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Memorandum on Enhancing Efforts To Promote the Health of Our Young People Through Physical Activity and Participation in Sports

June 23, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education

Subject: Enhancing Efforts to Promote the Health of Our Young People Through Physical Activity and Participation in Sports

Physical activity and participation in sports are central to the overall health and well-being of children and adults. Adolescence is an especially important time to establish the habit of participation in daily physical activity. Sports and physical activity can introduce young people to skills such as teamwork, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. Lack of recreational activity, on the other hand, may contribute to making young people more vulnerable to gangs, drugs, or violence. Studies consistently show that adolescents who engage in regular physical activity have higher self-esteem and lower anxiety and stress. Unfortunately, daily enrollment in high school physical education classes dropped from 42 percent to 29 percent between 1991 and 1999 and about 14 percent of young people ages 12–21 report no recent physical activity at all. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled.

The extent of this problem should not be underestimated. Last year, for example, the United States spent over \$68 billion, or 6 percent of the Nation's health care expenditures, on direct health care costs related to obesity. According to the landmark 1996 Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, inactivity and poor diet contribute to nearly 300,000 deaths in the United States annually. In conjunction with the recent National Nutrition Summit hosted by my Ad-

ministration—the first in over three decades—I released revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including a new guideline recommending regular physical activity.

My Administration has an ongoing multi-pronged effort to promote physical activity and fitness. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Participation continues to play an important role in promoting physical fitness and sports participation nationwide. A key part of the Council's work is the President's Challenge Youth Physical Fitness Awards Program, which offers awards for participation and excellence in a set of physical fitness assessments to encourage 2.9 million students to improve and maintain physical fitness. The Department of Health and Human Services' National Youth Sports Program collaborates with participating colleges to provide summer sports programs in college environments to youth living in areas of urban and rural poverty. Currently, over 70,000 children at over 200 colleges and universities through this program can improve their physical fitness and health habits while becoming acquainted with post-secondary educational opportunities.

The Department of Education also promotes physical activity and health in schools. My Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization proposal includes "Lifelong Physical Activity" discretionary grants as part of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Building on current demonstration projects by the Centers for Disease Control, this initiative would authorize funding for sites to implement programs that promote lifelong physical activity and health awareness during and after school by linking physical education with health education.

These efforts, and many similar public and private initiatives around the country, are encouraging. We must now build on this groundwork by developing additional strategies for promoting physical fitness and participation in sports, which are essential to improving individual and community health.

Therefore, I direct you to identify and report back to me within 90 days on strategies to promote better health for our Nation's youth through physical activity and fitness, including:

1. Promoting the renewal of physical education in our schools, as well as the expansion of after-school programs that offer physical activities and sports in addition to enhanced academics and cultural activities;
2. Encouraging participation by private sector partners in raising the level of physical activity and fitness among our youth; and
3. Promoting greater coordination of existing public and private resources that encourages physical activity and sports.

In developing these strategies, you shall work with the U.S. Olympic Committee, and other private and nongovernmental sports organizations, as appropriate.

By identifying effective new steps and strengthening public-private partnerships, we will advance our efforts to prepare the Nation's young people for lifelong physical fitness.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Tobacco Settlement Lawsuit

June 23, 2000

I am pleased today that the House of Representatives voted decisively to support the interests of the American people over those of the special interests. This action will help support the Justice Department's litigation to recover billions of dollars in tobacco-related health costs. I commend the bipartisan efforts led by Representatives Waxman, Evans, Meehan, Hansen, Ganske, and others who worked tirelessly to ensure that justice is carried out.

Proclamation 7324—50th Anniversary of the Korean War and National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 2000

June 23, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Fifty years ago, on June 25, 1950, armed forces from North Korea shattered the peace in the Land of the Morning Calm as they crossed the 38th Parallel and launched an invasion of South Korea. The communist forces advanced rapidly and, at the outset, appeared close to easy victory. President Truman, recognizing the threat to our South Korean allies and their democracy, responded swiftly and decisively. Through the United Nations Security Council, he marshaled international opposition to the invasion and, on June 27, 1950, committed the first U.S. forces to combat in South Korea.

On some of the world's harshest terrain, through the scorching heat of summer and the numbing cold of winter, American troops fought with steely determination and uncommon courage. As they gained ground, pushing the North Koreans back toward the 38th parallel, American families began to hope that our troops would be home by Christmas. But in November, at the Yalu River in North Korean territory, American forces encountered a new and daunting antagonist: Chinese forces had joined their North Korean allies, and the tide of battle turned once again.

Through months of attack and counter-attack, falling back and regaining ground, U.S. troops and our allies refused to succumb to enemy forces. The war dragged into a bloody stalemate and long, bitter talks ensued. Finally, negotiators signed an armistice agreement at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. North Korea withdrew across the 38th parallel, and the Republic of South Korea regained its status as a free, democratic nation. For the first time in history, a world organization of nations had taken up arms to oppose aggression and, thanks largely to the valor, skill, and perseverance of almost 2,000,000 Americans, had succeeded.