republicans and Democrats, and spend that money wisely to say to low-income seniors, a promise made to us by a society will be a promise kept when it comes to prescription drugs.

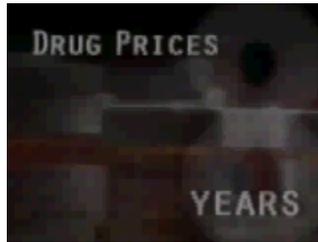
But also, let's have a cap. Let's have a cap so that if you spend more than \$6,000 out of pocket the government will step in so that nobody loses it all as a result of a catastrophe. It's a novel concept that's been

talked about. I'm going to get it done should I become the president of the United States.

George W. Bush

September 14, 2000

TV Ad: "Federal"



[Announcer]:

Under Clinton/Gore, prescription drug prices have skyrocketed, and nothing's been done. George Bush has a plan: Add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

[Bush]:

Every senior will have access to prescription drug benefits.

(On screen: "Bush details drug-coverage plan" -- Phila. Inq., 9/6/00)

[Announcer]:

And Al Gore? He says he wants to fight for the people against HMOs, but his prescription drug plan forces seniors into one HMO selected by the federal government.

(On screen: Source: Gore/Lieberman 2000, "Prosperity for American Families, The Gore/Lieberman Economic Plan," Sept. 2000)

Al Gore: Federal HMO. George Bush: Seniors choose.

(On screen: Paid for by the Republican National Committee)

George W. Bush

California Republican Party Convention

Austin, Texas

September 16, 2000

Medicare: Gore Plan vs. Mine

...

On Medicare, I've proposed a plan to make prescription drugs affordable for every senior in America. Seniors can stay in the current system, or choose a plan that serves them best. Every senior will get help paying for prescription drug coverage – and every low-income senior will get prescription coverage for free.

No more choosing between food and medicine. No more being ordered around by an arrogant health care bureaucracy.

And no more risk of losing everything because of an extended illness. My Medicare plan has a \$6,000 cap on out-of-pocket medical expenses. My opponent offers a cap on drug expenses – but no limit at all on overall health costs.

The Vice President says he believes in health care choices – and he has made yours for you. If you want prescription coverage, the Gore plan forces you to join a government HMO for drugs.

When the Gore plan is fully implemented, seniors will be required to pay a new, \$600 access fee each year – in addition to the premiums you already pay for Medicare.

And there is another catch. Under Al Gore's plan, you have to sign up for drug coverage at age 64 and a half. If you don't, you lose your chance – forever.

That's the Gore drug plan: One choice, one chance, no changing your mind. If you want prescription drugs, that's a private matter,

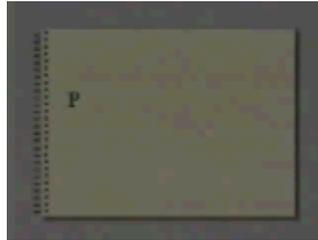
between you and your Washington bureaucrat.

...

George W. Bush

September 20, 2000

TV Ad: "Notebook"



[Announcer]:

On prescription medicines, compare: Al Gore will charge seniors a new \$600-a-year government access fee. *(On screen: CBO, 5/00)*

George Bush opposes Gore's \$600 fee.

(On screen: CBO 7/98, 5/00, Ctr. for Reg. Effectiveness, 9/13/00)

Gore's plan: When seniors turn 64, they must join a drug HMO, selected by Washington, or they're on their own.

(On screen: Bush Medicare Fact Sheet, 9/5/00)

Bush's plan: Seniors choose, and it covers all catastrophic health care costs.

Gore's plan doesn't and has a government HMO and a \$600 fee.

(On screen: Gore Economic Plan, 9/00)

A prescription for disaster.

(On screen: PrescriptionForDisaster.com; Paid for by the Republican National Committee)

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Preserving and Improving Medicare

“Our nation must reform Medicare — and in doing so, ensure that prescription drugs are affordable and available for every senior who needs them. Seniors deserve a wider scope of coverage, and they deserve to have more choices among health plans. Over the last few years, both Republicans and Democrats have embraced these goals, yet the Clinton-Gore administration has blocked bipartisan Medicare reform. When I am president, I will lead Republicans and Democrats to reform and strengthen Medicare and set it on firm financial ground.”

— George W. Bush

Medicare, at age 35, needs a new lease on life. It’s time to bring this program, so critical for 39 million seniors and individuals with disabilities, into the Twenty-First Century. It’s time to modernize the benefit package to match current medical science, improve the program’s financial stability, and cut back the bureaucratic jungle that is smothering it. It’s time to give older Americans access to the same health insurance plan the Congress has created for itself, so that seniors will have the same choices and security as Members of Congress, including elimination of all current limitations and restrictions that prevent the establishment of medical savings accounts. To do that, we need to build on the strengths of the free market system, offer seniors real choices in coverage, give participants flexibility, and make sure there are incentives for the private sector to develop new and inexpensive drugs.

No one in their right mind would choose a physician who limited her practice to the treatments and procedures of the 1960s. By the same

token, no one should be content with a Medicare program based on benefit packages and delivery models of that same era. For example, it denies coverage for necessary preventive services, like cholesterol screenings, and limits access to new life-saving technologies. This must change. Every Medicare beneficiary should have a choice of health care options. We want them to have access to the health plan that best fits their medical needs. In short: no more governmental one-size-fits-all.

Medicare also needs new measures of solvency that look at total program expenses and provide an honest reading of how we can guarantee benefits for decades to come. At the same time, we must dramatically reduce the program's administrative complexities symbolized both by its 130,000 pages of regulations and by its \$13.5 billion in improper payments in 1999 alone. Some of that is due to fraud, waste, and abuse, but most of it comes from the sad fact that Medicare is a creaking, bureaucratic, and oppressive dinosaur in the age of MRIs. This frustrates health care providers, hospitals, and patients alike. Let us be clear: We support vigorous enforcement of anti-fraud laws in cases where there is intent to commit fraud, but it is unfair to blame honest health care providers who must seek reimbursement within a minefield of confusing Medicare regulations.

For Medicare to survive — and more important, to succeed — it must become a common enterprise of government, health professionals, and hospitals alike. Rather than continue the practice of recurrent and unpredictable cuts in provider payments, a reformed Medicare program will allow health care providers, particularly those helping rural and underserved populations, to adapt to changing conditions in health care by providing reimbursement at levels that will permit health care providers to continue to care for these patients. Republican leadership will reopen and broaden the door to health care by fulfilling the promise

of medical research and innovation, by offering choice and protecting consumer rights, and by modernizing antiquated systems to deliver affordable care for all its beneficiaries.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

***Party Platform: Quality Health Care – A Commitment to All
Americans***

Americans enjoy the best health care in the world. Their system, the envy of all mankind, is the center of debate and controversy. This contradiction arises from the dynamism that is changing every aspect of American medicine. Change is seldom easy, and when it relates to the health of those we love, it can be downright scary. Still, the outcome of all this change is a world of unimagined promise in health. We must embrace that change, and master it as well.

The mapping of the human genome, identifying every gene in the human body, may, over time, translate into new treatments and cures for scourges like cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS, as well as diseases that affect the very young, such as muscular dystrophy and juvenile diabetes. A century ago, the average American life span was 55. Today, it is 78, and children born in this decade have the realistic prospect of living into the Twenty-Second Century. A simple blood test can now screen for prostate cancer at its earliest appearance. Biochemistry is revolutionizing the field of mental health. Millions of operations have been replaced with CAT scans. We want that progress to continue. But translating the promise of medical research into readily available treatments requires more than just money; it needs a whole new prescription for health care. That prescription is what the Republican party offers in the elections of 2000.

Let's start with the diagnosis. After eight years of pressure from the current administration, the foundations of our health care system are

cracking. We can spot the fissures everywhere:

There are currently 44 million uninsured Americans, an increase of one million for each of the past eight years.

The institutions and the people who provide health care are at risk. Hospitals in our poorest urban and rural areas are being callously closed, by the same administration that budgets far less than was originally projected, while calling for greater coverage.

The quality of health care is in jeopardy. Recent reports estimate that almost 100,000 patients die each year from medical errors. This is more than from auto accidents, murders, or AIDS.

Medicare, the bedrock of care for our elderly, is suffocating under more than 130,000 pages of federal rules, three times the size of the entire IRS code. It pays for only 53 percent of seniors' care, provides no outpatient prescription drugs, and does not cover real long-term care, and it is still headed for bankruptcy in the near future.

The doctor-patient relationship has been eroded, and in some instances replaced, by external decision-making and managed care bureaucracy.

We intend to save this beleaguered system with a vision of health care adapted to the changing demands of a new century. It is as simple, and yet as profound, as this: All Americans should have access to high-quality and affordable health care. They should have a range of options and be able to select what is the best care for their individual and family needs. The integration of access, affordability, quality, and choice into the nation's health care system is the goal that brings together all of the following proposals. In achieving that goal, we will promote a health care system that supports, not supplants, the private sector; that promotes personal responsibility in health care decision-making; and that ensures the least intrusive role for the federal government.

Medicare and Prescription Drugs - Gore

Al Gore

Emory University's Medical Center

Atlanta, Georgia

June 1, 2000

Cancer Research and Treatment

...

Just weeks ago, we learned that American cancer rates are now falling faster than ever before—and that cancer death rates have seen their biggest drop in history. And the pace of new scientific breakthroughs is astonishing. Let me share a few recent milestones:

The first results of a hormone and radiation therapy that can reduce the recurrence of breast cancer in the breast by more than 80 percent;

The announcement of a combination of radiation and chemotherapy that, combined with surgery, may increase patients' survival rate for gastric cancer by half;

A molecular therapy that shows a 100 percent response rate in patients with a certain chronic leukemia, who have failed to respond to all other kinds of therapy.

These breakthroughs have been announced not in the last three years, or even in the last three months – but in the last three weeks.

Imagine what's going to happen in the next three weeks. In fact, we are no more than a few weeks away from one of the greatest breakthroughs in human history. Sometime this summer, a rough draft of the Human Genome, the complete sequencing of all the genes in the human body. Within the next few years, scientists will identify the genes that cause every type of cancer. Let me tell you why I think that's so

important.

...

With the completion of the Human Genome, we are on the verge of cracking another enemy's secret code. When we intercept and decipher the coded messages that cancer send from cell to cell, we will turn the tide, and win the war against cancer.

We may soon move beyond early detection, to early prevention – so we and those we love can stop cancer before it has a chance to start.

We can develop a new generation of cancer treatments that free families from the pain of surgery or chemotherapy. One day soon, cancer treatments may no longer be as painful as the disease itself.

I pledge to you today: if I am entrusted with the Presidency, I will work with you to put the same energy and priority into fighting cancer that we would put into preventing a war that could take 500,000 American lives every year. The stakes are that great.

It was nearly forty years ago that President Kennedy set a national goal of putting a man on the moon – to reach beyond our own horizons, and explore outer space. Today, we have the capacity to reach not just outward, but inward—deep within the DNA of the human body, to see the blueprint of human disease; to find new tools for healing and hope.

I believe it is time to set a new national goal – to match our resources and our national will to the promise of this moment.

If I am entrusted with the Presidency, I will work to double federal cancer research, to double our progress in preventing cancer and saving lives. If we do this, we can save the lives of 700,000 Americans who would have died of cancer over the next decade. Think about that: these are people we know; they could be people in this very room.

And as we work to fight all cancer, let us reach for a new and higher goal –one that challenges our capacity, but may now be within reach:

within ten years, no one in America should have to die from colon cancer, breast cancer, or prostate cancer. We may not get there, and certain forms of these diseases may be beyond our reach. But of this much we can be certain: if we don't set the goal, we will never get there.

To meet these goals, I am today proposing a major national cancer-fighting initiative, that is built upon two fundamental principles. First, we need an aggressive national commitment to cancer research and cure. Second, we need to bring the latest breakthroughs to every family, through a new a national commitment to cancer care and treatment.

I am releasing the full details of my plan today. But I want to highlight its basic goals and principles.

First, I want our government to be not an obstacle, but a strong ally as we move toward a new generation of treatment and cure.

By doubling federal cancer research, we will triple the number of cancer-fighting drugs and therapies that reach cancer patients. And we will help the nation's scientists to develop simple blood tests and new diagnostic techniques for every major cancer—so we can find it earlier, with more certainty than any method we have today.

We will support powerful new computer technology that can help us target the most promising areas of research and medicine. And then we have to not only speed up the developments of new drugs, we have to bring them to patients sooner. We need our FDA to be as modern as our best science –while maintaining essential health and safety standards.

Second, we have to do more to help people avoid cancer – and to help people who have it. The best science will be of little use if we don't make it real in the lives of our families.

To begin with, people can't even begin to conquer cancer if they don't have health insurance. It is time to move step-by-step to universal health coverage in America – starting with all children. The health of a cancer

patient should never be determined by his or her family's wealth.

We have to widen access to cutting-edge clinical trials – for they not only save lives, they break down new barriers to understanding and curing cancer.

Today, most children with cancer are enrolled in clinical trials—and partly because of their access to the latest and best treatments, their survival rates have risen dramatically. Four decades ago, almost no child survived cancer. Now, 70 to 80 percent are cured.

Yet only three percent of all cancer patients are enrolled in cutting-edge clinical trials—which is part of the reason why the cure rate for all cancer patients is far lower than that for children.

I will ensure a fivefold increase in cancer clinical trials through our National Cancer Institute. I will work to see that every health plan in America should be required by law to cover essential clinical trials. We have to expand Medicare, so more seniors can take part in more clinical trials—and we must act now, by law or by executive action, to get this done. Together, let's be sure that every American who has cancer also has the most up-to-date treatments America has to offer.

I will expand common-sense cancer prevention. And I'll start by making low-cost cancer tests available to those who don't have access to them today – and I'll fight to expand health coverage to those whose tests detect cancer.

I'll make sure seniors on Medicare don't have to pay a dime in co-payments or deductibles for early detection tests. And I'll create a new “fast track” approval process so that Medicare always covers the latest cancer tests. We cannot allow anything to discourage seniors from getting the latest and best of life-saving tests.

And as we reform health care, we must work to ensure that every health plan covers these tests.

I want to encourage the private sector to be a partner in promoting cancer screening and prevention. We're working to have the federal government follow the example of Boston, and give employees time off work for cancer screening. I urge private companies to do the same.

We have to address the unacceptable variation in cancer care today. And we can never accept the racial disparities in cancer rates and fatalities. For example, African Americans are one-third more likely to die of cancer than white Americans – and we've got to change that.

We need to raise up the quality of care for all cancer patients. I'm going to demand high standards and the same up-to-date guidelines for cancer treatment—everywhere, and for everyone in the nation. Where you live shouldn't determine your medical quality of life.

We should also make sure families know if there are special cancer risks in their neighborhoods. We should work with industry create a full registry of environmental health risks that could lead to cancer. Parents can't protect their children from dangers they aren't told about—and they have a right to know.

We must make the Patients' Bill of Rights the law of this land. If you're in the middle of chemotherapy, you shouldn't be forced to stop treatment because your employer changes health plans. All cancer patients deserve the right kind of care, when and where they need it.

And we must ban genetic discrimination once and for all. Americans should never be forced to risk their jobs or their health coverage because they are at risk for cancer. Genetic discrimination is wrong—and it should be illegal in the United States of America.

There is one more thing we can do to dramatically reduce cancer in America –and it doesn't take a scientific breakthrough. It takes a breakthrough of political will.

It is time to treat underage smoking like the urgent national health

crisis it is. We must dramatically reduce teen smoking in America.

We must reaffirm the full authority of the FDA to keep cigarettes away from children. In the wake of the recent Supreme Court decision which challenges that authority, I call on Congress to give the FDA unequivocal power over this issue, including the power to impose tough financial penalties on companies that market to children.

We must match the tobacco companies' big advertising campaign with national counter-advertising about the dangers of smoking and the risks of cancer. And we must double our investment in efforts to prevent smoking – so we can prevent more cancer, and so we can find new ways to break the grip of nicotine addiction.

The issue isn't easy—and there are entrenched interests on the other side. But it's an issue where we can never give up, and never give in. I promise you: I never will.

The steps I am announcing today are realistic, and the goals I am setting are achievable. We can and must harness the wonders of today's scientific discoveries, to keep people healthy and alive. We can and must bring the best of treatment and prevention to millions of Americans.

...

Al Gore

June 13, 2000

TV Ad: "Prescription Drugs"



[Announcer]:

Every week, Bob Darthez has to afford his groceries and prescription drugs. He's worked a lifetime, but now he's at the mercy of the big drug companies. They're using money and lobbyists to stop progress in Washington.

Al Gore is taking them on. Fighting for a Medicare prescription drug benefit for seniors like Bob Darthez.

[Gore]:

People can't afford these ridiculously high prices for prescription medicines. When their doctors prescribe medicine for their health and their well-being, they ought to be able to take it.

(On screen: The Gore Plan; www.1-877-leadnow.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

Al Gore

Central Connecticut State University

New Britain, Connecticut

July 10, 2000

Patients' Bill of Rights

...

Today, I want to focus on a single choice that is fundamental to our promise as a nation:

Will we stand up for the people, or serve the powerful? Will we rise up and demand that America's leaders put the American people first? Or will we allow entrenched interests to dig in their heels even deeper; to put their own interests ahead of the public good; to take over the Presidency as well as the Congress?

I'm running for President because I want to fight for you. I want to fight for the people, not the powerful.

For all my public service, I've stood up to the big drug companies, the big oil companies, the insurance companies and the HMO's. That's what I'm doing now in this campaign - and that's exactly what I'll do as President of the United States.

But I am here today to tell you: we don't have to wait until election day.

For the past eight years, we've shown that we can put progress ahead of partisanship, to make gains that were once unimaginable: the first budget surpluses in a generation. Twenty-two million new jobs. Targeted tax cuts to pay for college and job training. The welfare rolls cut in half. The smallest national government since John Kennedy sat in the Oval Office.

Now, because of all we've achieved, we can set our sights even



higher. Now, building on a strong foundation, we can reach for the best America.

Imagine an America that closes out not just its material debts, but its moral debts as well: where no parent or grandparent ever has to choose between medicine and food and rent; where we honor the bonds between the generations, and keep Social Security and Medicare strong.

Imagine an America that transforms education -- so that there is a qualified teacher in every classroom, and all our children have a chance to learn more and lift themselves higher.

Imagine an America where we invoke all the wonders of science and discovery - to cure cancer, ease the pain of disease, and let all our children breathe air free of pollution and smog.

Here's the good news: we can now take major steps toward the best America. And we can take some of these steps right now - in this session of Congress - simply by passing legislation that has been before the Congress for months, or even years.

And this is not just the Democratic agenda. There is broad, bipartisan support for health reform, education investment, and measures like a prescription drug benefit for seniors - not just across the land, but across the aisles of Congress itself.

But here's the reality of the Republican leadership in this Congress: instead of taking bipartisan action for prosperity and progress, they have chosen a different course:

Do nothing for the people; pass nothing that offends the special interests; serve the powerful, not the people.

I say to you today: that must change, and it must change now - even before the election.

It is time for Congress to start listening to the voices of the people, instead of hearing and heeding the demands of big oil and the

pharmaceutical interests.

This do-nothing-for-the-people Republican Congress should finally do something for our children, and pay down the national debt -- so they can reach for their dreams, instead of paying for the cost overruns of ours.

The leadership in Congress should stop trying to pass massive tax breaks for the special interests, because we don't want to go back to the era of deficit, recession, and high interest rates.

This do-nothing-for-the-people Republican Congress should finally do something for our parents and grandparents, and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. Yes, both houses of Congress have passed legislation to put Medicare in an iron-clad lock-box, where the politicians can't touch it. But you know what the Republican leaders are doing with that legislation? They're keeping it in a legislative lock-box, so it can never become law.

This do-nothing-for-the-people Republican Congress should finally do something to invest more in education - to hire new teachers, reduce class size, and help our children learn. Instead, they even tried to repeal our plan for 100,000 new well-trained teachers.

This do-nothing-for-the-people Republican Congress should finally do something for every family in America, and that is: pass a real, bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights, to make sure you get the best health care, and not just the cheapest. To cover up their inaction, the Republican leadership has offered fig-leaf legislation to protect insurance company profits, not your health and well-being. Here is how Republican Congressman Charlie Norwood, the co-author of the bipartisan bill, describes his own party's do-nothing bill: "not worth the paper it's printed on."

Instead of counting the big drug company donations that are rolling

in, it's time for Congress to pass a real prescription drug benefit for all seniors on Medicare. But the do-nothing Republican leadership won't even let the House of Representatives vote on that, because they are afraid it would pass.

Instead of counting the oil company donations that are gushing in, it is time for Congress to take decisive action to protect our environment, to reduce our dependence on big oil and foreign oil, and to clean up contaminated brownfields.

Unless this Congress starts doing its job now, this will be remembered in history as the Congress that blocked progress for the people all across the board. What is their record to date?

Nothing to close the gun show loophole. Don't they agree that we should stop criminals from buying guns without a background check?

Nothing to raise the minimum wage. Don't they agree that for the hardest-pressed families, work should always pay more than welfare?

Nothing to guarantee basic paycheck fairness for women. Don't they agree with us that there should be an equal day's pay for an equal day's work?

Don't just take it from me; as one Republican staff member in the Senate just admitted, "you couldn't get a Mother's Day resolution through [Congress] right now."

Let's face it: never has so little been done, in so much time, to benefit so few.

This is the do-nothing Congress of the 21st Century - and the reason they do nothing is that the Republican leaders keep asking what they can do for the special interests.

It's not just a coincidence that they have blocked meaningful campaign finance reform. They may want John McCain to speak at their convention, but they filibustered the McCain-Feingold bill. And we all

know why:

The HMO's and insurance companies have lavished almost \$9 million on the Republican Party in the past few years. No wonder the Republican leaders' phony Patients' Bill of Rights leaves out 135 million Americans; leaves out a real guarantee of the right to see a specialist; and leaves out any assurance that you can go to the nearest emergency room, not just the one that is miles away.

A phony coalition called "Citizens for Better Medicare" has given more than \$7 million to the Republican Party in the past few years. You know who the citizens are? More than 30 big drug companies. And the Republican leaders in Congress have joined with them to protect drug industry price-gouging and tell seniors to go beg the HMO's and the insurance companies for help with prescription drugs.

Now the so-called "Citizens for Better Medicare" is polluting the public airwaves with television ads designed to defend the position taken by the Republican leaders. At least there ought to be a little truth in advertising. They ought to call it "Citizens for Bad Medicare."

Governor Bush, who is now the head of the Republican Party, says nothing about this, and his silence aids and abets the do-nothing Republican Congress - and the same special interests who are contributing so much to his own campaign: the HMO's, the insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies, the oil companies and the big polluters.

Many of us are concerned about the problem of partisanship in Washington. That problem is real - and with your help, as President, I will work to heal the divisions. But that's not the problem here. How can it be, when a real Patients' Bill of Rights has been co-authored by a Republican, has wide Republican support in Congress, and is supported by most Republicans in America?

How can this be about partisanship when dozens of Republicans in the House and the Senate have joined with Democrats, to fight for a real prescription drug benefit for seniors - a bill that a majority of Republicans across this nation want to see passed into law?

The real problem here isn't gridlock; it's the special-interest lock that's creating the do-nothing Congress. That's why the Republican leadership won't let Republicans and Democrats alike join together, to do what's right for America.

I say to you today: it is time for Congress to listen to the people, and not the powerful.

...

A few weeks from now, the Republican and Democratic parties will gather for their national conventions - to formally choose their nominees, and to begin this fall's election contest. I know that it will be a hard-fought contest; it already is.

But the campaign is no excuse for a Congress that continues to do nothing. Instead of just making promises in a platform, it's time for the Republican leaders to let Republicans and Democrats join together in Congress to pass the people's legislation.

We can do it now. The Democratic Party is ready. Many Republicans have pledged their votes as well. We are just six votes away from raising the minimum wage. Just one vote away from a real Patients' Bill of Rights.

I have talked with Congressman Gephardt and Senator Daschle, and they are ready to work with the Republicans to get this Congress moving now. So is President Clinton, and so am I.

There is one other voice, the voice of George W. Bush, that can move the Republican leaders in Congress, and prove that a newly-proclaimed moderation is real, and not just rhetoric.

Let Governor Bush speak up on prescription drugs; on a Patients' Bill of Rights; on raising the minimum wage; on 100,000 new teachers for our schools.

Let Governor Bush pick up the phone, call the leaders of his own party, and ask them to pass legislation instead of blocking it.

This is the time of testing - when we show whose side we are truly on.

If hard-working families can't count on Governor Bush today, then what would happen if the results in November were a Bush White House, and a Republican Congress led by Lott, Armey, and Delay - all beholden to the same special interests?

The do-nothing Congress could then become the "do-the-wrong-thing" Congress.

Massive tax breaks for the powerful and the comfortable -- instead of new investment in education. More protection for the big drug companies - instead of prescription drugs for seniors. More excuses for the HMO's and the insurance companies - and too many children and too many families left without any health care at all.

There is a real choice - not only in this election, but in the weeks ahead. It is time to move America forward.

Al Gore

NAACP 91st Annual Convention

Baltimore, Maryland

July 12, 2000

***Improving Medicare by Adding a Prescription Drug Benefit to
Seniors***

...

And in order to have a strong America, we also need to have a healthy America. It is unconscionable that we have 44 million of our citizens who don't have health care in the midst of the greatest prosperity we've ever had. We ought to start by making a commitment, and I make you this commitment: You elect me president, I'll make sure that every child in America has full health care within the next four years. And then we'll move step by step toward universal health insurance for all of our people.

Your health should not depend on your wealth.

...

Now, we have an opportunity right now to pass legislation. And it is central part of my platform. I believe that it is time to improve the Medicare program by adding a prescription drug benefit for our seniors and giving them the help they need to buy their medicine so they can follow doctors' orders.

But we can't stop there, because we have a set of problems in our health care system that are bedeviling our people and need to be addressed.

...

I'm telling you—I'm telling you—we need a law that takes these medical decisions away from the accountants that work for the insurance

companies and gives the decisions back to the doctors and the nurses and the health care professionals, because they are the ones who know what they're talking about. These accountants don't have a license to practice medicine and they don't have a right to play God.

We need a real patients' bill of rights, and we need to make it the law of the land. But this other group on the other side, they refuse to pass it. It failed by a one-vote margin—one vote.

So let me tell you, it is time for some change.

...

Al Gore

San Antonio, Texas

July 20, 2000

Governor Bush's Record on Health Care

...

Now, here in Texas, it seems to me that the state government here under Governor Bush has it half right. The people of Texas, as anybody who's been here knows, work just as hard or harder than anybody else. But the question is, is the Bush government here working just as hard for them and helping to ensure that they succeed?

I believe that it's important to fight for people and not the powerful. And one of the most important questions that our nation is going to be deciding this year has to do with our priorities: What are we going to focus on? How are we going to use these unprecedented surpluses?

Well, you know, I understand that Governor Bush is a popular and well-liked governor here, and I want to give him some credit on that score. I think he has a warm and engaging personality, but you know the presidency is more than just a popularity contest. It involves whether or not you're willing to fight for what's right, whether or not you're willing to spend some popularity to do difficult, hard things, and that's where you get to priorities.

Now, faced with a budget surplus nationally, I've been proposing health care for every child, cleaning up the environment, improving the quality of life for all Americans and targeted tax cuts. Here in Texas, faced with the largest surplus ever, courtesy, I would argue, in part at least of the national economic boom that produced surpluses in most states, Government Bush choose a different set of priorities.

Instead of addressing some serious problems that we're going to hear

about here today, involving families with children who don't have health insurance, instead, the governor has made his top priority, the first bill he signed, a large tax cut for special interests.

Now, this is a wonderful state, but I think it should be—and I think most people agree, it should be a state where it's just as easy to raise a child as it is to set up an oil rig. But here are the facts: Texas now ranks number one in industrial pollution, it's number two for child poverty, it's number three for deaths from asthma, it's number two for children living in poverty. And when you look at the issue of health care, Texas is number one for families that do not have health insurance, number two for children without health insurance, number 50 for women with health insurance.

So what would it take to solve that? If you really wanted to address that problem, one way to do it would have been to take the large surplus last year and address the problem, and these representatives who are with me attempted to do that.

Now, at the national level we've attempted to do that. President Clinton and I advocated and passed a few years ago the so-called Child Health Insurance Program, which makes it possible for families that are low-income and low-middle-income to sign up their children for health insurance, if the states allow it.

Now, the facts will show, the record will reflect, that Governor Bush fought against the expansion of that program here in Texas, and when it was passed over his objections he supposedly said to one of the sponsors that they had forced it upon him.

But then there was a long delay before the state applied for the funding. And then, worse than that, Texas became one of the two or three worst states for creating obstacles to sign people up.

Now, here's the—here are the facts. If a state finds ways to

discourage families from signing up for Medicaid or for the CHIP program that's part of Medicaid, then the state saves money in its budget. If they erect all kinds of barriers and obstacles, and families get the notion that they really shouldn't try to participate in it, the state can use that money for other things, like a tax break for the oil companies and other special interests.

Now, the fact is Texas requires, under Governor Bush, a face-to-face interview before children who are eligible for this health insurance can get it. And these families have been made to believe that they have got to go back for another face-to-face interview every six months, and in some cases, every three months. I was just learning about that for the first time here. The paperwork is very difficult. Families that are working have to take many hours off from work, almost always during a workday. The documentation is extensive. And as a result, there are 600,000 children in Texas eligible for health insurance who don't have it. They could be signed up.

Now, since this election nationally is about priorities, I want you to know that I've proposed a plan to ensure that every child has health insurance. And part of my plan is to deal with these kinds of barriers that Texas and a handful of other states have erected, to stop that kind of practice that prevents children that clearly need health care from getting health care.

Now, here's the other thing: By making his top priority a \$1.7 billion tax cut for special and powerful interests, the governor evidently did not heed a warning that came early on that there were going to be increased expenditures needed for Medicaid. And now the largest surplus in Texas state history a year ago has become a shortfall. And the shortfall is particularly to be found in the area of health care and also the justice system.

Now you're seeing the internal memoranda coming out. You're seeing a rush by the governor's political allies to try to put a gloss on it. And the governor told one of the newspapers represented here last week that he hopes not to be around to have to deal with it next year.

Al Gore

Independence, Missouri

August 14, 2000

Bush's Proposal vs. Mine: Drug Benefits and the Medicare Plan

Talking about my dad, the year before Medicare was passed in 1964, one of our family's greatest sources of pride is that my dad authored the first Medicare bill to pass the United States Senate. That one didn't pass the House that year.

But after the landslide of '64, then in February of '65, the new Medicare proposal did pass.

Now, it's an issue in this election year. And it's worth remembering why Medicare is so important. Before it passed, only 50 percent of our senior citizens had health insurance. After it passed, 95 percent of our seniors had health insurance. That made a tremendous difference.

Now, today, we see from all of the stories that are coming from our own families and from people far and wide that prescription drug bills are so high that seniors need some improvements to Medicare. That's why I'm fighting in this election year to make this in part a mandate on whether or not we are going to have prescription drug benefits.

Joe Lieberman and I are for prescription drug benefits under the Medicare program for all of our senior citizens. It is time to give them that help because they're having trouble paying their bills.

Now there is a contrast in this election. And the American people deserve to know the details of what is being proposed by the two major parties on Medicare, on Social Security, on the prescription drug benefit that I just mentioned.

Let me just give you some specific examples. The other side has proposed privatizing a major part of Social Security. I believe, for reasons

I will spell out in my speech Thursday night in Los Angeles, that -- that that's not in the best interest of America's seniors. But they couch in rhetoric that makes it sound like they're after the same goals that we are.

On Medicare, the population of seniors eligible for Medicare will be doubling as the baby boomer retires from 40 million people now to 80 million people, and that's going to put a financial strain on Medicare, nothing we can't handle, particularly with these big budget surpluses, but we do have to adjust to it.

How will we do so? Well, in my balanced budget proposals, I set aside the surplus to deal with that problem to help out with both Social Security and Medicare. On the other side, for all the sentiment and expressions of support, they do not carve out any new money for Medicare even as the need is growing so fast. That's a contrast.

On prescription drug benefits, here is the -- here is the specific proposal on the other side, so you can judge for yourself. And ask them questions if you think I'm not describing it in an objective way. They want to give money to insurance companies in the form of a subsidy to help you buy a brand-new kind of insurance policy that will cover prescription drugs.

Now, the insurance companies say that that won't work and they don't want it because, unlike other kinds of health insurance, they say practically everybody takes prescription drugs when they get older now. It's not as if they're gambling that some will and some won't the way they gamble on insurance coverage. Most people stay relatively healthy, so their premiums will help to pay the bills of the ones that have need for medical care. It's not that way with prescription drug benefits. So they say it won't work.

Our proposal is different. It gives the money directly to the seniors so they can purchase their own prescription drugs. Now the big drug

companies are opposed to what we're talking about. And why is that?

Today, people in different circumstances pay different prices for the same prescription drugs. You know what I'm talking about? You can go to other countries, you can go to a veterinarians office and get a much cheaper price. And the highest price of all is charged to seniors.

And what the big drug companies are worried about is that if we provide a prescription drug benefit under the Medicare program that Medicare will start negotiating for a better price, and that that will drive the price down for seniors, and that will hurt some of the profits for the big drug companies.

Well, they have by far the highest profits of any industry in America. I'm not against profits, but I am against the kind of situation that is faced by seniors today. I talked to a women in Missouri on the other side of the state with Dick Gephardt last month sometime. She told me how she had to pay over half of -- about half of the money she gets from her Social Security check for prescription medicine. And she doesn't have enough money leftover for food and for clothing and shelter.

I talked to a woman in New Hampshire who told me how she takes her pill bottles out of the medicine cabinet and puts them on the breakfast table and goes through them, and counts pills, and counts pennies at the same time.

And then she unilaterally makes decisions to cutout some of her medicine because she can't afford all of it, and she doesn't consult with her doctor in the process.

We need to give seniors help in order to stop that kind of situation. We need to intervene, to give them some help with prescription drugs.

So whether it's Social Security or Medicare, or prescription drug benefits being added to Medicare, these three health care issues effecting seniors are at the center of the debate in our nation over which direction

we're going to take.

...



IN THEIR OWN WORDS
SOURCEBOOK FOR THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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Al Gore

La Crosse, Wisconsin

August 18, 2000

A Prescription Drug Benefit for Seniors

...

You know, I said in my speech last night that this whole struggle is about the future our country and what happens for working families. Don't ever lose sight of the fact that this is a struggle. Getting the right kind of policies that unleash the potential of our country can only happen if we all join together to overcome the resistance that's out there. And the reason we've got to get this reform measure is, in part, because now the wealthy and powerful special interests have too much of an ability to stop good things.

For example, why hasn't the Congress already passed an increase in the minimum wage for those families who are having a hard time getting by? We're for an increase in the minimum wage.

Why -- you know, I'll give you another example. I have talked to seniors all over America who now have prescription medicine bills that come to half or more of their Social Security checks; in some cases, more than their Social Security check.

I've talked to those who often will go to the medicine cabinet and get the pill bottles out and count the pills and count the pennies and then make decisions to cut out some of the prescriptions, even without consulting the doctor, because they -- they can't afford it.

That's just morally wrong for us to put them in that situation at a time when the drug companies have the highest profits of any industry in America -- . You know, they deserve to make good profits, of course. But it is -- but why should seniors be charged higher bills than anybody else

for the same medicine, forcing them to go across the border to Canada, in some cases to go to veterinarians' offices to get a cheaper price for the same medication? I see a lot of heads nodding.

That's why Joe Lieberman and I are going to fight, with Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl and Ron Kind, to get a prescription drug benefit for all seniors under the Medicare Program.

I'll give you another example, also in the area of health care. Why is it that when the doctor gives you a prescription, or when the doctor recommends that you see a specialist, all of a sudden that doctor's recommendation can be overturned by some bean-counter for an HMO or an insurance company --.who doesn't have a license to practice medicine and doesn't have a right to play God? We need to take those medical decisions away from the HMOs and give them back to the doctors and the nurses and the health care professionals.

The insurance companies don't want that to happen, just as the drug companies don't want the prescription drug benefit to happen, and so there is this mighty wall of resistance. That's what this election is for - - to enable and empower all of us to join together to say, The people of the United States of America have had enough. We want these changes, and we're going to the ballot box to get these changes!

...

Al Gore

The University of Maryland

College Park, Maryland

August 24, 2000

Putting Social Security & Medicare in a Lock Box

...

Now, I'm speaking primarily to a group of young people right here, but I want to start by telling you of my absolute obligation and determination to make sure that we protect and preserve and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. I'll put them in a lock box and say, "Politicians, hands off." And I'll veto anything that takes money out of Social Security and Medicare for anything other than Social Security and Medicare. And I will not go along with any proposal to strip one out of every six dollars intended for the Social Security trust fund out of the Social Security trust fund. I will never go along with the privatization of Social Security because I think it's wrong, I think it's in the worst interests of our country.

And I also want you to know about the changes I'm proposing on health care. I believe that it is time to say that medical decisions should not be turned over to bean-counters behind computer terminals who don't have a license to practice medicine and don't have a right to play God. I think it's time to take the medical decisions away from the HMOs and insurance companies and give them back to the doctors and the nurses and the health care professionals!

And I think it's time to recognize that concentrated power can sometimes work to the disadvantage of competition and the American people. Specifically, we have seen a dramatic increase in prescription drug prices in recent years, especially for our seniors, who are charged

the highest price of all. Everybody else gets a lower price for prescription medicine than senior citizens in the Medicare program. You can even go to a veterinarian, if the vet prescribes a medicine that's used by people, as is often the case -- we have a dog that has arthritis, for example and cats and dogs get a much lower price than people do. It's a reflection of the fact that the big drug companies have so much power today that they -- they can dictate different prices to different markets, and we need more competition to bring the prices down.

And we need a prescription drug benefit for seniors, under the Medicare program to help them pay the bills.

...

Al Gore

Florida State University.

Tallahassee, Florida

August 28, 2000

Our "Specific" Prescription Drug Plan for Senior Citizens

...

All this week, I'm going to be talking about health care, and today, specifically, I want to talk to you about prescription drug costs. Because people on fixed incomes in this country are having an extremely difficult time paying for their prescription medicine.

The good news is that over the last 20 years or so, there have been so many advances in science that a lot of new medications have been invented and they can alleviate pain and suffering and cure diseases in ways that weren't possible before. That's great news.

But as is so often the case with new advances, when the good news comes there is bad news along with it. How do we adapt to these changes? And in this case specifically, how do we help people on fixed incomes afford these new miracle medicines that the doctors are prescribing for them.

Now, I have responded to this challenging by laying out, in the course of my campaign, a specific prescription drug benefit under the Medicare program. I believe it is time to say to every senior in this country: We have come to the point when we can improve Medicare by giving a prescription drug benefit to every single senior in this country, so that the prescription medicines can be afforded and purchased.

And, now, a campaign is also a contest, and I invite you to look at what is said on the other side. And I'll let them speak for themselves. I'm not going to say a single negative personal thing about my opponents.

You will not hear that from me in this entire campaign.

I do invite you to compare and contrast the plans that we put forward. Because the real question here is not what's good for me, or what's good for my opponent, it's what's good for you. It's all you, it's about the future of our country. And you deserve a detailed, adult, intelligent discussion of exactly what the specifics are of the plans that we are proposing.

And I -- when the other side gets around to proposing a specific plan, then we can compare it and contrast it. But I want to spend my time talking about my plan. Here's how it would work.

For low income seniors, who make less than \$12,000 a year, who get that much in income or less, all of your prescription drug benefit will be covered and the premiums will also be covered up to an amount of \$5,000. And then, when it gets up to total expense of \$4,000 for the individual's part of it, then everything above that will be covered.

For those who have annual incomes of more than \$12,000, it will be 50 percent of the cost will be covered by Medicare up to \$5,000 worth per year.

And then, if you're one of the ones that are not too big a percentage of seniors whose individual expenses are more than \$4,000 a year. Everything above that will be covered.

Now, that contrasts with a plan that the other side has pointed to that says that only low income seniors would be covered, and then they would get a subsidy that they could take to insurance companies and attempt to buy an insurance company plan that would cover prescription drugs.

But the insurance companies have said they will not offer such plans, and they've said that approach will not work. So don't take it from me, go check it out. It's -- you can look on the World Wide Web, if you

have the Internet at Algre.com and other places, too.

Now, let me give you specific examples of what is happening. We just came from the Baker Pharmacy, and Dr. Baker is here, somewhere, thank you, sir. It's a family-owned pharmacy, and your customers just brag on you so much, and we learned a lot over there.

And one of the -- one of the seniors that was there getting her prescriptions filled was Myrtle Jennings, who is with us right here in the front row. And appreciate you coming, Mrs. Jennings. And she gets about -- well, she was handed her prescription for the month while we were there, and, of course, they worked that out in advance, it came out to about \$207 per month as I recall.

And that's fairly common these days, some have more, some have less, some have a lot more, but it's not at all unusual for -- is it, doctor? That is very, very common.

Now a lot of times, if a senior is on fixed incomes -- on a fixed income, that person will have to choose between paying for the prescription medicine and paying for food, or paying for rent.

I talked with a woman in St. Louis, who I invited to the Democratic convention incidentally, who told me of the bills she had that caused her to scrimp and save for food, and she would go to a wholesale food store and wait until she could buy macaroni and cheese in bulk and then have it every meal. She told me she is pretty tired of eating macaroni and cheese, and she shouldn't have to.

Here's what Miss Jennings told me this morning, and bet you there are some other people like this. In fact, I know there are. For her, it is not so much a choice between prescription medicine and food and shelter, as it is between some prescription medicines and other prescription medicines.

I talked to some others who say they take their medicines out of the

cabinet and put them out on the kitchen table, and then they go through them one by one and count the pills and count the pennies, and some of them will cut back the dosage compared to what the doctor recommends. Others will take some of the medications and cut them out entirely.

In Miss Jennings' case, here's what she does. She has got medications for her heart, and for blood pressure, and for pain that's caused by arthritis, pain in her spine. She told Tipper and me that she's worried about the -- about not taking the heart medication because she thinks that it's real serious that she needs to keep taking that. Similarly, with the blood pressure medication, she believes it's real serious for her to keep taking that. So what does she do? She cuts out the pain medication.

Now, understand what this means. Mrs. Jennings is 82 years old, has four children, she lost her husband earlier this year. She is now placed in a situation where she has to -- she feels like she has to cut out that pain medication. That is just wrong, that's just wrong. And how many millions of seniors are there now, who are making choices like that, or like the woman who goes to the wholesale foods store or the others who don't want to be a burden on their children, but call up and have no choice but to forfeit their strong desire for independence.

Let me tell you. Medicare was such a great blessing when it was enacted. I'll fight to defend it. We'll talk about that more.

...

Al Gore

Portland State University

Portland, Oregon

August 30, 2000

Expanding Medicare for an Expanding Medicare Population

...

And all this week, whether it's been on prescription drug coverage for seniors or our proposal to cover all children within the next four years, or the Patients' Bill of Rights that we're going to be talking about in more depth and detail tomorrow, we've been talking about health care and the choices that we as a nation must make if we're going to do the right thing and make it's affordable.

Today our focus is single-minded: We're talking about Medicare. Now, the prescription drug benefit that we are proposing will become a part of Medicare, with your help, but there are some even more basic choices that we, as a nation, have to confront where Medicare is concerned.

Joe mentioned that my dad played a role back in '64. That bill didn't pass the House. But in the fall of 1964 there was a landslide and Lyndon Johnson was elected to his own full term, and in February of 1965 Medicare became law.

To those who say these choices don't make a difference, listen to this fact. The day before Medicare became law, 50 percent of all America's seniors had no health insurance whatsoever. The day after Medicare became law, 95 percent of all of our seniors had health insurance. That makes a difference.

But that was 35 years ago and a lot of things have changed since then. The increasing prominence of prescription medicine has changed;

that's why we need to add that benefit. But here's another change. The number of seniors is growing, the fastest-growing age group is over 85, there are 75,000 Americans over the age of 100 today. The -- I hope to eventually be one of those.

But not only is the absolute number increasing, the percentage is increasing, and the number of seniors in relation to the number of people who are in the work force paying into Medicare is also going up.

How do we adapt to that? When the baby boom generation that I'm a part of retires, starting in about 15 years, then there's going to be an even bigger shift all of a sudden. And by the year 2030, there will be 80 million Americans eligible for Medicare. That compares to 40 million today. So, it's going to double over the next 30 years.

That means that we, in this election, have to take responsibility for adjusting Medicare, strengthening Medicare, putting new resources into Medicare in order to prepare for these challenges.

Here's another change: Some of the decisions made by the Congress in the last few years, specifically the 1997 Balance Budget Act, made some cuts in Medicare -- some that were wise, but others that we now know went too far. Teaching hospitals, for example, play a unique role in our medical system, and if you starve teaching hospitals for resources, then that hurts the research and the training of new doctors. And we need to put more money back into the teaching hospitals.

Also, rural hospitals, nursing homes, home health care agencies, rehabilitative services.

Joe and I have a budget that budgets \$40 billion over the next 10 years to address those specific problems that I've just mentioned, those five areas, including teaching hospitals. We have, in our budget, a specific sum of money -- if you add it all up, it's \$339 billion over 10 years -- that will also prepare Medicare for the expanded Medicare

population and the prescription drug benefit.

OK. If we as a nation are going to be responsible in making sure that Medicare continues to play the crucial role it plays, we have to make these choices. And that's why we're talking about it in detail.

Now here is the -- here's the first choice that I think we need to make where Medicare is concerned, to prepare for this upcoming challenge: We need to take the Medicare trust fund and take it out of the rest of the budget; put it in an ironclad lockbox with a sign that says, "Politicians: Hands off. Don't use this money for anything except Medicare." It's going to be needed. We're going to keep it there. We're going to rule it hands off.

We have made that decision. Our opponents have not. There's still time for them to do that. Let's discuss that.

I think it should be done, because otherwise you're going to have budget pressures on politicians in both political parties driving them to consider raiding the Medicare trust fund. Because until the baby boom retires, the surplus inside Medicare is going to seem like it's continuing to grow. But it needs to be protected, because we can look ahead and see very clearly that, even though it's going to build up a little bit in the next decade or so, then it's going to start being drawn down. So let's remove the temptation to raid the cookie jar and keep it for when it's going to be needed.

...

Al Gore

September 5, 2000

TV Ad: "Siding"



[Announcer]:

The issue: prescription drugs. George Bush's approach leaves millions of seniors with no prescription drug coverage -- none.

(On screen: Source: CBO Analysis H.R. 4680 6/28/00; U.S. House DPC, 4/14/00)

And Bush forces seniors he does include to go to HMOs and insurance companies for coverage.

(On screen: Source: Blue Cross/Blue Shield Assoc. Letter, 4/24/00; National Journal, 4/1/00)

The National Council of Senior Citizens says, "The Bush approach is favored by big drug companies and leaves millions with no help."

(On screen: Source: National Council of Senior Citizens press release)

Al Gore is taking on the big drug companies to pass a real prescription drug benefit that covers all seniors.

(On screen: Source: Los Angeles Times, 6/6/00)

George Bush? Siding with the big drug companies.

(On screen: Source: Wall Street Journal, 7/31/00; National Journal's Congress Daily, 4/11/00)

The Gore plan: fighting for our seniors.

(On screen: 1800thefacts.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

Al Gore

Columbus, Ohio

September 5, 2000,

Bush's Prescription Drug Plan

...

We had a great time. And tomorrow I'm going to be introducing a comprehensive economic plan in Cleveland. And I thought today would be an ideal time to have a forum on the new economy and to talk about exactly what is at stake here.

You know, both of the campaigns are going back and forth and presenting ideas.

Today my opponent, Governor Bush, is unveiling a prescription drug plan. And I thought I would just make a short comment on that before we get into our discussion.

There are really three problems with it: Number one, it leaves millions of seniors without any prescription drug coverage, middle-class seniors. Nearly half of all of those who don't have coverage today would not get coverage under the plan that he's announcing today.

The second problem is, it would still force seniors into HMOs that -- and managed health plans, even if they don't want to go into them. And as we have seen, there are a lot of problems with the way some of the HMOs have been treating all Americans.

And number three, the biggest problem is, there's no money to pay for it, if you give away all of the surplus in the form of a giant tax cut to the wealthy at the expense of the middle-class in a way that stops our prosperity and progress.

I think the far better approach -- first of all on prescription drug benefits, I think we should give all seniors a prescription drug benefit

under the Medicare program and help them pay their prescription medicine bills.

...

Al Gore

September 21, 2000

TV Ad: "Cover"



[Announcer]: Newspapers say George Bush's prescription drug ad misrepresents the facts.

(On screen: Source: Washington Post 9/15/00)

In fact, Al Gore's plan covers all seniors through Medicare, not an HMO. Under Gore, seniors choose their own doctor, and doctors decide what drugs to prescribe. George Bush forces seniors to go to HMOs and insurance companies for prescription drugs. They have no choice.

(On screen: Source: Boston Globe, 9/13/00, Time Magazine 9/18/00)

And Bush leaves millions of middle-class seniors with no coverage.

(On screen: Source: The Economist, 9/9/00)

Al Gore -- the only prescription plan that gives all seniors coverage and choice.

(On screen: Paid for by Gore/Lieberman, Inc.)

Al Gore

St. Petersburg, Florida

September 25, 2000

Medicare at a Crossroads

Six weeks from tomorrow, the people of Florida will play a decisive role in shaping America's future.

And I believe the choice comes down to this: will we have a President who stands up and fights for the seniors who need health care? Will we have a President who fights to save and strengthen Medicare - not just for our parents' generation, but for generations to come?

Each day in America, new scientific breakthroughs are conquering the most dread diseases -- enabling us to live longer, healthier lives.

I'm fighting to see to it that those breakthroughs reach into every home, and every hospital, all across our land.

Each day in America, new medicines are giving us a powerful new capacity to fight everything from high blood pressure and arthritis, to cancer and diabetes.

I'm fighting to see to it that those miracle medications reach every senior who needs them - so good health is no longer an unattainable luxury, but a basic right for families.

But let's be clear: there are powerful forces that want to block our progress, putting short-term profits over human health.

The HMO's and insurance companies want to measure your health and well-being on a spreadsheet. And we're no longer going to let it happen.

The big drug companies want to overcharge seniors - and then plow more and more of their money into high-priced TV ads. And we have to stop that.

The power should be in your hands. The choices should belong to you, your family, and your doctor - not some insurance company clerk, trying to cut corners with your health care.

I'm running for President to fight for you. And the heart of my agenda is a rock-solid commitment to Medicare - America's guarantee of affordable health care for our parents and grandparents.

So I don't believe this election is an award for past performance.

I'm not asking you to vote for me on the basis of the economy we have.

I'm asking for your support on the basis of the fairer, healthier, more prosperous America we can create together.

Let's make sure prosperity enriches not just the few, but all our families.

Let's invest in education, middle-class tax cuts, and a secure retirement.

Let's clean up the environment.

And let's invest in health care and Medicare for our seniors.

Today, even as a revolution in health and medicine promises to lift the lives of millions of seniors, Medicare is threatened with insolvency -- unless we act now.

That's why Joe Lieberman and I are releasing our full plan to protect, improve, and modernize Medicare. It's called "Medicare at a Crossroads."

And I pledge to you: if I am entrusted with the Presidency, we will protect Medicare for at least another 30 years, the longest period of solvency in Medicare's history.

We will improve Medicare, by giving real prescription drug coverage, and life-saving preventative care, to all seniors under Medicare.

We will modernize Medicare by giving seniors more choices for their health care, so they are never left powerless and broke.

And I will never go along with any plan to raid Medicare, or turn it over to the HMO bean-counters - shaking the foundation of health security for our seniors.

My plan starts by putting Medicare in an iron-clad lock-box with a sign that says: "hands off, politicians."

Right now, Medicare is running a surplus. Some see that surplus as a piggy bank they can use for a tax cut that primarily benefits the wealthiest Americans, at the expense of everyone else.

I want to make sure that the Medicare surplus is used for only one thing - strengthening Medicare.

Let me put it right on the line: I will veto the use of any money from Medicare, for anything other than Medicare.

But it's not enough to defend what's good about Medicare today. We also have to improve Medicare for tomorrow.

For all the progress of today's medicine, Medicare still looks a lot like a typical health plan from 1965. Back then, prescription drugs weren't considered an essential part of American health care. Back then, we didn't have early screening tests for cancer and osteoporosis that could save and enhance lives.

So I'll fight for a prescription drug benefit for all seniors under Medicare.

It's just wrong for seniors to have to choose between food and medicine - or between one crucial medicine and another -- while the big drug companies run up record profits.

I'll make sure Medicare covers the most up-to-date early screening tests - so we can catch and even cure disease before it's too late. I'll eliminate most co-payments and deductibles for important screening tests. No seniors should be priced out of tests that could save their lives.

And let's allow people from the ages of 55 to 65 years old to buy into

Medicare. The near-elderly have the hardest time finding health coverage. I say: let them join the most successful health program in the history of our country.

Now, let me be clear about one more part of my plan: it modernizes Medicare by providing real choice and real control for all seniors under Medicare.

Under my Medicare plan, you get to choose your own doctor. And no HMO can take that choice away.

Under my prescription drug plan -- if you choose to participate -- you can go to your own local pharmacy and get all the medicine your doctor prescribes for you. And no big drug company can veto that choice or take it away.

And we will no longer just accept the rising wave of HMO's dropping seniors and denying them coverage, all to enhance their bottom line.

Here's my bottom line: tough new penalties for any HMO that tries to exclude or drop our seniors.

Now, there is a real debate in this election over the future of Medicare. And I think it's an important debate.

The other side has called Medicare a "government HMO." They've suggested that you shouldn't trust Medicare to provide prescription drug coverage.

Let me tell you: Medicare has been a lifeline for tens of millions of families. It's given millions the choice of doctors and health plans - so they don't have to choose between health care and food and rent. So I'll take Medicare over the real HMO's any day of the week.

The other side seems to put a lot of trust in those HMO's. And that's an area where we simply disagree.

Their plan would force seniors into HMO's. And their plan would make seniors go beg the HMO's and insurance companies for

prescription drug coverage, even if the HMO's don't want to provide it.

If I'm entrusted with the Presidency, I will block any effort to turn Medicare over to the HMO's.

The other side doesn't make a commitment to take Medicare off-budget, and put it in a lock-box where it can't be raided by politicians. And that's another area where we just disagree.

Their plan would take as much as \$360 billion from Medicare, and then use more than 70 percent of that to pay for a tax cut that gives the wealthiest one percent almost half the benefits.

Consider this fact: their budget plan spends more on a tax cut for the wealthiest one percent of taxpayers than it invests in health care, prescription drugs, education, and national defense combined. I think those are the wrong priorities.

There's one more area where we disagree. According to one study, in the first four years of their plan, the other side would provide prescription drug coverage not to all seniors, but to fewer than 700,000 seniors. And their plan could mean that in some states, seniors would have to go through welfare offices to qualify.

I believe seniors deserve better than a plan that leaves out millions of middle-class seniors, varies in coverage from state to state, and could run seniors through welfare offices. The Gore-Lieberman plan, by contrast, avoids another layer of bureaucracy, and maintains the principle of universality: if you paid into Medicare, you're eligible for Medicare benefits - including the new prescription drug coverage.

Our parents and grandparents gave us everything we have today. This is the generation that survived the Great Depression, won World War II, and made this country what it is.

So I won't go along with plans that would force them into HMO's.

I won't stand for a plan that gives the HMO's and insurance

companies more power over seniors' lives.

I won't accept proposals that make seniors rely on uneven and inadequate prescription drug coverage.

I'm fighting for the seniors of America - the people who have worked hard all their lives, paid their taxes, and deserve some peace and security in their older years.

These are important differences. And they're not about me or my opponent - they're about you; your families; your future.

Join with me, and I'll give more of the power to you - not the HMO's, not the big impersonal bureaucracies that want to privatize Medicare.

Because I know this about the job of the President: It is the only job in the Constitution that is charged with the responsibility of fighting for all the people. Not one state, or one district; not the wealthy or the powerful -- but all the people. Those who need a voice; those who need a champion; those who need to be lifted up, so they are never left behind.

If you entrust me with the Presidency, I know I won't always be the most exciting politician.

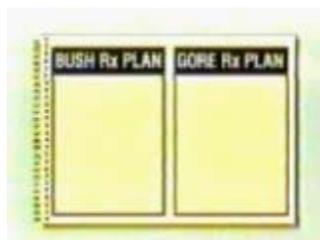
But I will fight for you every day. I will keep Medicare strong for your future. And I will never let you down.

You deserve a Medicare program that is as strong as America - the strongest, most powerful, most prosperous nation in history. Together, we will meet and master the challenge of Medicare at the crossroads.

Al Gore

October 11, 2000

TV Ad: "Check"



[Announcer]:

The truth about prescription drugs isn't in this notebook. It's in your checkbook. Bush relies on insurance companies. They now charge \$90 a month.

(On screen: Source: Based on Dept. of Health and Human Services data, 2/29/00)

Under Gore, \$25 a month through Medicare.

(On screen: Source: Office of Management and Budget, 6/26/00)

Under Bush, millions of middle-class seniors not covered.

(On screen: Economist, 9/9/00)

Under Gore, coverage available to all seniors under Medicare. Seniors choose their own doctor. Medigap still available.

(On screen: Source: The New York Times, 10/1/00)

Under Bush, seniors forced into HMOs and insurance companies.

Medicare premiums could rise 47 percent.

(On screen: Source: USA Today, 9/6/00; Washington Post, 9/15/00)

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Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Eldercare

The Baby Boomers are the first generation with more parents than children. Many families are doing all they can to help for and care for their elderly parents. These families are doing the right thing - and America must be on their side. We must do more to support the families and individuals who are caring for relatives suffering from long-term illnesses at home or at institutions. We should provide Americans with long-term care needs and their caregivers a \$3,000 tax credit. We should hold those who care for our nation's elderly to the highest standards and improve these workers' wages, benefits, training, and working conditions. We should make sure that every community in the country has a program to offer caregivers critical information, referrals, and respite from the difficult work of caring for a loved one.

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Universal Health Coverage

There is much more left to do. We must redouble our efforts to bring the uninsured into coverage step-by-step and as soon as possible. We should guarantee access to affordable health care for every child in America. We should expand coverage to working families, including more Medicaid assistance to help with the transition from welfare to work. And we should also seek to ensure that dislocated workers are provided affordable health care. We should make health care accessible and affordable for small businesses. In addition, Americans aged 55 to 65 - the fastest growing group of uninsured - should be allowed to buy into the Medicare program to get the coverage they need. By taking these steps, we can move our nation closer to the goal of providing universal health coverage for all Americans.

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Protecting and Strengthening Medicare

It is time we ended the tragedy of elderly Americans being forced to choose between meals and medication. It is time we modernized Medicare with a new prescription drug benefit. This is an essential step in making sure that the best new cures and therapies are available to our seniors and disabled Americans. We cannot afford to permit our seniors to receive only part of the medical care they need.

Democrats believe Medicare is worth fighting for - and worth saving. With the number of Americans on Medicare expected to double in the next 35 years, Al Gore has stepped up and taken responsibility by proposing a Medicare Lock Box that would insure Medicare surpluses are used for Medicare - and not for pork barrel spending or tax giveaways. We should also modernize Medicare by promoting competitive prices and remain vigilant against Medicare fraud.

Veterans' Benefits - Bush

George W. Bush

Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

August 21, 2000

Veterans Health Care

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And keeping faith also means giving our veterans first-rate health care, and treating the veterans with dignity. As you know better than anyone, health care for veterans is a complicated, bureaucratic process involving too many delays and uncertainties in coverage. Disability compensation claims can be even a longer ordeal, taking an average of 165 days to complete. So chaotic is the process, there is now a backlog of nearly one-half million claims. This is no way to treat any citizen, much less a veteran of our Armed Forces.

The veterans' health care system and the claims process will be modernized so that claims are handled in a fair and friendly way. To raise the standard of service to the veterans, I'm announcing today two proposals. As president, I will return the VA to the principle that it has a duty to assist veterans who seek service-related disability benefits. The old policy required the VA to assist veterans with their claims, and that will be our policy again. In my administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs will act as an advocate for veterans seeking benefit claims, not act as an adversary. Veterans who once stood in the line of fire to protect our freedom should not have to stand in the line of bureaucracy that is unwilling to help them in their claims.

And finally, as president, should I become your president, I'll also



bring together officials from the VA, leaders of the veterans groups, doctors, in a new Veterans Health Care Task Force. Their job will be to help ensure the swift and appropriate enforcement of law, such as the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act, and to further target and modernize areas that hinder veterans' access to the top-notch benefits they deserve.

President Kennedy observed that change is the law of life, and those who only look to the past or present are certain to miss the future. The choices we make now in the quiet days of peace will determine future battles won or lost, young lives protected or squandered. Our opportunity is here to renew America's purpose for a new generation, to extend America's peaceful influence across the world and across the years. This nation has been blessed by those who have been willing to serve a cause greater than self. This nation has been blessed by men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to our nation. This nation has been blessed by young men willing to travel long distances to fight for freedom. These lessons of our history must never be forgotten. The lesson of freedom must never be tarnished.

It's an honor to be standing before you. It's an honor to be running for president of the United States. It's an honor to be in a hall with heroes, both male and female alike.

George W. Bush

American Legion 82nd Annual National Convention

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

September 6, 2000

Improving Health Care for Veterans

Some of you here today served in the recent past, others in more distant times. Some served for a few years, others for an entire career. But what you all have in common is a duty fulfilled. In America's hours of need, you answered.

I respect what you did for our country in active service. I respect what you do today, through this organization's many good works: Helping fellow veterans maintain and understand their benefit claims. Coming to each other's aid in times of disaster. Caring for the young, through the Child Welfare Foundation and the Children's Miracle Network.

I have made education the central focus of my campaign – improving the schools with higher standards, accountability, and local control.

The American Legion is helping to build knowledge and character in our young people.

You introduce students to the best traditions of our country, in programs like Boys and Girls State and Boys and Girls Nation – reminding them, as Franklin Roosevelt said, that America has always put “freedom under God before all other purposes.” All those who look for the meaning of duty, honor, and country will find it in the American Legion.

I am here to talk about what is owed to the armed forces of the United States – past, present, and future. To the veteran, we owe gratitude – shown not just in words of tribute, but in acts of care and attention. To those who serve today and in the future, this country owes

the best in training and equipment and leadership.

Yesterday, in Pennsylvania, I spoke of this nation's commitments to our elderly – commitments that are a special concern to the millions of veterans at or near retirement age. Should I become president, I will see that these commitments are kept.

I will lead a bipartisan effort to save and strengthen Social Security. I will lead the effort to make long-term care available and affordable, not a path to financial ruin.

Taxpayers should be able to deduct every dollar they spend on long-term care insurance.

We should provide an additional tax exemption for people caring at home for a spouse or parent.

And I will lead Medicare reform, giving seniors more control over their health care decisions, and adding prescription drug benefits.

No discussion of our healthcare goals is complete without addressing the concerns of the veteran.

Too often, in Washington, those who served in the military are remembered only on Veterans' Day.

That must change. Daily advocacy is what veterans deserve, and should I become president, daily advocacy is what veterans will have – in the VA, and in the White House.

The VA healthcare system should always be a source of pride and peace of mind. And in many ways it is – by advances in medicine that have helped not only veterans but all Americans. From the veterans' healthcare system came the CAT scan, artificial limbs, and the cure for tuberculosis.

But the system has problems today. And when these problems are neglected, veterans and their families suffer. As president, I will work with Congress to raise the standard of service – not just for veterans, but

for our military retirees. All of them must be treated with the care they have been promised, and the dignity they have earned.

The General Accounting Office has documented that the VA spends a million dollars a day maintaining empty hospital wards, at a time when the VA healthcare budget is stretched to the breaking point.

Health care for veterans has become a complicated and bureaucratic process, with long delays and unfair denials in coverage.

Resolving a disability claim can be an ordeal, taking an average of 205 days to complete. So chaotic is the process there is now a backlog of nearly one half-million claims, one-quarter of them involving appeals. A veteran who appeals a decision can expect to wait 745 days – close to two years. And when the claims have been adjudicated and a decision finally made, a third of those decisions contain errors.

The present administration often claims to have re-invented and reorganized government. What they have not done is improve the way veterans are treated. They have not led. I will.

The veterans health-care system and the claims process need to be modernized, so that veterans are well-treated, and claims are handled in a fair and friendly way.

To set a new standard, I recently announced two new proposals. First, I will return the VA to the principle that it has a Duty to Assist veterans who seek service-related disability benefits. The old policy required the VA to assist veterans with their claims. That will be our policy again. In my Administration, the VA will act as an advocate for veterans seeking benefit claims, not act as an adversary.

Veterans who once stood in the line of fire to protect our freedom should not have to stand in the line of a bureaucracy that is unwilling to help them in their claims.

Second, I will convene a Veterans Health Care Task Force, made up

of VA officials, leaders of veterans' groups, and doctors. Their job will be to see that laws such as the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act are being fully implemented.

As the veterans population grows older, we must make long-term care a higher priority. Wherever possible, we should put unused facilities back into service for veterans, including homeless veterans who need assisted living, or other kinds of care. We have a responsibility to fulfill the health care commitments made to those who wore the uniform.

Our veterans deserve the nation's full respect and gratitude. We show that respect and gratitude not just in keeping promises to those who came before, but in preserving the memory of their service.

We often speak of the Greatest Generation – those who grew up during the Great Depression and won the Second World War. And yet, even as the World War Two generation passes from our midst, there is still no national memorial to honor their achievement.

I commend a distinguished American, Senator Bob Dole, for leading the effort to build a World War Two Memorial right where it belongs – in the heart of our nation's capital, in the shadow of the Washington Monument.

Farther along the Washington Mall, on the Vietnam War memorial, there are places for the names of those not yet accounted for. We must do everything in our power to obtain the fullest possible accounting for those still missing in action from America's Pacific wars. All who serve America must know that they will never be abandoned.

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George W. Bush

Wright State University

Dayton, Ohio

September 7, 2000

Rebuilding the Morale of the Military through Ensuring Benefits

I take my duty seriously as the potential commander in chief. I want our military to be strong to keep the peace. There's no more noble cause than to stand in front of our nation to speak to the moms and dads and grandparents of America and say as loudly and clearly as I can: If you elect me to be your president, I will do everything in my power to keep the peace, to make the world more peaceful. But in order to do so, we need to have a military of high morale, high spirits, a military that's well-paid, well-equipped, well-housed. I will rebuild the military power of the United States in order to keep the peace.

The job of the leader is to not look just at the moment, but to anticipate the future.

You'll hear the case made for men who've worn the uniform of the United States, but the signs are disturbing: recruitment goals aren't being met; we're short of equipment; we've got people on food stamps.

It is time for new leadership in Washington, D.C., that will rebuild the morale of the United States military.

Part of rebuilding the morale of the U.S. military is to keep the commitments to those that have worn our uniform.

To the veterans of the audience, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart. To the veterans of the audience, a promise made will be a promise kept when George W. Bush becomes president of the United States.

Part of rebuilding the morale of the military is to pay our pay soldiers

more and house them better. Part of rebuilding the morale of the military is to have a commander in chief who clearly sets the mission -- states the mission in a plain-talking way. The mission of the United States military is to be able to fight and win war and, therefore, prevent war from happening in the first place.

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George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: A Military for the Twenty-First Century – Veterans’ Benefit

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As the traditional advocate of America’s veterans, the Republican Party remains committed to fulfilling America’s obligations to them. That is why we defeated the administration’s attempt to replace veterans’ health care with a national system for everybody. It is why Congressional Republicans enacted the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, to thwart attempts to water down veterans’ preference in federal civil service hiring and retention, and why they created the National Veterans Business Development Corporation to assist vets in becoming entrepreneurs. The same holds true for their Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, a first step toward correcting the deficiencies in medical care for vets and ensuring a medical infrastructure that will better honor the nation’s commitment to those who served. In a Republican administration, a true advocate for veterans will become Secretary of Veteran Affairs.

The maintenance and expansion of our national cemeteries is a solemn duty; a Republican administration will attend to it. Many of the programs designed to assist veterans cry out for modernization and reform. The American people cannot be content with the current unemployment rate of recently separated veterans, or with the significant number of veterans among the homeless. With a backlog of almost a half million cases, the Veterans Benefit Administration needs to be brought into the Information Age. The work of the Veterans Employment and

Training Service needs a stronger focus on vocational education, and the nation as a whole must reconsider the ways restrictive licensing and certification rules prevent fully qualified vets from moving up the opportunity ladder.

Veterans' Benefits - Gore

Al Gore

Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

August 22, 2000

Rewarding Military Service

Our men and women in uniform offer us no less than their lives. In return, we have to make sure their service is both rewarding and well-rewarded. That's why I will fight for another military pay raise -- and I will make sure we always provide the pay our servicemen and women deserve.

I will lead the effort to improve military housing. And I will address another important issue as well - military families who need special help just to put food on the table. Right now, the number of military families on food stamps is less than a third of what it was in the previous administration. But some still need food stamps - and that is just wrong.

Our armed forces should be commemorated on stamps; they shouldn't have to use them to buy groceries. I pledge to you today: in a Gore administration, I will make sure that no members of our armed forces ever have to rely on food stamps. And I will make sure we always repay our debt to those whose service is done. I'm proud that we are reducing waiting times in our VA health system, upgrading outdated facilities, and meeting veterans' health challenges such as spinal cord injuries.

I'm proud that once again, under our administration, all honorably-discharged veterans in America have access to the VA health system. I'm proud that we won a major increase in veterans' health - to fund more

health clinics and better health care. Now we have to ensure that all veterans treated in our VA system get the quality care they need - and if I'm entrusted with the Presidency, that's exactly what I'll do.

And we have to rededicate ourselves to the idea that built America's middle class in the years after World War II: the key to opportunity is education. Those who fight for our security should never have to fight for the education they need to succeed.

So I will fight for the largest increase in veterans' education since the G.I. Bill. And let me be clear about veterans' benefits: we don't give our veterans anything. You earned it -- with blood, sweat, and sacrifice.

I want to make one final point to you today. We cannot have the right defense policy in the 21st Century without the right economic policy. That is why I will not go along with a huge tax cut that primarily benefits the wealthiest at the expense of everyone else - which would wreck our good economy, and make it impossible to modernize our armed forces and keep them ready for battle.

It is wrong to spend our budget surpluses on short-term gain - when we need to make sure the resources are there to keep our military strong far into the future. I will make sure the resources are there. I will fight to see to it that America meets its fundamental responsibilities - to the men and women who safeguard our freedom, and to the hard-working, middle-class families who make freedom worth fighting for.

A few years ago, I received a gift from a fellow Vietnam vet. It was a canteen with these words engraved on it: Each face will lose its name, And time will not defer, For there will always be a bond, Between who we are And what we were.

I can't tell you how much your service and sacrifice mean to this country. I can't tell you how much it means to me to be a member of the VFW. And I make you this simple pledge: if I'm entrusted with the

Presidency, I will always fight for our men and women in uniform - I will never forget those who have worn the uniform -- and I will never let you down.