

industry production was 5.6 percent of our gross national product. In 1992, vehicle and parts manufacturing directly accounted for 4.6 percent of our manufacturing employment. During the first quarter of this year, the Big Three accounted for two out of three auto sales in the United States, with the American cars gaining market share in 1993. This did not happen by accident. It required investment, it required reorganization, it required some reductions in spending. Over the last 3 years, \$73 billion have been invested by the Big Three. Since 1981, quality has dramatically improved. The number of customer-reported defects is down by 80 percent. And many of our American cars, by any quality measure, are better than their foreign competitors today. They are also more fuel-efficient and increasingly so.

Our great challenge now is to produce cars of high quality at affordable costs that are environmentally responsible and that preserve good jobs here in America for those who can compete and win. In order to do that, we have to begin by getting our house in order. In the next few days, the United States Congress will have a chance to adopt the biggest deficit-reduction package in the history of this country, one that asks wealthier Americans—who, I might add, have overwhelmingly been supportive of this—to pay most of the burden of the new taxes, which exempts lower middle income Americans from any burden and which asks the Congress to impose unprecedented cuts, including reducing the Federal work force by 150,000 over the next 4 years and cutting over 200 specific Government programs. This is a balanced program. We also invest in jobs, in technology, and education and training. If we can get our house in order, if we can bring our deficit under control, reduce it, make some room for targeted investments in jobs and people, we can turn this country around.

I think that the auto industry has showed us what it takes. You've seen reduction in spending, you've seen painful cuts, you've seen dramatic increases in investment, you've seen American workers not just working harder but smarter, and you have seen years and years and years of disciplined effort rewarded by something 5 years ago or 6 years

ago most people would tell you would never happen: American-made cars winning the quality race and regaining market share. That's what we're going to do with our country.

Thank you and bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the National Air and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Owen Bieber, president, United Auto Workers; John F. Smith, Jr., president, General Motors Corp.; Harold A. Poling, chairman and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co.; Robert J. Eaton, chairman and chief executive officer, Chrysler Corp.

### **Exchange With Reporters at the National Air and Space Museum**

*May 25, 1993*

#### **Budget Proposal**

**Q.** Mr. President, is the House going to pass your tax bill?

**The President.** I think they're going to pass the budget bill, yes, which has a lot of cuts in it, and it also has some good things for these folks, good for manufacturing, good for small business. Good bill.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### **Remarks on Signing the Older Americans Month Proclamation**

*May 25, 1993*

Thank you very much, Senator Pryor and Secretary Shalala. Let me also acknowledge in the audience the presence of Senator Bill Cohen from Maine, Congressman Marty Martinez, and Congressman William Hughes. We're glad to see them. And I also want to pay a special word of respect to my good friend, our Vice President's mother, Mrs. Pauline Gore. She's a little too young to be here, but I'm glad to see her here anyway.

You know, Senator Pryor told that story about the 100-year-old man who had been against all the changes he'd seen. One of the things I think that age does for all of us is it gives us the ability to laugh at things that once we would have cried about, something I've needed more and more as I've taken this job. [Laughter]

But David told this story. It reminded me, there's a town in Arkansas that has my name, called Clinton, and I was invited there once to a nursing home to celebrate the 107th birthday of this lovely woman. And I showed up, and she had a beautiful pink dress on. And I said, "Gosh, you're pretty today." And she said, "Don't you go flirting with me. I'm not looking for a husband." [Laughter] And so I said, "Well, I appreciate that." I said, "You know, I already have one wife. Don't you think that's enough?" And she said, "I guess so, hard as times are." [Laughter] Sometimes I think about that.

This is the 30th anniversary of Older Americans Month. And I can't think of anybody I'd rather be up here with than Secretary Shalala or with Senator Pryor. When I was attorney general and David Pryor was Governor, I just reminded him up here, 18 years ago we sponsored our State's first conference on long-term care and how to provide long-term care for senior citizens. Well, we're still chipping away at it, but I just want you to know at least we've got some credentials for being in the vineyards.

We are committed to keeping faith with the senior citizens of this country, and we are trying to fulfill that commitment in two very important ways that are specific to our senior citizens and one that is very important for the responsibility we all seem to feel for the future. The first is the White House Conference on Aging to discuss providing for older Americans and also for making better use of the time and talents of our senior citizens. I feel very strongly that both those things are important. Most people I know who are in their later years want to be challenged to do more, to bring to bear their energy, their experience, their judgment, and their perspective on a lot of the very thorny problems and challenges we face today. And I hope our administration can do that not

only here in Washington but all across America.

I am, in that regard, proud that we have for the first time an Assistant Secretary for Aging in the Department of Health and Human Services, and I'm proud of Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil who was introduced and who received such a warm reception from you.

The second thing that we hope to do is to deal with some of the terrific health care challenges facing our senior citizens while keeping faith with the obligations we now have to maintain the integrity of Social Security. The fastest growing group of Americans are people over 80. The largest number of people I met on the campaign trail last year with really heartbreaking stories were elderly people just above the Medicaid eligibility line who had massive drug bills every month. And literally, I met people in State after State after State that made the weekly choice between food and medicine because they were just above that Medicaid eligibility line and had no way in the wide world to pay for medicine that was absolutely necessary to maintain their health.

So in this health program—I know a lot of you have already heard a speech about this from my wife, and she's gotten a whole lot better on this subject than I have—but we are committed to a health care plan which will provide coverage for all Americans, which will lower the cost of health care, which will lower the cost of health care for our country in the years ahead—we're already spotting our competitors 35 percent of every dollar spent on health care—and which, at the same time, will begin to address the problems that I saw out there for a wider range of long-term care services and for dealing with the drug problem that our elderly people have who are not Medicaid-eligible. These are the things that we must have in a comprehensive, long-term care package.

I also want to say to you that I believe any responsible health care plan must encourage and indeed have incentives for health care maintenance and for the prevention of bad things happening. With the fastest growing group of people being people over 80, with more and more senior citizens coming into really dominant positions in our

country, with the Social Security system starting in a few years to raise the retirement eligibility limit by a month a year, as all of you know, as a part of the 1983 resolution to resolve the crisis that then existed, it is absolutely imperative that we not only think about giving health care services but maintaining strong, healthy people. And that has got to be a critical part of our health care plan, and I know all of you will be out there lobbying for that. We so often strain at a gnat and swallow a camel when we don't have enough prevention and maintenance of healthy people in our health care plans and even in our own daily habits. And so I hope you will all support that.

The last thing I'd like to say is that it seems to me that those of you who represent older Americans are in a unique position, being able to have the benefit of memory, to know what is going to happen to us in the years ahead if we do not move now and move aggressively to get control of this Government deficit, to bring down our interest rates, to enable our economy to grow, to give us some more elbow room. Year-in and year-out for the last several years, my heart has gone out to Members of the Congress in both parties who have struggled to find funds for things they think needed to be funded or to just keep things going along as they are, as we become more and more consumed by an ever-growing deficit, going from \$1 trillion to \$4 trillion in just 12 years.

I believe, as all of you now know, that we need to have both spending cuts and tax increases to close this deficit and to bring it down. We could all argue until the cows come home about whether every last decision has been perfectly right, but it is perfectly clear that if you don't do both, you can't get where we're going. And it is absolutely imperative that we send a clear signal not only to the financial markets but to our children and our grandchildren that we are thinking about their future, that we are not going to saddle them with so much debt that we won't be able to finance education and economic growth and the kinds of things that every generation of Americans must be free to spend money on, both private money and public funds. If we don't take that oppor-

tunity now, we will have squandered our responsibilities to those who come behind us.

You know, I think more about it with each succeeding year that my daughter grows older. I think about how it won't be so long before she and her generation will be making decisions that now we're wrestling over. We owe it to those kids and to the ones who will follow behind them to provide the freedom of movement that any great society needs to reach the challenges of that time. We today, and this Congress, every Member will tell you, those people who occupy Washington today are hamstrung by a lack of freedom of movement because we have permitted paralysis to drive this deficit up, because we have refused to deal with the health care crisis, we have refused to deal with automatic explosions and things that we could have dealt with. And the time has come to face it and face it squarely. And I hope and pray, for the sake of our children and grandchildren, we are about to do just that in the next few days in the United States of America.

I want to say one thing finally. On the tax side of this plan, 74 percent of the burden falls on the top 6 percent of income earners in America, and a lot of the rest falls on the top 20 percent of Social Security recipients whom we have asked to subject more of their income to taxation so as to avoid reducing cost of living allowances to all the Social Security recipients in the land who need that.

One of the things I think we have not said enough, and I believe most people in the Congress would admit this: We have heard very little opposition from upper income Americans to paying their fair share of taxes as long as they believe we're going to cut spending, bring the deficit down, and provide for the basic needs of this country. And to me, that's been one of the most rewarding things out there. A lot of the opposition is coming from middle class people who think they're going to pay a lot more than they are. But the people who are really going to pay and who know it, by and large, have been immensely patriotic in this last 2- or 3-month period, knowing that they have to make a contribution to securing the future.

All of you here who represent the elderly people of our country, you can reach out and

embrace this effort in a way that no other generation of Americans can. This is a difficult time for the Congress, a difficult time for the country. The worst thing we can do is to walk away and do nothing and continue the perilous paralysis of the last few years. So I implore you to shoulder this. Think of our kids and grandkids. Let's move this country forward in a bipartisan and open manner.

Thank you. God bless you. And let's get on with the signing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

### **Proclamation 6565—Older Americans Month, 1993**

*May 25, 1993*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Older Americans Month—a time when we, as a Nation, honor our elder citizens and recognize the many contributions they have made to our country.

Older Americans, having witnessed many of our Nation's historic milestones, are embodiments of 20th century American history. Many lived through the trying times of the Great War, the Depression, and the Second World War. With younger generations, older Americans shared the anguish of the Cold War and helped their more youthful countrymen get through this difficult period.

Older Americans provide us with the experience, knowledge, and leadership that are needed to help our Nation ply the difficult waters of the present. Through their experience with adversity, older Americans understand the critical need for shared sacrifice in meeting the challenges we face. Their wisdom provides us with a valuable perspective on how we must reorient our society toward investment in the future. Working in a variety of roles, as volunteers and employees, millions of older Americans continue to give their communities the fruits of their labor.

Today's older Americans are the best educated, most well-informed generation of el-

ders our Nation has ever produced. The challenges they have met—and met successfully—have enabled them to make a continuing contribution with wisdom and understanding. We can see this not only in our families, as a new wave of responsible grandparenting helps ensure the future of our children, but also in our communities, which benefit from the experience and leadership of older Americans who volunteer their talent and time in fields ranging from business management to the arts.

While we salute the continuing contribution of older Americans, we also acknowledge our debt and responsibility to them. We renew our commitment to preserving for them the quality of life they deserve. We will safeguard their economic security not only through preserving the Social Security system but also by strengthening our Nation's overall economic performance. We will provide the leadership that will help our elders remain independent members of the community for as long as possible. We will supply that help in the neighborhoods where they live—through the kinds of social and supportive services made possible through the Older Americans Act and other programs. And we can help ease the suffering and worry caused by increased medical expenses through enacting a national program of health care reform.

By helping to preserve the security and independence of older Americans, we are also ensuring that our own futures will be ones of dignity with independence.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the month of May 1993 as Older Americans Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities in honor of our Nation's senior citizens.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-three, and of the Independence of the