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Designing housing to maximize independence

- 1 WHEREAS most housing is designed to accommodate only the needs of able-bodied persons and not a variety of functional levels and ages across the lifespan;
- 2 WHEREAS 90 percent of older people live in household settings and most strongly prefer to live independently;
- 3 WHEREAS older people buy approximately 7 percent of new homes as primary residences and those between 50 and 64 years of age constitute an additional 15 percent of all home buyers;
- 4 WHEREAS health becomes an increasingly important part of housing needs and decisions as older people age, with approximately 20 percent of them requiring at least some minimal degree of help with activities of daily living;
- 5 WHEREAS most older people with limitations live in the community and prefer to remain in their own homes and communities; and
- 6 WHEREAS millions of older people live in homes that should be modified to meet their needs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the 1995 White House Conference on Aging to support policies that:

- 7 Provide incentives to encourage design, development, construction, and modification of housing for persons of all ages to permit aging in place;
- 8 Modify physical environments for older people and people with disabilities to accommodate their changing needs in the workplace and in the community, including housing that encourages independent and assisted living, and care facilities that are accessible, efficient, responsive, affordable, and culturally sensitive;
- 9 Promote and facilitate education of and greater activity by the public and private sectors, including the financial community, architects, home builders, landscape architects, and interior designers, to design housing and facilitate modification of existing housing to meet the lifespan needs of all people;
- 10 Grant greater flexibility to Federal, tribal, State, and local Governments in approving and financing innovative, safe, and affordable housing with mixed income levels designed for older people and people of all ages with functional limitations;
- 11 Encourage organizations serving seniors to educate or advise older individuals about how to modify their homes and apartments and to identify sources of funding;

- 12 Eliminate barriers and create innovative and effective funding mechanisms, both public and private, to finance home improvements, maintenance, repairs, and modifications;
- 13 Ensure that Federal, State, and local Governments observe the design provisions of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that protects individuals with disabilities;
- 14 Design care facilities that are responsive to the needs of residents and efficient for staff.

