

# Bush 88 Quayle

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

9/22/88

## GEORGE BUSH ON SECURITY FOR OLDER AMERICANS FACT SHEET

The Reagan-Bush Administration entered office in 1981 pledging to restore the financial integrity of Social Security, and to pursue programs and policies that would allow the nation's elderly to live independent lives with dignity and well-being.

Those promises were kept.

This Administration forged a bipartisan effort to rescue Social Security. As a result, benefits are up substantially, and the Social Security Trust Fund stability is assured well into the next century. The crippling, double-digit inflation of the Carter years -- over 13 percent in 1980 -- has been sharply reduced, thus ending the devastation inflicted on elderly Americans living on fixed incomes. Sustained economic growth with low inflation has brought the poverty rate among the elderly to an all-time low, below that of the American population as a whole.

George Bush has pledged to not let them take it away.

### GEORGE BUSH: A RECORD OF CONCERN AND ACTION

George Bush, has a record of action dating back to his days as a Congressman -- sponsoring legislation in 1969, for example, to increase social security benefits by 10 percent across-the-board, to index benefits against inflation, and to increase benefits for the children of disabled or deceased workers, and for their widows and parents.

In areas of health concern to older Americans, Congressman George Bush:

- o Voted to extend and improve health programs relating to diseases of the aging, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, and other major diseases and conditions;
- o Sponsored legislation to attract medical practitioners to areas where their services are scarce;
- o Co-sponsored an amendment to Medicare to extend eligibility for 24-hour nursing services to hospitals not formerly qualifying

And, George Bush, in addition to calling for tough economic policies to break the back of inflation, and for an end to partisanship on Social Security, as early as 1980:

- o Supported the development of effective Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs); and,



- o Called for coverage of the costs of serious, acute illness, saying:

"...this nation and its citizens must have a program to cover the catastrophic medical expenses for everyone unable to handle them."

George Bush has a record of service, experience, and accomplishment that will work for America's older citizens.

#### THE FUTURE

Thirty-two million Americans are over the age of sixty-five. Their life expectancy has increased dramatically in this century, and now, they are the fastest growing segment of our population.

America is proud of -- and indebted to -- its older citizens, and George Bush is committed to safeguarding their interests.

Our nation's older citizens represent not only a link to our past -- but a bridge to the future in the depth of their experience and in their adherence to a longstanding set of values reflecting the best of the American tradition.

George Bush pledges that those who brought America so far in their working years will remain secure in their retirement, and that a Bush Administration will work to see that older Americans can have:

- o Income security -- through a commitment to a sound Social Security system, to pension soundness, and in the knowledge that their income will not be eaten away by inflation.
- o Health security -- through a commitment to a strong Medicare system, and to access to quality health care.
- o Long Term Care Security -- secure that there are fiscally responsible plans to meet their long term care needs.

"I pledge to continue the economic policies which have brought low inflation, low taxes, and low interest rates."

#### KEEPING INFLATION IN CHECK

George Bush will fight to protect the income security of America's older citizens, by working to maintain and build on the economic gains of the last seven years.



The most important of these gains was to break the back of inflation -- the silent tax that erodes the incomes of all living on fixed pensions. America cannot afford to return to the crippling, double-digit inflation of the Carter years:

- o Inflation, which would have doubled the price of goods and services in five years, was cut from a peak of 13.5 percent in 1980 to an average of 3.3 percent per year from 1982 to 1987; and,
- o Interest rates, measured by the prime rate, slashed from a high of 21.5 percent in 1980 to 8.5 percent in 1988.
- o And, the poverty rate for older Americans stood at an all time low of 12.2 percent in 1987 (2.1 percent if all government assistance is counted) -- a 20 percent drop from the 15.3 percent level reached by 1981 -- due largely to breaking the back of inflation, and in part due to the improvements in Social Security policies.

George Bush knows what it means to deliver.

#### PRESERVING THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

"We need to ensure that current beneficiaries receive the benefits to which they are entitled and that today's workers have confidence that there will be a solvent Social Security system when they retire."

George Bush is committed to maintaining the integrity of the Social Security system. He has pledged to protect the gains made possible by the President's bipartisan commission, and enacted into law in 1983:

- o The Social Security Trust Funds -- on the brink of insolvency in 1980, despite huge payroll tax increases and benefit cuts enacted in 1977 -- has been returned to solvency through bipartisan action.  
  
-- The Old Age Survivors Disability Income (OASDI) fund is now financially strong with over \$100 billion in reserves by the end of this fiscal year.
- o Average monthly Social Security benefit has increased from \$294 for a single retiree in 1980 to \$513 in 1988.

George Bush has demanded Social Security not be treated as a partisan issue. And, he has said that Social Security is off-limits from budget cuts, and he opposes means-tests -- it's an earned benefit and should be treated as such.

"We should exempt Social Security from budget cuts, and avoid means-testing it."



## PROTECTING THE PRIVATE PENSION

"Adding to the income security of future retirees -- through private pension plans -- will help fulfill our common goal of ensuring that all senior Americans are well off."

George Bush believes that the pension funds of America's working men and women should be safe from mismanagement and political assault:

- o Some have wrongly proposed that America's pension funds should be used as the financing vehicle for the social welfare plans of the liberal left:

"...We believe that it is time to invest...in new priorities...through...[a] program to invest a portion of public and private pension funds as a steady source of investment capital..."

Democratic Platform (1988)

George Bush will oppose this assault on the pension funds of the American worker -- public and private pension funds alike. And, he opposes the use of public pension funds -- as was done so recently in Massachusetts -- to provide artificial balance in public budgets. A pension fund raid is irresponsible and hurts most those who have earned the benefits -- the elderly.

A Bush Administration will:

- o Encourage greater accumulation of pension funds, and work to see that they cover a broader cross-section of our workers.
- o Examine tax incentives that will encourage small businesses to provide pension coverage.
- o Work with the Congress, and through Executive action, to bring greater simplicity and stability to the pension laws -- and to reduce the regulatory burdens -- to make pensions more attractive to private employers.

And, George Bush believes that pension funds should be invested to benefit workers, not to advance political causes.

## QUALITY HEALTH CARE SECURITY

George Bush has long felt the need for a health system that delivers:

"We need to promote better management of our health care system so that our resources are used more efficiently and so that health costs do not erode our capacity to provide for other human needs." (1980)



## A COMMITMENT TO EFFECTIVE, QUALITY HEALTH CARE

America's health care system has tremendous resources. Eleven percent of our Gross National Product -- some \$500 billion in public and private resources -- is spent annually on health care at all levels. The job for the 1990's is to ensure that this money is well spent -- and that all Americans have access to quality health care.

- o More effective utilization of resources can bring more care to more persons, especially to those most in need.
- o And, more can be done to promote private sector options -- including enrollment in innovative group plans, such as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs).

## A COMMITMENT TO PREVENTION

George Bush knows that a commitment to disease prevention early in the working life can make -- literally -- the difference between life and early death:

- o More than 1.2 million heart attacks occur each year, more than 475,000 persons died of cancer last year, more than 60 million Americans have levels of blood cholesterol that are too high, 58 million Americans have high blood pressure, 11 million Americans have diabetes, and 34 million adults are obese.

Separate from the impact on the quality of retirement, the economic cost is staggering. In 1987, heart disease alone cost \$85 billion. Cancer cost another \$51 billion, lung disease \$33 billion, stroke \$23 billion, and infectious diseases \$17 billion. Though cancer and heart disease may not be entirely preventable, the number of deaths caused by these diseases can be greatly reduced by effective prevention and treatment.

While the principle responsibility for wellness lies with the individual, the federal government can help by making information and resources available. George Bush believes we must:

- o Invest now in prevention to lower the cost of future treatment, and expand efforts in disease prevention and health promotion.

A good retirement should include the best health -- and health care -- possible.

## INSURING THE SOLVENCY OF THE MEDICARE TRUST FUND

George Bush believes that the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund may become insolvent unless action is taken to protect it.



George Bush is committed to ensuring the solvency of the Medicare Trust Funds. He has called for a bipartisan solution -- in much the same way that the integrity of the Social Security Trust Fund was obtained just 5 years ago.

"Seniors must feel secure in the knowledge that their basic medical needs will continue to be covered by Medicare."

George Bush, GTE Presidential Forum, May 1988

Many challenges face America's health care system. The aging of our population, great advances in our ability to extend life, the AIDS epidemic, the increasing cost of care, and limits in federal resources, have all placed great stress on the health care delivery system.

George Bush believes effective, high quality health care is best obtained by making government and private insurers better consumers, and by creating the right kinds of tax and program incentives. The health care industry needs appropriate incentives to lower costs and assure that the quality of the services they provide are those the American public deserves.

#### A COMMITMENT TO LONG TERM SECURITY

George Bush knows that one of the greatest fears of America's older population is of chronic illness and the cost of long term care. As America's population ages -- the proportion of the population over 65 will double, and the proportion over 85 will quadruple over coming decades -- the problem of long term care becomes more acute.

George Bush is committed to developing workable, fiscally sound solutions to the growing problem of long term care. Some of these initiatives include:

- o Research into chronic illness

Devotion of significant research attention to the prevention and cure of debilitating illnesses -- such as Alzheimer's, arthritis, and osteoporosis.



o Catastrophic Health coverage

Implementation of the new catastrophic health care legislation -- which eliminated spousal impoverishment requirements and improved home health coverage -- and which now provides protection against catastrophic acute medical expenses.

o Eliminate financial penalties for saving

Elimination of penalties now incurred for converting life insurance, Individual Retirement Accounts, and other savings plans to funds which will finance long term care needs.

-- Incentives to offer and buy group health insurance should be strengthened, and long-term care insurance should be given the same favorable tax treatment as life and health insurance.

o Long Term Care insurance

Increase the availability and affordability of long term care insurance and encourage full retirement planning. The choices and alternatives in both price and coverage have increased dramatically and a Bush Administration would encourage these competitive new developments.

America's older citizens know what it means to work hard, to extend a helping hand, to have strong family values to carry you through life. George Bush shares these values -- which is why he has committed himself and a Bush Administration to working with America's seniors. Income security, access to quality health care, long term care security are George Bush's goals -- and his pledge to America's 32 million retirees, and to those who follow.

# # #