

Day One

Healthcare for Grandma!

➔ President Lyndon B. Johnson created the Medicare program. Read silently.

“You can’t treat grandma this way.” That’s how President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) got people to support Medicare. He wanted to help older people pay for healthcare. He also believed Medicare would help the economy. But LBJ told his assistant to just talk about taking care of our grandparents. This helped win people over on Medicare.

Medicare is a program that helps older people pay for doctors and medicine. Many people worry about paying for healthcare after they retire. Private health insurance costs more as people get older. Medicare gives people security that they can afford healthcare in their old age.

LBJ’s popularity in 1965 helped him pass Medicare. Some people were unsure about the program. They worried about how much it would cost. But LBJ had just won the presidential election by a lot. He used his win to pass new bills. In July 1965, after years of hard work, LBJ signed the Medicare bill. Today, most Americans support the Medicare program. They believe LBJ helped his country by passing Medicare.

Unfortunately, LBJ’s popularity among voters did not last. The Vietnam War, in particular, made Americans unhappy with LBJ. People didn’t trust him. Many felt he was lying about what happened in Vietnam. In 1968, LBJ decided not to run for president again. A Republican named Richard Nixon became the next president.

Source: “LBJ Launches Medicare: ‘You Can’t Treat Grandma This Way’,” Billmoyers.com, July 30, 2017.