

The White House Conference on Social Security

Statements From Participants

December 8-9, 1998



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 4, 1998

I am pleased to welcome all those who are participating in the first-ever White House Conference on Social Security.

During the past year, we have worked hard to foster a national discussion on Social Security reform. Through regional forums -- culminating in this conference -- we have strived to create a climate conducive to bipartisan Social Security reform. We now have a historic opportunity to save Social Security for the 21st century.

Since its creation more than 60 years ago, Social Security has been a bedrock of retirement security for Americans. That's why it is so important for all of us to work together to find the best way to strengthen Social Security for future generations. There are 76 million baby boomers in our country today who are looking ahead to retirement. Consequently, by the year 2030, there will be twice as many elderly Americans putting pressure on the Social Security system as there are today. After 2032, Social Security will only have enough resources to cover 72 cents on the dollar of current benefits.

We must act now to tackle this tough, long-term challenge. We must strengthen Social Security, and I believe we can do it in a way that maintains universality and fairness, ensures that Social Security continues to provide a benefit people can count on, protects low-income beneficiaries and those with disabilities, and sustains our fiscal discipline.

This conference will help to pave the way for comprehensive, bipartisan Social Security reform next year. As you know, to ensure that all voices in this debate are heard, I invited every conference participant to submit a statement of his or her views on Social Security. The compilation of these statements reflects a variety of perspectives on the future of Social Security. I hope that you find the statements -- and this conference -- a helpful summary of the debate on this critical issue.

I appreciate your interest and leadership on Social Security, and I look forward to your continued participation as we work to save Social Security for our children and grandchildren.

Bill Clinton