

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
December 20, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES A. BAKER, III

FROM: JAMES W. CICCONI *JW*
SUBJECT: Senior Citizens Outreach

Yesterday I met with Jack Courtemanche, Paul Simmons (Svahn's assistant), and Judi Buckalew regarding improvements in our outreach efforts to senior citizens. Currently, we are hampered in this area by a number of factors:

1. A general perception of insensitivity toward senior citizens and their problems.
2. Misunderstandings regarding our Medicare prospective payment regulations, and a fear that this will jepordize or make more expensive health care for senior citizens.
3. Apprehension regarding the report to be released in January of the Medicare study commission.
4. Misperceptions regarding this Administration's record on Social Security, and fears regarding our future intentions.

Without going into excessive detail, we agreed on the following:

1. The President should deliver a radio talk on January 7 or January 14 which is addressed primarily to senior citizens. This would occur soon after the Medicare commission's report is released, and after the delayed Social Security increase occurs on January 1.
2. Ed Meese will be asked to chair a meeting with the leaders of the four or five top senior citizens organizations. There has been surprisingly little done with these groups over the last several years, and virtually no presidential contact. This would be a listening session, with Heckler, Whittlesey, and Svahn also present. We will try to schedule this meeting for the first week in January, and expect that subsequent ideas and proposals will flow from the discussion therein.

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3. Since the President will not be able to attend the convention of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in April, we will request a videotaped message and will recommend the event to the VP. The AARP, with a membership of around 15 million (claimed), is by far the largest senior citizens group.

Part of the problem in this area has been the lack of asustained WH outreach effort with senior citizens groups in the past. Another, more serious problem, is an apparent disinterest on the part of Secretary Heckler in meeting with these groups. (We are attempting to deal with the latter by inviting Heckler to the Meese-chaired meeting.)