

PRESIDENT SIGNS MEDICARE BILL; PRAISES TRUMAN

He Flies to Independence,
Mo., to Hold Ceremonies
at Presidential Library

20-YEAR CAMPAIGN ENDS

Social Security Is Expanded
to Provide Medical Care
for Americans Over 65

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related matter, Page 8.

By JOHN D. MORRIS
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INDEPENDENCE, Mo., July 30 — President Johnson flew to Independence today and signed the medicare - Social Security bill in a moving tribute to former President Harry S. Truman.

Mr. Truman, beaming, sat beside Mr. Johnson on the stage of the Harry S. Truman Library auditorium. More than 200 persons, including Vice President Humphrey, Congressional leaders and Administration officials, witnessed the ceremony.

President Johnson chose Independence for the signing because Mr. Truman was the first President who proposed a Federal program of health insurance under Social Security.

It was in a special message Nov. 19, 1945, that Mr. Truman asked Congress to enact such legislation.

'A Reality for Millions'

"The people of the United States love and voted for Harry Truman," the President said. "not because he gave them hell but because he gave them hope.

"I believe today that all America shares my joy that he is present now when the hope he offered becomes a reality for millions of our fellow citizens."

The 81-year-old former President, opening the ceremonies with a brief talk, found himself uncharacteristically at a loss for words at one point.

"I am glad to have lived this long and to witness today the signing of the medicare bill," he said.

Then, welcoming those who came to Independence, he groped briefly for a phrase to express his feelings.

Johnson Hails Program

"I thank you all most highly for coming here," he said. "It's an honor that I haven't had done to me—well, quite a while, I'll say that to you."

In his address at the signing ceremonies, Mr. Johnson said:

"No longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine. No longer will illness crush and destroy the savings that they have so carefully put away over a lifetime so that they might enjoy dignity in their later years."

The Senate completed Congressional action on the bill Wednesday, capping a 20-year effort to steer such legislation to final passage.

The bill expands the 30-year-old Social Security insurance program to provide hospital care, nursing home care, home nursing services and out-patient diagnostic service for all

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Associated Press Wirephoto
MEDICARE BILL SIGNED: President Johnson signing bill, with former President Harry S. Truman at his side, in Truman Library at Independence, Mo. Behind them are Mrs. Johnson, Vice President Humphrey and Mrs. Truman.

HIS ACTION ENDS 20-YEAR EFFORT

Social Security Is Expanded
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Americans over 65 years old. It also sets up a supplementary program of Federal insurance covering most of the doctors' bills and some other health costs of persons over 65. The supplementary insurance will be available on a voluntary basis with participants paying \$3 a month in premiums.

Other provisions include a 7 per cent increase in cash benefits under the present old age, survivors and disability insurance program.

To finance the basic hospital and nursing care insurance and the new cash benefits, Social Security taxes will be increased in steps over the next 22 years starting next Jan. 1.

Both the basic and supplementary insurance programs start next July 1. The 7 per cent rise in cash benefits is retroactive to last Jan. 1. Checks for nearly \$1 billion, covering eight months of retroactive payments for 20 million beneficiaries, will be mailed in September.

The medical care programs will not go into operation until almost a year after the bill was enacted. The delay was intended to allow time for drafting administrative rules.

The bill does not specify how doctors and hospitals will be paid for their services. But it is expected that the rules, to be set forth by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, will funnel much administrative activity through such established organizations as Blue Cross, Blue Shield and possibly some private insurance companies.

The medical care program covers all persons who have reached 65, with some minor exceptions.

Coverage for Doctors

It covers 17 million persons eligible for Social Security and 2 million others who do not fall under Social Security's present old-age, survivors and disability insurance program. Medical benefits to the latter group will be paid for by appropriations from general revenues, not from Social Security funds.

Of the 2 million persons, only 350,000—persons in their seventies who under previous laws did not have enough wage credits to qualify—will be entitled to cash benefits. They will receive payments of \$35 a month. Those still not covered by Social Security are people who did not meet the requirements for coverage at the time they retired, many of them self-employed persons or domestics, and their widows.

The new law extends Social Security coverage to self-employed physicians and to hospital internes, the last major group that had been exempt from coverage.

President Johnson used 72 pens to sign the measure and passed them out to members of Congress, labor leaders, Administration officials and others who filed across the stage and shook his hand.

He gave the first one to Mr. Truman and the second to Mrs. Truman.

Wilbur J. Cohen, Under Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, got two pens. So did Andrew Biemiller, chief lobbyist for the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, and Lawrence F. O'Brien, the White House Congressional liaison officer.

Forand Receives Pen

Mr. Cohen was an early advocate of medicare legislation. He and Mr. Biemiller and Mr. O'Brien did much to lobby the present bill through Congress.

Others receiving pens included Representative Wilbur D. Mills, Democrat of Arkansas, and Senator Russell B. Long, Democrat of Louisiana, the House and Senate managers of the bill; Representative Cecil R. King, Democrat of California, and Senator Clinton P. Anderson, Democrat of New Mexico, co-sponsors of the measure, and former Representative Aime J. Forand, Democrat of Rhode Island, who sponsored a much discussed medicare bill as 1957.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Truman chatted privately for a few minutes before and after the ceremony. The President later flew to his Texas ranch for the weekend.