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Paul Glastris

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT IBEW CONVENTION
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL
September 17, 1998

Acknowledgments: John Sweeney; Bob Georgine, pres Building and Trades; Jack Barry, pres. IBEW; Ed Hill, Secretary-Treasurer IBEW, Rick Diegal, Leg Dir IBEW, Carol Hooper, member of IBEW.

I'm delighted to be addressing the men and women of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, many of whose leaders and members I've known well since my Arkansas days. The last time a president spoke to an IBEW convention was 1958, and the president was Harry S Truman, so this is a privilege for me. I want to thank you for fighting by our side for these six years. I want to tell you what as a nation we must do to seize this time of opportunity. And I want to tell about an action I'm taking to strengthen families by providing millions of Americans with the peace of mind that comes from knowing they will not be denied access to high quality health care. This is a good time for America. We now have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, with 16 million new jobs; the lowest crime rate in 25 years; the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years; the lowest inflation in 35 years; and we're about to have the first balanced budget and surplus since Neil Armstrong walked on the moon.

Six years ago, when you helped Al Gore and me get elected, average wages had been stagnant for a generation. But last year, wages rose at twice the level of inflation. That, my friends, is real progress--the product of the energy of the American people and of an economic strategy that mirrors our values. Together, we boosted the minimum wage. Together, we doubled the tax credit for low-income working families. Together, we made college loans more affordable so that young and old can invest in their economic futures by learning new skills.

And together we fought efforts to undercut workers' rights. I remember last May out in California helping John Sweeney get the message out that it's wrong to pass a ballot initiative that silences the voice of workers in the political process. The voters wound up agreeing with us. And this week the Senate this week agreed with us that it's wrong to pass a salting bill that would erode the rights of workers to organize.

Yes, these are good times for this country, and good times for America's working families. But this is not a time to rest. If we do not act, and act decisively on America's challenges, this moment of opportunity will be remembered as time of missed opportunity. We in this country have real work to do, on the real issues facing our people. We must put progress before partisanship and get the job done.

First, above all else, we should press forward with the economic strategy that has helped bring our country such strong prosperity.

We should preserve our fiscal discipline. On the day I took office, we had a budget deficit of \$290 billion; now we have budget surpluses as far as the eye can see. I believe we should use this time of plenty to honor our duty to our parents and our children. We should set aside every penny of any surplus until we save Social Security first.

Now, as you may have heard, some on Capitol Hill have different ideas. In just a few minutes, the House Ways and Means Committee will begin marking up an \$80 billion tax cut that will drain the surplus before that money even shows up in the Treasury's account. I'm not against any and all tax cuts; in fact I proposed some targeted tax cuts in my own budget, paid for by cuts elsewhere in the budget. What I am against is baby boomers like me bankrupting our children so our children can't raise our grandchildren. So I say, put aside the surplus--every penny of it--until we save Social Security first. And I promise you this: If Congress sends me a bill that that squanders the surplus on tax cuts before we save Social Security, I will veto that bill.

To keep our prosperity going, we must also strengthen a global economy buffeted by change. That means, above all else, that Congress must act by meeting our obligations to the International Monetary Fund. Failure by Congress to act will put our prosperity at risk.

To keep our prosperity going we also must continue to invest in the education of our people. We have to have smaller classes, more teachers, modernized schools, all classrooms hooked up to the Internet, and higher standards.

We need more from Congress. We need Congress to help strengthen our families by giving them the peace of mind that comes from access to high-quality health care. With your help, we've made real progress. In 1996, you fought for and I signed the Kennedy-Kassebaum law so that Americans can keep their health coverage when they change jobs or when someone in their family gets sick. Last year I signed a balanced budget bill that helps make sure that up to 5 million uninsured children will get the medical coverage they need and deserve, the biggest increase in medical coverage since 1965.

And this year you've fought for -- and I am determined to sign -- a patients bill of rights for all Americans. 160 million Americans are in managed care plans, and these plans can save money and improve care. But I have met too many people who have had medical procedures delayed or denied because not by their physician but by a health care bureaucracy. I have spoken to too many doctors and nurses who are not able to give the kind of care they are trained to deliver. I have heard too many stories about parents rushing kids to the emergency room and worried whether their health plans will cover them. Here's our bottom line: our health care system should value patients, not just the bottom line. Medical decisions should be made by medical doctors, not insurance company accountants.

I asked a bipartisan panel to develop a comprehensive set of rights for patients, and I

The remaining need

The PBR is bipartisan

thank Bob Georgine of the Building and Trades council of the AFL-CIO for serving on that commission. And this year, I have acted, within my power as President, to extend these rights. Since February, we've extended the protections in the Patients bill of rights to tens of millions of Americans in federal health plans. That includes federal workers, service men and women, veterans, and Americans covered by Medicare.

Here's
what
we
done
for fed
workers

Today, I am taking another executive action. I am pleased to announce new regulations that will extend our patients bill of rights to the Medicaid program, which covers 42 million vulnerable Americans including poor children, people with disabilities, older Americans, and pregnant women. With this action, we have extended the patients bill of rights to health plans serving 75 million Americans. That's the right thing to do.

Now, Congress must do its part. It must assume responsibility in the remaining few weeks of the legislative session and pass a strong, enforceable, bipartisan patients bill of rights for Americans in all health plans. This is truly an issue where we should be able to advance progress over partisanship. Our bill is genuinely bipartisan. In fact, outside Washington, Republicans and Democrats have worked together to pass many of these protections in many states.

For nine months my administration worked in good faith with lawmakers of both parties to pass strong legislation. But for nine months the leadership of the majority party in Congress refused to act. In July, under pressure from the public, the House did pass something that they call a patients' bill of rights. It's a hollow measure that can only give patients and their families a false sense of security. But at least they passed a bill. The Senate hasn't even bothered to vote on a similarly hollow measure, and yesterday they stopped business entirely for four hours just to having to consider our measure.

we worked
in good
faith...
He passed
hollow bill,
Sen refused

The difference between our patients' bill of rights and the Republican leadership's versions couldn't be more stark, as this chart shows.

Our patients bill of rights says that managed care accountants can't make arbitrary medical decisions. Theirs' don't.

Our bill says that you ought to have a right to see a specialist if you have a medical condition which requires a specialist. Theirs' don't.

Our bill says that in an emergency you ought to have the right to go to the nearest emergency room, without worrying if your managed care plan will cover it. Theirs' don't.

Our bill says that if your employer changes health plans, you shouldn't be forced to change doctors if you're, say, six months pregnant or in the middle of chemotherapy treatment. Theirs' don't.

Our bill makes sure health plans don't give doctors secret incentives to limit care. Theirs' don't.

Our bill says that your medical records should be kept confidential. Theirs' actually makes it easier for others to look at your medical records.

Our bill says you ought to be able to hold your health plan accountable if it causes harm. Theirs' don't.

Our bill covers all health plans. Their bill leaves out as many as 100 million Americans.

Their plan isn't a real bill of rights -- it's a bill of goods. And if they send me a health care bill that is more loophole than law, I will veto it.

I want to thank the AFL-CIO for the grassroots and media campaign they've launched to get the message out about the patients bill of rights. I want to thank the IBEW, for helping us build the prosperity we now enjoy. And I want to thank everyone in this room for being involved in the political process. You know and I know that the real question that matters is whether, every day, we're doing the people's business, whether we're putting people above partisanship on health care, on education, the economy, the environment. That's what we're trying to do. But to do it, we need each and every one of you to vote in November. We need your members to vote in November. We need the American people to vote in November. And if they do we will chose progress over partisanship, and strengthen our nation for the century ahead.

Thank-you and God bless you.

All

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 29, 1998

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Edgartown Elementary School
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

10:06 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I'm speaking to you today from the Edgartown Elementary School in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. I'd like to talk to you about how we can put progress over partisanship in efforts to expand access to quality health care for every American.

Years from now, when we look back on the greatest accomplishments of this century, miraculous advances in medical care surely will be at the top of the list. But for all the successes of medicine, for all the wonders of its quality, parts of our rapidly changing medical system that deal with access to medical care are in desperate need of repair.

Like many of you, I've been appalled by tragic and repeated stories of men and women fighting for their lives and, at the same time, forced to fight insurance companies focused not on getting them the medical care they need, but on cutting costs even if it denies that medical care.

Recently, I met Mary Kuhl, the wife of a 45-year-old man who died after his insurance company canceled his emergency heart surgery, against his doctor's urgent warnings. I met Mick Fleming, whose sister died of breast and lung cancer after she was unfairly denied the treatment her doctor recommended, treatment for which she was eligible and desperately needed. These stories, and these practices, are callous and unacceptable. We must do everything in our power to give our families greater protection at this time of great change in medical science.

These things happen when, against doctors' recommendations, managed care plans deny procedures or treatment.

Now, nobody wants to waste money, and the managed care movement has done a lot of

negd.
care
OK,
but...

← good in slowing down unnecessary inflation. But none of us wants to see medical decisions affecting our families made by insurance company employees who are trained and paid to think like cost-cutting accountants, not care-giving doctors.

★
The litany
on PBR

That's why I've worked so hard to pass a patients' bill of rights, available to all Americans in all plans -- a patients' bill of rights that would say medical decisions should be made by doctors, not accountants; emergency room procedures should be made available whenever and wherever they're needed; no one should be denied access to a specialist when it's needed; no one should be forced to change doctors in the middle of treatment just because an employer changes medical plans; there ought to be an appeal of a medical decision made by an accountant all the way up the change in the company quickly until it gets to a doctor; people who are hurt ought to have redress, and medical records should be kept private.

We've worked very hard to make these protections available to everyone we could. We've extended the protections of a patients' bill of rights to 85 million Americans who get their health care through federal plans -- Medicare, Medicaid, the Federal Employee Plan, the Veterans Administration. Today we'll take executive action once again.

More than 120 million Americans are in workplace health plans that are protected under federal law. The Secretary of Labor has now been instructed to ensure that all these people can quickly appeal through an internal review process any coverage decision that denies the care their doctors said was needed and appropriate. That means 120 million more people will no longer have to take an HMO accountant's "no" for an answer. This will bring a lot greater peace of mind.

What's this fig?

In many of these stories we hear about, the HMO actually, ultimately, approves the treatment the doctor recommended, but only after it goes through layer after layer after layer of appeal. And sometimes there's no appeal at all. What we're doing today is trying to give quick and prompt appeals through an internal review process to the insurance companies and plans that are within our jurisdiction. It will help 120 million Americans, but it's not enough. It is simply not enough.

Bipartisan
PBR

We do not have the authority to extend all the critical patients' rights protections I mentioned to all the American people, and we won't have it until Congress acts. That's why I've worked since last November with doctors, nurses, consumers, lawmakers of both parties to get a strong, enforceable and bipartisan bill of rights -- again, one that says you have the right to emergency room care whenever and wherever you need it; the right to see that medical decisions are made by medical doctors, not insurance company accountants; the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors abruptly; the right to see a specialist when you need it; the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes harm; and the right to privacy in medical records.

These protections could have spared the Kuhls, the Flemings, and large numbers of other families across our country needless tragedies. They are protections all Americans deserve.

Unfortunately, not a single one of these vital protections is assured in the Republican leadership bills now in the House and Senate. Both leave millions and millions of Americans without any protections at all. The Republican leadership of both Houses has not allowed full and open debate on the issue. The Senate hasn't even held a single vote.

But remember, this is not a partisan issue. Nobody asks your party affiliation when you visit your doctor. No one wants to see unfeeling practices by insurance companies add to the pain of injury and disease. So when the Senate returns from recess next week, I urge lawmakers of both parties to make patient protections their first order of business.

Last year we worked together in a bipartisan spirit to pass a balanced budget which included historic Medicare reforms and the largest investment in children's health in more than 30 years. This year Congress must act like that again. It must put progress ahead of partisanship, and join me in giving Americans a patients' bill of rights strong enough, enforceable enough to make quality health care every insurance company's bottom line.

Thanks for listening.

END

10:11 A.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 10, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS EVENTstart
p. 4

Commonwealth Convention Center

Louisville, Kentucky

11:35 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Peeno. Thank you, Dr. Peters. I must say, after they have spoken there hardly needs to be much else said. I was profoundly moved, as I know all of you were, by what both these fine doctors said, and I thank them for giving their time and their lives to the work that they have discussed with us today. Yes, let's give them another hand. I thought they were great. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for your warm welcome and your leadership. Thank you, my good friend, Senator Ford, for all the years of wise counsel and advice, for your work for Kentucky, for its communities, its farmers, its people. Thank you, Governor Patton, for your friendship and for working for the education and health of your children. Thank you, Congressman Baesler, for voting with us and supporting the patients' bill of rights, along with Senator Ford, for both of them.

I'd like to thank your Lt. Governor and Dr. Stephen Henry for being here today; and State Auditor Edward Hatchett; Secretary of State John Brown; my good friend, Judge Dave Armstrong from the same little patch of ground that I'm from in Arkansas. I'd like to thank our Director of Personnel Management, Janice LaChance, for coming down with me here today. And I'd like to thank all of the health care professions who are here.

Ladies and gentlemen, before we begin, I would like to just ask you to permit me to say a few words about the terrible tragedy that occurred at our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. Our hearts are heavy with the news that now 12 Americans -- brave people who are working to build a better world and represent all of us abroad -- have lost their lives. Somewhere around 200 Africans have died in those bombs now. We mourn their loss. We extend our sympathies to their loved ones. To the nations of Kenya and Tanzania, we thank them for their friendship to us.

We grieve for the lost of their citizens.

I would just like to ask all of you to take just a few seconds of silence in their honor. (A moment of silence is observed.) Amen.

We go forward now. You should all know that our teams are on the ground in Africa. They're tending to the wounded; they're providing security; they are searching and finding evidence. We will do whatever we can to bring the murderers to justice.

I must have said this 100 times or more since I've been President, but I want to say it again because it bears special meaning today. The world we are living in and the world we are moving toward will allow us to move around the world more rapidly and more freely than ever before and to move information, ideas and money around the world more rapidly, more freely than ever before. It will be a global society that I am convinced will bring all Americans our nation's best years. But there has never been a time in human history when we have been free of the organized forces of destruction. And the more open the world becomes, the more vulnerable people become to those who are organized and have weapons, information, technology and the ability to move.

We must be strong in dealing with this. We must not be deterred by the threat of other action. There is no way out if we start running away from this kind of conduct. We have to build a civilized, open world for the 21st century.

Now, back to the important business at hand. For five and a half years now, I have had the great honor of serving you and working with others to strengthen America for a new century, a global information age. We have tried to look ahead with new ideas relevant to the times, but based on our oldest values of opportunity for all citizens, responsibility from all citizens, and a community of all our citizens.

Thanks to the hard work, ingenuity, and civic spirit of the American people and to this new direction in policy, this is a time of great prosperity and profound national strength for America. We have a lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years the smallest federal government in 35 years the highest home ownership rate in history. Wages are rising at twice the rate of inflation. We have, as the Governor said; provided for the opportunity for health insurance for 5 million uninsured children. We have provide Hope Scholarships, worth about \$1,500 in tax credits a year for the first two years of college tax credits for other years of college; interest deduction on -- tax deductions on the interest on student loans; more Pell Grants; more work-study positions to open the doors of college to everyone.

Compared to five and a half years ago, our air and water are cleaner, our

food is safer, there are fewer toxic waste dumps. And soon -- soon -- we will have the first balanced budget since Neal Armstrong walked on the moon in 1969.

Now, here's the problem with that. Usually, in our personal lives, our family lives, our work live and a nation's life, after a series of difficult years, when times get good you want to say, thank goodness, I'm tired, I need a rest; I want to sit back and enjoy this; I've been working like crazy for years and now things are good -- give me a break, let me have a break. And you agree, see?

That is the natural human tendency; that would be a mistake. Why? The world is changing very rapidly as we see every day in the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world. If someone had told you five or six years ago that today Japan would be having the problems it's having, would you have believed that? I say that not critically -- it is a great country full of brilliant people and they will come back. But it is a reminder that things change in a hurry and we must always be ready.

I think you can overdo sports analogies, but I can't resist one since I'm in Kentucky. (Laughter and applause). The way the world works today is like the last 10 minutes of a basketball game between two really talented teams. Now, you think about last season and what the Kentucky Wildcats did to people who sat on the lead. Now, think about it. How many games were you behind in that you won? You can't afford to do it. The world is changing, so we should take the confidence, the resources, the good fortune that we gratefully have now and use it to meet the big challenges still facing the country. That is very important.

We've got to continue to work on economic growth to stay with the strategy of fiscal discipline and open trade and investment in our people that has brought us this far. And we have to prove we can extend the benefits of this recovery to people who haven't felt it yet from the inner cities to Appalachia.

We have to continue to lead the world toward peace and freedom. We can't withdraw from the world -- witness the events of the last few days. We have to stand against the spread of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. We have to stand against the reach of international organizations of crime, and terror, and narco-trafficking. We have to stand against the destruction of racial and ethnic and religious hatred; against the threat of global, environmental, and health challenges.

Here at home we have to honor our obligations to future generations. And the most important thing we should do is to set aside every penny of the surplus we're going to have on October 1st until we have saved the Social Security system for the 21st century when the baby boomers require it. We have to make sure all of our people have a chance in tomorrow's world by making our elementary and secondary schools the best in the world. We need smaller classes, more

highly-trained teachers. We need modernized schools connected to the Internet. We need schools where there is discipline and good behavior and no gangs, guns, and drugs.

We need high standards and accountability, and great flexibility in meeting them. We need to prove we can protect our environment and still grow our economy. We have to continue to prove we can reach across the lines that divide us in this increasingly diverse country and be one America.

A good way to view this moment in history, I believe, is through the lens of the First Lady's theme that she came up with for our Millennium Project as we look toward how we will mark the changing of the centuries and the changing of a thousand years: Honor the past, imagine the future -- that's what we should be doing.

We have come here today to talk about a very important part of one other big challenge we face -- how we can put progress over partisanship, people over politics, to expand access to quality health care to every American. Nothing is more critical to the securities of our families, the strength of our communities. Health is something we take for granted until we or our loved ones don't have it anymore. But people like the two fine doctors who talked to us deal with folks like that every day. It isn't a partisan issue and I appreciated the fact that they made that clear. You know, when someone gets sick and comes into see one of these two doctors and fills out a form, there is no box that says, Republican, Democrat or independent.

Health care is being revolutionized in America. Most of the changes are good. Stunning biomedical breakthroughs pose the possibilities of vaccines or cures for our deadliest enemies, from diabetes to AIDS to Alzheimer's. Before you know it, this Genome Project will be finished and we'll be able to decode the genetic structure of every person. Mothers will know when they bring their babies home from the hospital what the potential problems are that those babies have, and some of it will be troubling to know, but most of it will be good because they'll be able to avoid all kinds of problems that might otherwise have come to their children.

It will be unbelievable what's going to happen to health care in the 21st century. There have already been examples of nerve transplantations in laboratory animals where their spines have been severed and now their lower limbs are moving again. It will be an amazing time.

The trick is how to extend affordable coverage of all these miracles and basic preventive health care to all Americans. That's really how the managed care revolution began. You know, when I became President, for the last 10 years health care costs had been going up at three times the rate of inflation. We were

spending approximately 4 percent more of our national income -- and at the time that was about \$240 billion a year -- than any other country on Earth on health care, even though we were one of the few industrialized countries that still had a significant percentage of our people without any health insurance. That was an unsustainable trend.

Since 1990, the number of people in managed care has nearly doubled. Today most Americans, 160 million of us, are in managed care plans. And, as has already been said, I think, on balance, there have been a lot of good things to come out of managed care, to make it more affordable, more accessible, to make the resources go further. But you've heard these doctors say that some very, very costly errors have been made by putting the dollar over the person.

I'll never forget the people that I have met and the stories they've told me. I met a woman named Mary Kuhl from Kansas City whose husband died. He needed specialized, urgent heart surgery. By the time he got the clearance to get it, it was too late. I met Mick Fleming, whose sister died of breast and lung cancer after she was denied treatment that she was later determined to have been entitled to. I met a billings manager that the doctor referred to, who herself bears the scars of having to turn away patients. I think in some ways, of all the people that have talked to me, she was the most moving of all, because she had to deliver the "no" face to face.

Now, when the bottom line is more important than patients' lives, when families have nowhere to turn, when their loved ones are harmed by bad decisions, when specialist care is denied, when emergency care is not covered -- we have to act. That's why you heard, at the grass-roots level in America, Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, even people who think normally the government should not do anything that can fairly be done by the private sector, have developed this overwhelming grass-roots consensus that we need the patients' bill of rights in America.

I've done what I could administratively, and some of you are probably covered by decisions that I and my administration have made. I acted to extend the protections of the patients' bill of rights to 85 million Americans who get health care through federal plans. In June we extended it to 40 million people who receive Medicare. Last month we put in place new rapid appeals for the 3 million veterans who receive health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Last week the Department of Defense issued a directive to all military bases throughout the world, extending protections to 8 million service men and women and their families at nearly 600 hospitals and clinics all around the globe.

We are already extending many patient protections such as the right to a specialist and continuity of care to federal workers. And that's why Janice LaChance is here with me today, because we are announcing that we are now

requiring that 350 health plans that serve federal employees to repeal the gag rules that keep doctors from telling patients all their health care options, not just the cheapest ones.

states good, but need nat'l -
Now, a lot of states are acting in this area, too. Kentucky has a patients' bill of rights. But I can tell you because of the way the laws work, there is no substitute for a national law. We cannot provide protection for all Americans. We will leave many, many tens of millions behind unless we have strong, bipartisan legislation that covers every American.

worked for a mos.
Now, for nine months, I've worked in good faith with lawmakers of both parties to pass a strong, enforceable, bipartisan bill of rights. We are fighting for a bill supported by both Democrats and Republicans -- and again, I thank Wendell Ford and Scotty Baesler for their support.

GOP - come-lately
Now, for nine months the leadership of the majority party in Congress has resisted taking any action at all. They have listened to those with an interest in preserving the status quo rather than the clear call of the public interest we have heard echoing across this hall today. Now public demand is rising and the Republican leadership has discovered the need to act, so the House passed a plan last month and the Senate Republicans have offered a similar bill. But these bills would give patients and their families a false sense of security.

chart →
You've already heard some of the comments. But this is very important, that when everybody is calling for a patients' bill of rights and both parties pushing proposals, how can the American people know what a real one is? Well, that's what this chart is about over here. And maybe -- Jerry, would you hand me the chart? I'll hold it. He said he's the Vanna White of Louisville here. I'm not going to discuss that.

) privacy
I want you to look at this, because that's what this is all about. A real patients' bill of rights at least continues and should strengthen the medical privacy provisions in place today. In the age of computer databases and the Internet, we should strengthen the privacy of medical records. Don't you want yours private, don't you?

I have a proposal that would do this. The House Republican bill would dramatically increase the number of people who can see your medical records without your knowledge or consent. It overturns privacy protections already on the books in 20 states, including Kentucky. The bill would just wipe them from the books and that is wrong. So here's the first test -- protecting medical privacy laws: the Republican plan no; our bipartisan proposal -- and I should say we do have Republican support, including a fine doctor from Iowa, Dr. Ganske in the Congress -- for the bipartisan bill.

2) specialists

Second, a real patients' bill of rights will guarantee the right to see specialists that you need. To reap the full rewards of modern medicine you must have the ability to see, for example, a neurologist or a cardiologist if that is what is medically indicated. The congressional bills don't give you that right; ours does. That's the second no-yes.

3) won't lose doc.

The third issue -- a real patients' bill of rights guarantees you won't lose your doctor in the middle of a medical treatment even if your employer switches health plans. This is a big deal -- this is a big deal. Now, the GOP leadership bills don't do that. An insurance company could switch obstetricians in the sixth month of pregnancy or drop your oncologist in the middle of chemotherapy just because your employer switches plans. A real patients' bill of rights makes sure that health plans don't secretly give incentives to doctors to limit medical care. Now, the Republican leadership plan would permit that; our's would not.

4) no incentives to ↓ care

5) emergency care

A real patients' bill of rights guarantees you the right to emergency room care when and where you need it. When you are wheeled into an emergency room, you shouldn't have to start negotiating with your health plan. This is the financial incentive. This is keeping your doctor through critical treatments -- no, yes; no, yes. Emergency room -- their's no, our's yes. A real patients' bill of rights holds health care plans accountable for the harm patients face if they are denied critical care. Now, that's important.

6) accountability

If a doctor denies you the health care you need, you can get help to pay for lost wages or medical costs today. If an HMO denies you the care you need, under the congressional leadership bill, you won't get any help at all. Now, if you have rights with no remedies, are they rights? How would you feel -- what would you say to me -- what they're saying is, oh, this bipartisan bill, they have all these remedies, and it's just going to be a mess with a bunch of lawyers. Isn't that awful? And a lot of people say, well, I don't like lawyers, I don't like lawsuits, who wants to be in court? Sounds pretty good.

right to sue

Let me ask you this: How would you react if I gave a speech tomorrow that said, my fellow Americans, I love the Bill of Rights. I love the freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly, the freedom of religion, the right to travel -- I love all those Bill of Rights. But I don't like all these lawsuits. We got too many of them in America. Therefore, I have proposed to amend the Constitution so that no one can ever sue to enforce the right to free speech, free assembly, free practice of religion, or any other of the rights that have kept our country strong for 220 years. You would say --

AUDIENCE: No way!

THE PRESIDENT: So when you talk about remedies, do you have rights without remedies? I think we've seen enough there. That's a big issue.

must apply to all plans
A real patients' bill of rights should apply to every plant, every single one. The Republican plan leaves out -- listen to this -- as many as 100 million people, many of them working for small businesses -- 100 million people would still be under the present system; 100 million people who need our help. It is wrong. If we're going to do this, I don't want to leave 100 million Americans behind, and I don't think you do either, even if you would be covered. That's not right.

*Overview:
All the specifics*
So you need to remember here, it isn't the title, "patients' bill of rights," it is the specifics. What are the specifics? Medical privacy: yes on our bill, no on theirs. Access to specialists: yes on our bill, no on theirs. Assuring that accountants don't make arbitrary medical decisions: yes on our bill, no on theirs -- a big deal to doctors, because they know what happens to patients. Providing real emergency room protections: yes on our bill, no on theirs. Holding health plans accountable if patients are harmed: yes on our bill, no on theirs. Protecting patients from secret financial incentives: yes on our bill, no on theirs.

not about politics
Keeping your doctor through critical treatments -- huge issue -- I saw a lot of you nodding your heads when I said that you'd lose your doctor in the middle of your treatment -- yes on our bill, no on theirs. And then covering all health plans, that is, all Americans: yes on our bill, no on theirs. That's what's at issue. This is not about politics. This is not about party. This is about a crying need for the American people, and it's time we did the right thing. We ought to do it now, in September when Congress comes back.

soundbite
I want to thank the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American College of Emergency Room Physicians, and so many others. I have to tell you, we need a bill of rights, not a bill of goods. We need a law, not another loophole. If I get that other bill of rights, I will be forced to veto it -- and I will.

Now, I will say again, this is not a partisan issue anyplace in the country but Washington, D.C. I believe Republicans and independents are just as much for this bill out here in the real world as Democrats are. Nothing should be less partisan than the quality of health care our people receive. We're a little more than 500 days from that new millennium, but there's only a handful of days left in this session of Congress. We cannot let this moment of opportunity be remembered as a time of missed opportunity.

Think of what I said about the basketball game. Think about how fast things are changing. Think about how fast things can change in your life, in your family's life, in your business's life, and in the life of our nation. Now is the time to say, we thank God for the good fortune we have, but we are using it to look forward to the future, to make a better future, to meet the big challenges of this country. And we ought to begin next month, when Congress returns, with the patients' bill of rights.

Thank you and God bless you all.

END 12:03 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Chicago, Illinois)

For Immediate Release
August 10, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT "VICTORY IN KENTUCKY" LUNCHEON

Seelbach Hotel
Louisville, Kentucky
P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. You know, unfortunately, I don't get to run for office anymore. And therefore, I'm supposed to appear above the fray and unpolitical. But I have some experience in this area, and I would say, if I asked you -- if I gave everybody here a piece of paper and a pencil and I said I want you to write down why Scotty Baesler believes he should be the senator, I believe you could all write something down now, couldn't you? That is the definition of a good political speech. Let's give him a hand. That was a great, great thing to do. Thank you. Thank you.

You know, I love this state, and the Mayor almost made fun of me, and the Governor, for coming here so much to Kentucky. I don't want to apologize, but I have been coming here a long time now, and a lot of times since I've been President. And this state has been very good to the Vice President and to me, and I want to say a special word of thanks for that -- for the support and the electoral votes we received from the people of Kentucky in both our runs. On behalf of the First Lady and Al and Tipper, all of us, we're very grateful to Kentucky for that.

I want to thank the Governor for being my friend and for doing such a wonderful job. I want to say to Steve Henry and Charlie Owen, I think you both have bright futures, and you've shown a lot of character by the way you've rallied behind Scotty Baesler and the idea of the Democratic Party and the principles for which you made your race. And I appreciate it very, very much.

I want to thank all the other officials who are here, including my longtime friend and fellow Arkansan, your Country Judge Executive, David Armstrong your state party chair, Ron McCloud. And we've got a congressional candidate here, Chris Gorman -- Chris stand up there. Good for you for running. Where's Fred

Cowen? Fred stand up -- stand up there.

When I was a young man starting out in politics 20 plus years ago, Fred Cowen was then an Arkansan. And on October the 3rd, 1991, when I ran -- announced my candidacy for President, there were only two elected officials from outside Arkansas who were on the steps of the Old Statehouse with me, and one of them was Fred Cowen. So I want you to help him get elected here. It would mean a lot to me personally to do that.

Senator Ford, I'm going to miss you -- and you do look good. We've all had that experience. I knew I was sort of on the other side of the divide when an 80-year old woman came up to me that I'd known many years and looked up at me and said, Bill, you look so good for a man your age. I'd also like to thank one other person who is here. I was a governor, you know, forever and a day. I was a governor for 12 years. And then I got beat once, so I was out for two years. So over a 14-year span I had the privilege of working with five Kentucky governors. You know, you had that one-term deal then, so all I had to do was hold on to my job and I'd always know somebody new from Kentucky if I'd just wait around. But one of them who was a particular friend of mine is John Y. Brown, and he's here today, and I thank him very much for coming. Thank you, Governor. Thank you.

Now, look, Scotty has given the speech, but let me tell you, the stakes are very high. The issue he mentioned, many others I could mention, they depend upon having people in the Congress who will do the right thing. Now, just ask yourself -- just take the three things he mentioned that are in the past, and one in the future, and think about the issues we'll be facing. Think about the minimum wage, the Family and Medical Leave law, the crime bill, and the patients' bill of rights. What do all those things have in common? The real beneficiaries of that legislation are the ordinary folks in this country, the people who work here at this place, not those of us who are sitting here at these tables.

The real beneficiaries are the people who are not organized, who could never afford to a luncheon like this, but who are the heart and soul of this country -- who get up every day and do the best they can at their job, they do the best they can to raise their children and take care of their parents. They pay their taxes, they fight our wars, they do all the work in this country. And all they want is a fair deal.

And when things change as much as they've been changing in how we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world, the job of the government is to take our oldest values and hook them to new ideas so that we can move into the future and make it a better time than the past.

You go back through the whole history of this country and you see that the

country has always been about certain basic things. It's been about freedom for responsible citizens, and widening the circle of freedom. We redefine it quite a lot. When we started out you had to be a white male property owner to vote. We didn't even let all the white men vote when we started -- we said all people are created equal, and then we said, oh, by the way, here's our definition. So we've had to do a lot of work on freedom.

It's about opportunity. I'm grateful for the fact that there are 16 million new jobs and that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years. But as Congressman Baesler said, there are still a lot of people who are working hard and don't have enough to get by. There are still some places in this country -- inner-city neighborhoods, places like Appalachia and places in South Texas, Native American reservations -- where they don't know there's been an economic recovery. It's about widening the circle of opportunity.

And it's about deepening the bonds of our community, the idea that we want to live in a country where not only we are treated fairly, but everyone else is, too; where not only we have a chance to raise our children and build our families and our communities, but everyone else does, too.

So you think about the crime bill. The crime bill is about freedom and community -- because if you're scared to death when your child goes to school, if you don't feel secure on your own street, you're not really free. You think about the minimum wage -- it's about opportunity and community. And by the way, it's always turned out to be good economics, because if working people are making enough money, then they'll be spending it with other people who are in business.

If you take the patients' bill of rights -- and it's the most important thing now because it's something we still have to do -- 160 million Americans are in managed care. Now, I don't think that's a bad thing, because before managed care inflation and health care costs had gone up at three times the rate of inflation. That was unsustainable, it was going to bankrupt businesses, it was going to bankrupt families, it was going to take too much of our money away.

But any device for saving money should be hooked to the values of the mission. The mission of the health care system is to take care of people. And the problem with managed care is that there are no limits that express the values of the country.

Now, this patients' bill of rights, here's what it does -- let me just tell you what it does, because it says a lot. I could go through all these other issues, but I'm going to take my cue from the Congressman, because here's an issue -- every single issue -- keep in mind, every single issue, he's on one side, his opponent is on the other.

values
of PBR

This patients' bill of rights says you ought to have a right to a specialist if you've got a medical condition which requires a specialist. We had a lot of breast cancer survivors at our former event. Why? Well, one reason is, they know that it makes a big difference, if you're a woman with breast cancer and you have to have a mastectomy, whether you have a specialist or a general surgeon. Just one example. We say yes; they say no.

Two, you ought to have a right to emergency room care in emergency conditions where the nearest emergency room is. And you just think about it. If one of your kids gets in a car wreck and they get hauled into a hospital and your children are on life supports, do you want the doctors to have to wait to call an insurance company to get approval before they start taking care of them? I don't think so. Just ask yourself what you want. Most of us wouldn't have to worry about it. Millions of Americans do. Should we change that? We say yes; they say no.

Here's another thing that happens. Suppose you've got an HMO and your employer, as he or she ought to have the right to do, has to change insurers at a certain time. Should they be able to make you change your doctor if you're in the middle of treatment? If you're a woman who is seven months pregnant or six months pregnant and you've been going to the same doctor all the time, should they be able to force you to change obstetricians?

What if you're in the process -- what if you've got some sort of lymphoma or cancer, you're taking chemotherapy, and you're in the middle of treatment? Should they be able to make you change your oncologist, or should there be protections against that? We say, yes, there should be protections, and you ought to be able to complete your treatment before you can be required to change doctors. They say no.

Should you have real protections of privacy for your medical records that are even stricter than the ones we've got now, or should we make your records available to more people? They say, make them available to more people. We say, not without your permission. We think, in this computerized age where everything about us is on a computer, we need more privacy protections, not fewer.

See, all this is about the world we're moving into. And interestingly enough, there are 43 managed care firms supporting our bill. Why? Because they're out there doing the right thing already, and they're being subject to unfair competition because they're determined to take care of people. And they don't think it's right to have somebody else get a financial advantage with them just because they've got enough power to kill a bill in Congress.

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So this is about the future. Man, I'm telling you, most of the medical stories you're going to be hearing in the next 10 years are going to be good medical stories -- unbelievable advances in medical research. Last year -- how many people do you know -- how many friends or family members have you had in your life who were confined to wheelchairs because of spinal cord injuries? Last year, for the first time ever, a laboratory animal got movement back in its lower limbs after its spine had been shattered because of a nerve transplant.

How many people do you know whose child had some sort of predisposition to a medical condition that if the parents had known when the baby went home from the hospital they wouldn't have suffered as much as they did? Within five or 10 years every mother will get a genetic code map of their children's bodies --how it works, what the pluses and minuses are. Most of the medical stories are going to be good stories. And there's going to have to be business management brought to the medicine like everything else. But you have to put people first.

You know, Scotty is independent -- we don't agree on everything. When he doesn't agree with me he votes the other way. And most of the time I imagine his constituents agreed more with him than me -- that's what representatives are for. But I'll tell you something, I never had any doubt that he was the same person in Washington that he was in Kentucky, and that he wasn't up there doing rhetoric to try to inflame people for no good reason. This election is about whether we're going to put the progress of the country over the partisanship of Washington; whether we're going to put the people's interest over the interest of politics; whether we're going to try to make America more unified as we go into the future or more divided.

And you really can see this patients' bill of rights as a metaphor for every other issue. I could give you a speech about education, about how to preserve the environment and grow the economy, about how we're going to deal with the problems so horribly manifested in what we went through with our embassies in Africa and all the losses of life. But every issue for the future -- you just remember -- the right answer is new ideas, old values. Take care of most people and those of us that are doing pretty well are going to do fine anyway. We'll figure out how to do fine if we've got a system that takes care of most ordinary Americans.

That's what this guy will do. He'll be a great senator for the 21st century. I hope you will help him. I hope you will help Chris Gorman. We need every person we can in the Congress who believes in what Scotty stood up here and talked about today. And I thank you for being here to help him.

God bless you. Thank you.

END

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE FAMILY REUNION CONFERENCE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
June 22, 1998**

Acknowledgments: First Lady; VP and Mrs. Gore; members of the roundtable

Before I begin, I want to emphasize what previous speakers have said: no family health issue is more important than protecting our children from tobacco. We have been working for some time now to forge an honorable, bipartisan compromise. A majority of the Senate stands ready to make progress by passing meaningful legislation. But last week, in a brazen act of partisan politics, the Republican leadership chose tobacco companies over American families. The bipartisan bill they blocked would not only give parents a chance against tobacco ads that target children. It would also protect kids from drugs, and give low- and middle-income families a tax break by ending the marriage penalty. It would [improve child care and] make an important investment in cancer research. **So this was not just a pro-tobacco vote; across the board, it was an anti-family vote.**

The congressional leadership will not succeed in clouding the debate or changing the subject from the health of our children. And they will not convince me that this battle is over, because we're going to keep on fighting it until we win it for our children. I urge all members of Congress to join in passing comprehensive legislation that curbs youth smoking. But one thing I will not do is participate a charade that fails to protect our kids and instead gives political cover to the allies of the tobacco lobby. I will not settle for anything less than honest legislation. Because our children deserve no less.

In many ways, this is a moment of great opportunity for America. Our economy is strong and social problems are on the mend. Families are more secure. For five years now, our administration has fought to give America's families more options for affordable health care. We've helped Americans keep health coverage when they change jobs. And we've proposed a patients' bill of rights to ensure that all families have the protections they need in a changing health care system. Families benefit only when we put their interests above special interests -- just as we are trying to do with the tobacco bill -- so I urge Congress to act to protect patients' rights before the end of this session.

America is making great progress in protecting the health of all our family members, from the oldest to the youngest. Previous speakers described the steps we're taking to fulfill our sacred obligation to older Americans. I want to take a moment to explain what we're doing for younger Americans -- our most precious responsibility as parents, and as a nation.

Last year, we made a historic investment in our children's health that will give up to 5 million uninsured kids access to the medical coverage they deserve. In my balanced budget for

1999, I have proposed to give states the funds and flexibility to enroll hard-to-reach children -- because millions of them, though eligible for Medicaid, remain without coverage. And, as recent studies have shown us, uninsured children are more likely to be sick as newborns; less likely to be immunized; and less likely to receive treatment for recurring illnesses, like ear infections or asthma. Without treatment, those conditions can have lifelong consequences.

Every family knows: there is no concern greater than a child's illness; there is no priority greater than a child's health. That is why, four months ago, I asked eight federal agencies to find new ways to help provide health care for children. And today, I am signing an Executive Memorandum directing those agencies to implement more than 150 initiatives, from information for schools and child care centers to partnerships with job centers and Head Start. Working together, we can enroll the millions of uninsured children in Medicaid or our new Children's Health Insurance Program.

As the health care industry evolves, families' needs also change. So must the government that works to meet their needs. The federal commitments I am enacting today give government a new flexibility -- cutting across agency lines, forging relationships with private organizations, pooling resources to protect the most vulnerable Americans. This is more than good policy; it is a fundamental obligation to our families. As we approach the 21st century, I am confident we will fulfill that responsibility -- and have healthier and stronger families, and a healthier and a stronger America.

I would now like to open the roundtable for discussion, and I look forward to hearing all your perspectives.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 4, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO DLC NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Omni Shoreham Hotel
Washington, D.C.

1:30 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Antonio, for that wonderful introduction. Thank you, Senator Lieberman, Governor Romer, Al From, and Will, and all the other folks here from the DLC. I thank Governor Carper and Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, and all the other elected officials who are here. I thank Jill Docking for her work on this important project.

And let me say, I'm very glad to be here, and I wish I could sit here for a couple of hours and listen to you, instead of the other way around. I find I nearly always fail to learn things when I am doing the talking. But I am honored to be here. And I just took a little picture in the next room with the elected officials, and I was thinking that we have come a long way since 1984, a long way since the New Orleans Declaration, a long way since Cleveland. And all of you should be very proud to be a part of a growing national movement that at the same time is bearing faithfully our most treasured American traditions and ideas.

I think it's worth remembering that in the early 19th century when the Democratic Party, when the term began to be used, very often the term was shortened from Democratic Party to just democracy -- people used to refer to our predecessors as "the Democracy," because we believed we were representing all Americans. And I think that may be a better name for us now, even than it was then.

Our party is again a party of hope, a party of the future, the party that empowers individuals and gives them a chance to be part of a larger national progress and unity. The credo of Andrew Jackson's day that I've heard Al From say a thousand times -- opportunity for all, special privileges for none -- is still a big part of what we believe.

Thomas Jefferson believed that we needed more freedom and more responsibility, and that's still what we believe. Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman believed that America had to lead in this increasingly interdependent world if we wanted to advance the cause of freedom and peace and prosperity and security. That's still what we believe.

And we have fundamentally, especially here at the DLC, been a group of Democrats committed to ideas. And in that sense, we have embraced one of the central gems of wisdom of

the greatest Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, who, in a very eloquent series of statements that I'm sure many of you remember by heart, reminded us that we could never build our country up by tearing others down. I am proud to be a New Democratic with all of you.

We have called our approach "the third way" -- with a government that is more active, more effective, less expensive; one that can bring us together and move us forward, not drive us apart and set us back.

I am profoundly grateful to the American people that in two presidential elections we have been entrusted with the leadership of the country into the 21st century. I believe it is not an accident that this has happened. I do not believe it is a figment of the fertile imagination of me or any political expert that work for us. I think this happened because we had good ideas that were rooted in old values; that we were able to tell the American people in a convincing way that we could transform our nation -- and in the process, transform our party -- in a way that would enable us to do the eternal business of America; that in the face of new challenges and new opportunities we would find a way to change while still anchored in our basic values, and that we could bring good results to the American people.

That is what I think brought about those two election victories. And I believe that history, when people look back on it, will show that. And in that sense, every one of you who have been a part of all we have done here for more than 10 years, and especially since the issuance of the New Orleans Manifesto, can really take a lot of pride in the good things that have happened to America. We are, in effect, building an American example for the new millennium right now.

Now, just think how far we've come. Think about how America was in 1990, in 1991. We not only had problems, we were not only drifting apart and stagnating economically and our social problems were deepening, but there was a real belief on the part of many people that nobody was really concerned enough to do anything about it. And more and more we had folks in the other party saying, well, there's a reason we're not concerned -- we can't do anything about it, because government is the problem and we just have to let this stuff happen and if we don't it will just get worse -- if we try to make it better it will just get worse.

And you remember all their speeches -- the Democrats would mess up a two-car parade and all that sort of thing. That was the basic prevailing conventional wisdom that they tried to hammer home. So, yes, we have these problems, but we really can't deal with them because government is inherently the problem; that if you trust the Democrats, they'll just make it worse by trying to help. And then, to make the climate worse, there were politicians who really tried to make these social differences in our country bigger, when I'm trying so hard to make them smaller.

Every time they saw a point of tension in our society, they saw that as an opportunity for what the professionals call "wedge issues." And there were even people who believed, looking at all this, that our country was in some sort of long-term decline, and all the experts believe -- the political experts believe -- that it would be a very, very long time before any Democrat could be

elected, because the other party said government is inherently bad, and besides that, the Democrats can't run the economy, manage foreign policy, they're weak on crime, weak on welfare, and they'll run the deficit up -- it will be a disaster. You remember all that.

Where is all that? It's all gone. What drove it away? Reality.

You should be proud of that. You should be proud that you have been a part of that. We tried in this administration to be faithful to what we said in Cleveland in 1991 -- to stay with the themes of opportunity and responsibility and community. We've tried to make sure that our ideas were driven by our values, and our politics was driven by our policies -- not the other way around. This really has been an administration of ideas.

Yesterday I had the pleasure to go celebrate one of those ideas. I went to Cleveland to the National Convention of City Year, one of our AmeriCorps affiliates. I saw 1,000 young people that are changing the future for tens of thousands of other people all across America. It's been a stunning success. Nearly 90,000 young people have now come into national service in the last four years. And over half of them have earned the credits to go to college; that was a very essential part of the DLC idea of national service and earning money for education, and it is making America a better place.

If you didn't read about it, it's only because no one had a fight or called anyone a name. But it actually happened yesterday, and it was quite wonderful. And it was very, very moving to see that an idea that all of us nourished for such a long time was actually out there alive.

One of the young men who spoke said, "the first time my mother ever said she was proud of me was when I became an AmeriCorps volunteer and I started working with children." A young man that I met seven years ago in Boston when I was running for President came up and reminded the audience that he'd given me the t-shirt off his back -- the sweatshirt off his back -- so I'd never forget the service project he was involved in. And I kept it, and ran in it, and still have it to this day. And he kept his service to this day; he now does it full-time.

There are young people like this all over America. How did this happen? It happened because the DLC developed this concept of national service. We had an election. It was part of the election debate, and the Congress ratified the judgment of the people in the election of 1992. And it changed America. There are lots of other ideas like this.

The DLC talked a lot about reinventing government and how we had to change the way government worked, and brought in a lot of people to actually go through the details of it. And a lot of that is kind of boring, you know, and it doesn't make great high-flowing lines in speeches. But a huge percentage of the savings that we will enjoy over the next five years that are helping us to balance the budget came because of the reinventing government efforts that the Vice President led. And we now have over 300,000 fewer people, and 16,000 pages of unnecessary regulations gone, and more than 250 programs gone, and 640,000 pages of internal rules gone. We save a lot of trees with this RIGO movement. It's worked. The efforts have saved \$137 billion. Years ago, reinventing government was a New Democratic idea. Today, it's an

American success story. You ought to be proud of that.

If you think about community policing, we just celebrated the fact that we're ahead of schedule. We've now funded 75,000 of our 100,000 community police that we promised in the campaign of 1992 -- a DLC idea. We're ahead of schedule and under budget. What was a New Democrat idea is now an American success story. The crime bill with the community policing, the Brady Bill, the assault weapons ban, the prevention efforts to do smart things in local communities with community leaders -- all these things were part of the original, tough, smart crime package of the DLC. They were New Democratic ideas; now they're American success stories.

We promised to ease the burden of taxes for working people, to reward work, to lift millions of working families out of poverty. When we doubled the Earned Income Tax Credit we made the American Dream real for people who work full-time. We said no matter how little you make, you shouldn't live in poverty if you're working full-time and you've got kids in the house. That Earned Income Tax Credit today is worth about \$1,000 a year to a family of four. It was a New Democrat idea, now it's part of America's success stories.

There are over 2 million children who have been lifted out of poverty because of an idea that started in a meeting like this held by the DLC and then appeared on a piece of paper and is now a part of the life of the United States. What you do here matters. Ideas matter. Work like this matters.

Now, I could give you lots of other examples. When I became President, I think there was one charter school in America. Today, there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds. The state of California just voted to take the cap off of the number of charter schools that they could have. It's sweeping America. For most people, it started as an idea being promoted by the DLC.

You can see it in the balance of tough child support enforcement with more support for children in welfare families. You can see it in the Family and Medical Leave law. You can see it in our trade policy, in the empowerment zones, in all of the other initiatives to bring the spark of enterprise to the inner city. You can see it in the HOPE scholarships, and, yes, you can see it in the balanced budget. They were New Democrat ideas; now they are American success stories.

And what are the results? Just think about it. If I had told you on Inauguration Day in 1993 that in five and a half years, I'd be able to come back here and assert to you that we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest welfare roles in 27 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years, the lowest inflation rate in 32 years, the smallest government in 35 years, and the highest home ownership in American history -- and, oh, by the way, along the way we opened the doors of college to every American willing to work for it and made dramatic advances for peace and freedom and security in the world, you would have said, I don't believe it, but if it happens, I'll be proud. You should be proud because you're a part of it.

Now, that brings me to why you're here -- because we're not nearly through. We still have to work to expand our own ranks within our party and to win elections with our adversaries in the election process. The American people need to understand even more clearly than they do now what the connection is between these ideas and the early actions that were taken and the consequences that have happened. But the most important thing to remember is this: elections are always about the future. If all you have done is a good job, you're entitled to a gold watch. Elections are always about the future.

I remember one time in 1990, I was thinking about running for governor again and I was out at Governor's Day at the State Fair and I said -- this old guy came up to me in overalls -- he said, are you going to run for governor again? And I said, well, if I do, will you vote for me? He said, yeah, I always have. I said, well, I've been governor 10 years, aren't you sick of me after all these years? He said, no, but nearly everybody else I know is. And I said, well, don't they think I've done a good job? He said, oh, they think you've done a wonderful job -- but that's what we paid you for all those years.

Very important to remember: elections are always about tomorrow. And that's the importance of this process in which you are engaged now. And what I'd like to say to you is, if you think about all these things I just said, what we'd really like is if that were more the normal condition of America. I mean, we'd really like it if we could sort of keep this thing going.

But what I want to say to you is that this is a moment where maybe the most important thing is Americans are upbeat again, they're optimistic, they have a sense of possibility, a sense of confidence, they even trust in government -- notwithstanding everything else they've been told. It's begun to edge up. Why? Because reality is out there. And no matter how much people may try to fill the atmosphere with other things, there is a reality out there.

The point I'm trying to make is this reality has given us a sense of collective self-confidence and security to be honest about what still needs to be done in America and to think about what the long-term challenges are to build a country we want for the 21st century. Now, let me just mention a few of them because I think there are clearly New Democrat approaches there.

The first thing I want to say is that we need to candidly tell the American people, yes, things are going well now, but if we are complacent, short-sighted, selfish, we will fritter away an opportunity to make sure that this country fulfills its potential in the 21st century, because we still have some very big challenges. What are they? The first thing we've got to do is figure out how to deal with the coming retirement of the baby boomers and the increasing life expectancy of people, which is looking better to me all along. I think that's a high-class problem. But we have to figure out a way to deal with this without bankrupting our children and undermining our children's ability to raise our grandchildren, while still honoring the needs of senior populations for a certain level of predictability and security a decent life.

So the first thing I would say is, we have to maintain fiscal discipline. We shouldn't spend the surplus before it materializes, and we shouldn't spend a penny of it until we have

secured Social Security for the 21st century, and we ought to pass the reform in early 1999.

Secondly, we also have a Medicare Commission chaired by another DLC leader, Senator Breaux, and we have to recognize that we have to deal with that. And we ought to deal with that also in 1999. And the Democrats should not run away from making the necessary reforms in Social Security and Medicare. They are our programs. We brought them to America. They are the great gift of our party in the 20th century. Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson and their friends in the Congress gave this gift to America.

Who can say anything other than "hallelujah" that less than 11 percent of our seniors live in poverty? But when we get to the point when there are two people working for every person drawing Social Security at present rates of retirement, life expectancy, child birth, and immigration, even if we succeed in providing quality health care more in line with the rate of inflation, you don't have to be a mathematical genius to know that we don't want to be responsible for destroying that which we have created. And, therefore, if we don't want to destroy that which we have created, we should take the lead and tell the American people they should trust us to take the lead to reform it in a way that will be consistent with our values and that will preserve the gains of the last 50 years, but drive them into the next 50 years with a 21st century system that meets the challenges of this day. And the Democrats ought to take the lead on that.

Furthermore, on health care, I think we have to continue to support both the Patient's Bill of Rights and increased access to health insurance, especially for selected groups where they're really often left out. And we have both addressed in different ways the need to deal with people who are not old enough to be on Medicare, but are, through no fault of their own, left without health insurance. It's a terrible problem -- everywhere I travel in the country, somebody else comes up to me and talks about it.

This Patient's Bill of Rights is a big issue because it's a way of saying we support managed care in its benefits, but any system which is rooted in process only, that gets disconnected from the values of the purpose of the endeavor -- in this case, providing a healthier population -- will get into trouble.

There was a woman with me from Minnesota the other day who, five weeks ago, was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer. Two years ago she had a lump in her breast. She went to her HMO. They said well, we took a picture of it and it looks all right to us. But it never went away. Finally, she paid for her own biopsy. So this was about six weeks ago -- she was here last week. They said, you've got stage two breast cancer. So then she goes to her HMO and they said, well, you can't have a breast cancer surgeon, but we'll give you a general surgeon to do this surgery. She said, I don't think so.

She made 123 phone calls trying to get them to give her a qualified doctor to do the surgery. So she said, well, I can't afford it, but I'll pay for it myself. When she was under the knife the HMO called her home and said they would cover it, but then they wouldn't cover her chemotherapy afterward.

Now, this may be an extreme case, but I promise you something like that is happening somewhere today. Now, part of it is the extreme financial pressure these folks are under. But if you put health care decisions in the hands of people who don't understand health care, then you have taken efficiency a step too far. And I believe it's a mistake.

I also believe, however -- it's just like Social Security reform. I think we had to have some managed health care. We couldn't continue to have health care costs go up to three times the rate of inflation. Eventually it would have consumed the whole economy. But if you don't remedy the abuses and set aside a system, then you may wind up destroying the whole concept that you can manage the health care system in an efficient way.

So we ought to be out there out front on these issues. We ought to be continuing to support education reform until the charter school movement and public school choice is the rule in America, not the exception. We ought to support my initiatives for smaller classes and better teaches and higher standards, and access to technology for all students. We ought to continue to support initiatives in juvenile crime and to rescue our inner-city neighborhoods generally -- further public safety issues, further support in community efforts that have been proven to be successful in rescuing kids and keeping them out of trouble before they go to jail in the first place.

In the end, that's what we've got to do. We can't jail our way out of the juvenile crisis in America. We can punish people who ought to be punished, but in the end, we have to be smart enough to figure out how to save more of these kids. We need them for our future and we can't let them go. And we ought to be on the forefront of doing that.

And let me just make one other -- there are lots of other issues I could mention, but I'd like to mention one. I think that we need -- and the DLC and the New Democratic forces need to do a lot more to define what our stakes are in the world of the 21st century. I'll just give you a few.

I went to Geneva the other day for the 50th Anniversary of the World Trade Organization and urged them to do seven things to modernize the trading system for the 21st century. As a Democrat, I believe that we ought to have more trade. America's got 20 percent of the world's wealth and four percent of the world's population and you do not have to be a mathematical genius to figure out that we have to sell something to the other 96 percent if we want to maintain our standard of living.

But, as a Democrat, I also want our trading relations with other countries to lead to improvements in the conditions of life for ordinary people in those countries, because that's the only way that freedom and free markets will be widely supported and that will sustain themselves throughout the new century.

So I do think we have to find ways to push that. But the answer is not to run away from expanding trade. The answer is to broaden our agenda in aggressive and creative ways that other countries will have an interest in supporting. I think we ought to be out there doing that.

I think we ought to recognize that there are new security threats in the 21st century that include, but are not limited to, biological and chemical weapons, the spread of disease, because people are so much more inter-connected with each other and the sweeping implications of cross-border environmental problems -- the most significant of which is climate change -- we have got to find a way to convince our neighbors around the world that you can grow the economy and improve the environment.

I just came back from Texas, where they are acutely aware of the inter-connection of nations with the environment, because all those wild fires that are raging in Mexico are now coming across the Texas border, with the smoke, undermining the quality of the air. We're working very hard on that. Whether we like it or not, this wild fire problem is not a Mexican problem. We had the same thing this year in South America. We had the same thing several months ago in Southeast Asia. We had two boats shift on the ocean, crash into each other because they were blinded by smoke from wild fires from the Rain Forest in Southeast Asia -- all a function of the changing climate of the world.

These are security issues. We should see them as such, and we should be totally unwilling to say that we all have to go back to the Stone Age economics to preserve the environment when that is clearly not true. But we do have to be aware of it.

Well, there are lots of other things I could say. I would like to say one thing just very briefly, and I don't want to -- the Secretary of State is working on this, as you know, at this moment. But I'd like to say one thing about the problems on the Indian subcontinent because I think they're important for you to think about in a 21st century context.

First of all, they show you that there's still a combustible mix if you have old ethnic, religious, and national tensions combined with access to modern technology. Secondly, it shows you -- and this may be the more important point -- that as much we're trying, there's still a lot of people who believe that being a great nation in the 21st century should be defined by the same terms that defined it in the 20th century.

An enormous part of my time as your President has been spent trying to develop policies and then make arguments to people like the President of Russia and the President of China that the definition of greatness should be different tomorrow than it was yesterday; that we should want to be measured by our ideas and our achievements and our ability to raise our children and our ability to relate to each other, and that national strength and greatness should be measured in different terms.

The present tension between India and Pakistan and the tests are a sober reminder in a larger scale because of the nuclear tests, of the challenges we still face in the Middle East, the challenges we still face in the Balkans, with our unfinished business in Bosnia, in Kosovo, the challenges we still face in Africa, in trying to get over what happened in Rwanda, throughout the world. One of the important things about what you're doing is that other people in other parts of the world are now interested in taking this kind of approach. And they're trying to figure out whether they can find a politics that is both human and sensible that works. And so I would urge

you to devote even more of your thoughts in the months and years ahead in this forum to how we can convince the American people, first of all, that we need to lead the world and we need to invest the money it takes to lead the world -- and we get a lot out of it, not just on trade, but in other areas; and secondly, how we can best make alliances with people in other nations. There must be people who think like you in India and people who think like you in Pakistan, just like there were in the new Labor Party in Great Britain or in the government in the Netherlands or the government in Italy or the government in Brazil. And we need to engage people in trying to define national greatness in a way that is inclusive and constructive, not divisive and destructive. It is very important.

The last point I want to make -- we are celebrating this week -- celebrating is the wrong word -- we are observing this week the 30th anniversary of the death of Robert Kennedy. I remember it like it was yesterday because it happened just a couple of days before I graduated from college. And I remember staying up with one of my roommates who worked in Senator Kennedy's office in Washington to watch the results of the California primary, and I turned the television off five minutes before Robert Kennedy was shot.

In so many ways what he was trying to do then for the Democratic Party and for our country has great parallels to what we have been about in the last few years -- trying to get people to give up the old dogmas, trying to bring people together, trying to go beyond the sort of stale liberal conservative name-calling and figure out a policy that was both humane and effective. A lot of what he said and did pre-figured what we have tried to do in our time.

But in that springtime in 1968, when both Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were killed, and when our country was so profoundly troubled and divided over issues at home and abroad, it was after those events not possible for a very long time to try to put the pieces of an American progressive movement back together because America's mind and heart was too easily divided and distracted and was too uncertain.

And I'd like you to think about it as you read things about Senator Kennedy -- over the next couple of days there will be a lot in the press. He never had a time like this in which to serve. And a lot of what Martin Luther King wanted to do in civil rights was complicated because of all the other problems that came into American society over the Vietnam War, and we became divided in other ways.

This is a time -- I read all those statistics off to you -- 28, 29, 30 years, and you were all clapping. It's really exhilarating, isn't it? But what you have to think about is, this doesn't happen all that often, and we have space now, and confidence, and a sense of possibility. And we cannot squander it.

Robert Kennedy used to quote Tennyson, saying it is not too late to seek a newer world. Well, it isn't too late. But I don't care how good things are -- believe me, I've now lived long enough to see things change -- it's not too late, but we don't have a moment to waste. And we've only just begun.

So I want you to celebrate what you've done. I want to thank you for what you've done, but I want you to think about the next 50 years and realize what a precious gift as citizens we have been given to mobilize together, to think about the large matters of our children and grandchildren's future and to actually to do something about them. And keep in mind with where we are, because we had ideas, and we had action.

Thank you very much and God bless you.

END 2:05 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 28, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Room 450
Old Executive Office Building

10:50 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Not much left for me to say, is there?

Let me say, first of all, how much I appreciate the work that Secretary Shalala and Secretary Herman have done on our quality health care commission. Dr. Benjamin, thank you for your life's work and for your leadership. Mr. Vice President, thank you for everything you've done in the last five and a half years on health care. And thank you, Ricka, for reminding us of what this is really all about.

I have a number of things I would like to say about this that I hope will not be repetitive. But because of the explosion of the nuclear tests this morning by the government of Pakistan, I'd like to make a brief statement about that first, since this is my only opportunity to communicate with the media and the American people on that issue.

First, I deplore the decision. By failing to exercise restraint and responding to the Indian test, Pakistan lost a truly priceless opportunity to strengthen its own security, to improve its political standing in the eyes of the world. And although Pakistan was not the first to test, two wrongs don't make a right. I have made it clear to the leaders of Pakistan that we have no choice but to impose sanctions pursuant to the Glenn Amendment as is required by law. Thank you.

Now I want to say again, it is now more urgent than it was yesterday that both Pakistan and India renounce further tests, sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and take decisive steps to reduce tensions in South Asia and reverse the dangerous arms race.

I cannot believe that we are about to start the 21st century by having the Indian subcontinent repeat the worst mistakes of the 20th century, when we know it is not necessary to peace, to security, to prosperity, to national greatness or personal fulfillment. And I hope that the determined efforts of the United States and our allies will be successful in helping the parties who must themselves decide how to define their future to defuse tensions and avoid further errors.

Now, if I might, I'd like to say just a few words about what we have been talking about here. And we have seen the human face of this issue in Ricka's story and in Dr. Benjamin's testimony. If you just back a step away, if you think about all the exciting things that are happening and how the world is changing, how technology and globalization and scientific advances are changing the way we work and live and relate to each other, it is clear that we are living in a moment of really pivotal change in human society.

At every such moment, the trick is to take advantage of the changes that are positive and not be consumed by their negative aspects. Or, to put it in another way, to meet the challenges of the future without giving up, but instead enhancing the most enduring values of the society. Now, that's what we've been trying to do throughout the last six years on a whole lot of issues. Yes, we balanced the budget, and earlier than anybody thought we could, but we continued to invest in education and health care and the environment and research. Yes, I want to have this surplus, but I don't want to spend a penny of it, even for things that I would like, until I know that we have secured the Social Security system for the 21st century so that when the baby boomers like me retire we don't bankrupt our kids and keep them from raising our grandkids properly. So you don't do the easy thing in the moment. You show a little restraint and think about the long-term interest of the country. You take advantage of the change of a healthier economy and a balanced budget and the surplus, but you don't just do what is right at hand. You think about the long term.

Now, yesterday we celebrated the year anniversary of our Welfare to Work Partnership -- that's all these companies that help us to hire people from welfare. So, yes, we said the welfare system wasn't working and people who are able bodied ought to have to go to work but, by the way, they shouldn't wreck their responsibilities as parents. So they have to have jobs, they have to have child care, they have to have health care, they have to have transportation.

And if you think about this issue in this way, I think it will help us all to think about all the other challenges that we're facing. I mean, we've been very fortunate in America to have had the national wealth and the infrastructure of health care that we've had and the huge number of dedicated people we have here -- physicians and nurses and other health care providers and support personnel. And because of technological and scientific advances and because we're learning how to do more outreach and preventive care, we now have the lowest infant mortality rate and the highest life expectancy in our history.

Because of the Human Genome Project and because of the mapping that it will make it possible to do for young children, we actually have people seriously saying that babies who are born at the tip end of the 20th century may actually live to see the 22nd century, not the 21st century. This is all great if you have access to it.

Now, if you look at what managed care has done -- I mean, first we had a system which was basically pay as you go. When my mother started being a nurse anesthetist, people didn't have money, there was no Medicare, there was no Medicaid. I remember one time a fruit picker bringing her five bushels full of peaches to pay for his wife's surgery. And, you know, I was young, and I thought it was a lot better than money. But it wasn't so good if -- you couldn't pay

your electric bill with peaches, you know.

So then when went into more and more insurance. We had Medicare, we had Medicaid, we had employer assisted insurance. Then we had this huge inflation in medical costs which led to two other trends. One was, unfortunately, fewer employers covering their employees at work. When the Vice President and I took office, about 40 percent of health care dollars were public dollars; now it's up over 45 percent. The other trend that occurred was, in an attempt to preserve the employer private based health insurance plan and not have the whole thing go broke by having inflation go forward at three times the national average, new management systems were put into place.

So I don't think we should overlook the fact that managed care was a part of a response to an unsustainable situation with inflation and health care costs and some good came out of it. But it's like every other change -- if there are no brakes, if there's no value base, then the logic of the change will consume itself. I mean that's basically the story you just heard.

So is managed care, per se, bad? No, who could say it's bad to stop health care costs from going up at three times the rate of inflation. It was unsustainable. Eventually it would have consumed the whole economy. But no change is inherently good without being anchored in basic values. Now that's all this Patients' Bill of Rights is about. It say, okay, go have your managed care, get rid of all the waste, be more efficient, don't let us bankrupt ourselves; but don't ever send me another story like this, I don't want to hear anymore like that. That's what this bill says.

This bill says, you know, how can you let some person with the mentality of an accountant who will only see the number of what it costs to have somebody do her surgery, who will only see the number at the bottom line of what the chemotherapy costs, make a decision. We're not that kind of people; we're not that kind of society. And if we have to endure a smidgeon more inflation, bring it on. That's all this is about.

Now, let me also say one other thing. This is urgent. You know, there have been a lot of other things going on during this session of Congress and let them go on, but there ought to be some time taken to do the business of the American people. This is urgent.

How many more stories do we have to hear like Ricka's before we actually act? Believe me, there's another one -- there's one right now, just while we're sitting here, that somebody else just like her somewhere in America going through something like she went through. And it will be somebody else tomorrow and somebody else the next day and somebody else the next day. This is not rocket science. This is a simple decision by a society to say, okay, we want all the benefits we can possibly get from better and more efficient management and cost controls, but we don't intend to chuck out the values that make this a decent place to live and give up all the benefits we've gotten out of medical research and advances in the last 30 years by just throwing it away on this kind of stranglehold technique. We're not going to tolerate it anymore.

Now, I think -- what I hope will happen, because all of you have come together here

today, is that we will have, first of all, a general feeling in the country that we have to do more on this to get this done in this session right now; secondly, that the people who are part of all your organizations or affiliates around the country will become more active; and thirdly -- and Secretary Shalala and Dr. Benjamin in different ways alluded to this -- that we will have a special increase in intensity among women in America about this.

We have a report which was handed to me -- you probably saw them hand it to me, because they forgot on a state-by-state analysis of what this bill would mean to women. Now, in addition to the points that were made by previous speakers about this, I think it's important to note that according to all the research that we have, three-quarters of all the health care decisions in this country are made by women. In many households women are taking care of sick children, taking them to the doctor, caring for elderly parents, paying the medical bills. Women also, unfortunately, more frequently suffer from chronic illnesses that require constant and specialized medical attention. So there are special stakes here for the women of America.

There's another point I want to make that was mentioned by the Vice President, but I want to hammer this home. This really is a problem that must have a national solution. People say to me all the time, well, you know, you used to be a governor, let the states do this or state legislation passing all the time. Well, first let me say I'm grateful for that state legislation and I thank governors of both parties who have supported it. Forty-four states have passed some kind of legislation.

But some of the states have only passed one of the provisions of the many provisions in the Patients' Bill of Rights, first of all. Secondly, there are 122 million Americans, out of a population of 260 million -- 122 million of us are enrolled in plans not fully governed by state law. For example, just take California, our most populous state. If California passed the bill now pending in Congress, which is quite comprehensive, there would still be 13 million of the 30 million Californians who'd be totally unaffected by it, as Secretary Herman said, because of the way ERISA works. So there has to be a national solution.

Now, all of you know that there are some pretty powerful special interests who are up here working against this bill. My answer is the previous speaker. So I think if you go back home and you think about this and you try to mobilize your friends and the people that are affiliated with it, first of all, think about how this is a specific example of the kind of challenges we face at this moment in our history -- all this technology, all these changes, everything going on. And it is fundamentally the test of a decent society and certainly a great democracy like ours that we embrace all the changes that are going on, but we do it in a way consistent with the basic values that got us where we are over the last 220 years.

Secondly, remember to put a human face on it. And remember every day that goes by that this bill does not pass -- every single day somewhere in America there's another story like Ricka's. There ought not to ever be another one and with your help we can stop it. Thank you and God bless you.

END

11:05 A.M. EDT

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
SPEECH TO THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, DC
March 9, 1998**

Acknowledgments: Dr. Percy Wootton (Woo-ton); Dr. Nancy Dickey; Dr. Tom Reardon; Dr. Randy Smoak (Smoke); and Dr. Lynn Jensen of the AMA.

It is an honor to be here with you today, and to be working with the AMA on so many important fronts. We've had our honest differences on policy. We haven't been on the same side of every health care fight. But one thing we've always agreed on is our profound obligation to the health of American families. When we walk together step-by-step, we make great strides in health care reform. We're expanding the promise of new medical technology and extending health care opportunities to the most vulnerable Americans. We've helped Americans keep health care coverage when they change their jobs. And last year, we helped make sure that millions of uninsured children get the medical coverage they deserve and the help they need.

And we've found the right family doctor for America--Dr. David Satcher, our country's new Surgeon General. We went too long without one. Just last month, your voices were strong and united in support of his nomination. I thank you, and America's families thank you.

This is a great and glorious moment for America. Our economy is the strongest in a generation. Social problems are on the mend. Our leadership is unrivaled around the world. Still, as I said in my State of the Union Address, this is not a time for America to rest. It is a time for us to build--to expand our prosperity, to strengthen our values, and to widen the circle of opportunity.

I am here to talk to you about some of the next, important steps we must take as a nation as we move forward into the 21st century. This is a moment of great potential, and we must seize it. Although we have not yet reached the first day of Spring, there are only about 70 working days remaining in the 105th Congress. In those 70 days Congress will write laws--and write history. I want the 105th Congress to go down in history as the Congress that saved lives: by passing a Patient's Bill of Rights that protects patients and respects doctors; by allowing Americans between the ages of 55 and 65 to buy their way into the Medicare program without putting any strain on the Medicare Trust Fund; and by passing tough and sweeping tobacco legislation to cut down on teen smoking and crack down on outrageous tobacco company marketing techniques.

But the choice is up to Congress: the next 70 working days will determine whether the 105th Congress goes down in history as one that saved lives with landmark health care laws, or

one that wasted time in petty, partisan pursuits. I hope you'll help me send a message to Congress: I know the calendar tells us this is an election year. But the American people also tell us it should be a legislating year. The clock is ticking. Time is wasting. Let's get to work.

This is a time of great change in American medicine. My mother, as some of you may know, was a nurse. She was a nurse anesthetist at St. Joseph's Hospital--a blond-brick building just off Central Avenue in Hot Springs. So I grew up around doctors. Walking through the wards with my mother, I saw some of the miracles doctors perform every day. And I remember what the profession used to look like--very different than today, I'm sure you'll agree.

More than 160 million Americans are now in managed care plans, with profound implications for health services of every kind. Much good has come of these changes. Good plans are promoting preventative medicine. And all of us appreciate it when health care costs aren't rising at four or five times the rate of inflation, as they were six years ago. That means affordable health care for families who need it. And that's most families.

But the new system can make it harder for doctors simply to be doctors. When a doctor spends almost as much time with a bookkeeper as with a patient, something is wrong. When a doctor spends almost as much time filling out authorization forms as making rounds, then something is wrong. Insurance company accountants aren't trained to do your job--and you shouldn't have to do theirs.

Traditional care or managed care, every American deserves quality care. And every American deserves medical decisions made by medical doctors, not insurance company accountants. When a patient comes to your office or emergency room, your first question should be: "Where does it hurt?" Not "How will you pay?"

Patients deserve better from their health plans. I was really moved to hear recently about a woman who works in an oncologist's office. Her job is to verify insurance coverage and get authorizations for medical procedures, and she told the story of a 12-year old boy with a cancerous tumor in his leg. The doctor wanted to perform a procedure to save the boy's leg. But the health plan said no--and refused to cover it. For that condition, the approved procedure was amputation. Period. That was the only procedure the plan would pay for.

The boy's parents appealed that decision and were turned down. They appealed again and were turned down again. Only when the father's employer weighed in did the health plan change its mind--but it was too late. After four months of this terrible tug-of-war between patient and plan, the boy's cancer had spread. By now, amputation really was his only choice. A life-or-death choice. One his family shouldn't have had to make.

You are the best trained, best skilled doctors in the world. You've had the best medical educations, and have the best medical technology. We've got to let you do the job that only you can do--to heal.

That's why I have urged Congress to pass a Patient's Bill of Rights--and put medical decisions back in the hands of patients and the best medical doctors in the world.

The Patient's Bill of Rights keeps the covenant of care with our parents, our children, and the neediest and most vulnerable Americans. The Hippocratic Oath binds doctors to "follow that method of treatment which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients." That's your responsibility and your patients' right--to know all their medical options, not just the cheapest. Primary care when possible. Specialists when necessary. That's why the Patient's Bill of Rights lifts the gag order on our nation's doctors, and allows patients to follow your best recommendations by appealing any unfair decisions by managed care accountants.

Patients have a right to keep their medical records confidential. And doctors must feel free to write down the whole truth--without it ending up on the Internet, or in the hands of employers and marketing firms, or increasing a patient's insurance rates. Again, we recall the Hippocratic Oath, which says that "all such shall be kept secret." That's why the Patient's Bill of Rights safeguards the sanctity of the patient-doctor relationship.

Patients have a right to emergency services wherever and whenever they need it. And when the EMTs are wheeling a new arrival into your ER, the last thing you--or your patient--should have to worry about is the fine print on a health plan.

I have already acted to ensure that our federal employees and their families, our military personnel, our veterans and their families, and every person on Medicare or Medicaid--altogether, one third of Americans--are protected by the Patient's Bill of Rights recommended by my Quality Commission. And across the nation, state legislatures--Republican and Democratic--are doing what they can. Today I am releasing a report that shows 44 states have enacted into law one or more of the basic provisions of the Patient's Bill of Rights. But the reality is that state law, and this patchwork of reforms, can't protect most Americans--more than 100 million Americans. That's why Congress must pass a Patient's Bill of Rights with the full force of federal law. If Congress doesn't pass these reforms, it will be just about the only legislature that hasn't.

With less than 70 days remaining in this legislative session, it is time to guarantee that the best practices of traditional medicine survive in the age of managed care. This administration has acted. The states have acted. The AMA has acted. I ask you to urge Congress to take the next, important step--and take it today.

The other great health issue before this Congress is tobacco. Today--and every day--3,000 children light their first cigarette. 1,000 of them will die prematurely because of it. This is a national epidemic, and a national tragedy. As physicians, you know the importance of preventative care. Often, it is easier to stop a disease before it starts. And that is why, for more than five years, our administration has worked to stop our children from smoking before they

start. We launched a nationwide campaign with the FDA to educate children about the dangers of smoking, to reduce their access to tobacco products, and to put a stop to tobacco companies that spend millions on mass marketing to young people.

Last fall, I called on Congress to pass comprehensive bipartisan legislation to reduce teen smoking by raising the price of cigarettes by up to \$1.50 a pack over the next decade; imposing strong penalties on tobacco companies that keep advertising to children; and giving the FDA full authority to reduce our children's access to tobacco products. If Congress acts, we can cut teen smoking by almost half over the next five years. We can stop almost three million children from taking that first puff. We can prevent almost one million premature deaths.

This weekend, a judge in Minnesota ordered the tobacco industry to release 39,000 documents that may contain still further evidence that the industry marketed to children. Every time documents like these come out, they confirm what we already know: that we urgently need to pass comprehensive tobacco legislation that gets the tobacco industry out of the business of marketing cigarettes to our children.

But again, the clock is ticking. It is time for leaders of both parties to put politics aside, protect our children from the deadly threat of tobacco, and protect every patient's right to quality care. It is time for Congress to match the commitment this administration has made, and the AMA has made, to the health of American families as we approach the 21st century.

There is another step we must take, and on this one you and I may disagree. I have made a targeted proposal that gives a vulnerable group of Americans new options for health care coverage. By enabling Americans aged 62 to 65 to buy into Medicare, and giving displaced workers 55 and over a similar buy-in option, my proposal protects them--without burdening the Medicare Trust Fund or busting our balanced budget. The CBO just reported that this policy will cost even less and help even more people. It will provide access to health care for hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable Americans, and it is clearly the right thing to do. We should not wait to take this next, important step toward quality care in the next century. I challenge you to join me.

This is a time of remarkable promise for American medicine. We have the potential to make it the most powerful force for human health in history. We are finding cures for seemingly incurable conditions. New gene therapies. New, more precise, surgical lasers. The choice we face today is whether to fulfill this promise tomorrow--and carry the best aspects of traditional care forward into the future. I think we will make the right choice as a country. And even though medical technology is ever-changing, the values of the medical profession--the Hippocratic Oath--are everlasting. If we preserve the values you were taught and continue to uphold, then we will truly have a healthier America, and a stronger America, in the 21st century.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 20, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROTECTIONS

Holiday Senior Park Center
Wheaton, Maryland

11:00 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. I want to thank all of you for being here today and particularly those of you who have been active in health care. I thank Secretary Shalala and Deputy Secretary Higgins and Secretary Herman, who has worked very hard on this; and Hershel Gober, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Janice Lachance and Nancy Ann Min DeParle, all the people who are here from the administration. General Hill, thank you for being here.

I'd like to thank County Council President Leggett and all the local officials who are here. A special word of thanks to Chris Jennings in the White House. You know, the staff people who work on these things never get enough credit. This is great -- the Vice President and I get up here and we give these speeches, and you think how wise we are. And the truth is -- there is always somebody making us look smarter than we are. And I'm very grateful to all the people who worked on this, who passionately care about you and people like you all over this country who never get the acknowledgements they deserve.

I thank Beth Layton and all the people here at Holiday Park for the work you're doing. I've been feeling very sentimental here. Twenty-one years ago, I'm almost sure it was 21 years ago this month, when I was a very young public official in my very first office of service, I had the state's first conference on senior citizens affairs. I never will forget it. I had it in the same place where I had my high school prom. And now I have my AARP card. I'm amazed at how far-sighted I was back then to be concerned about this.

I thank Marty Wish for his remarkable statement, and for reminding us why we're working so hard. The first person I heard tell that story about As Good As It Gets was the Vice President. And every time anybody sees that movie they always cheer. I understand it's going to be disqualified for an Academy Award because it's too close to real life.

I want to thank Representative Morella and Representative Stark for being here, and for their efforts to make health care quality a bipartisan American issue, not a partisan political issue.

And I thank you both for being here. Thank you very much.

We were going to have one other person here today, a woman named Dian Bower from California, whose son has a very serious illness that's being treated in a veterans military -- excuse me, a military managed care program. And she's very well satisfied with it, but passionately committed to the concept of a Patient's Bill of Rights. But because of the very difficult weather our fellow Americans in California have been experiencing -- I'm sure you've been keeping up with it -- she was unable to come. But I would like to thank her for efforts to be here.

I'm pleased to accept this report from the Vice President. I just have to say one word about him. I asked the Vice President to undertake a very -- what appeared to be a completely thankless job. When we took office, we had a deficit of \$290 billion, and I said, look, we have to find a way to reduce the federal payroll by a minimum of \$100,000, and we have to do it without throwing anybody in the streets, and we have to do it without losing the confidence of federal employees or breaking their morale, they have to feel good about this. In other words, I was asking him to take two and two and make three or five or something other than four.

And he worked with the federal employees groups. Five years later, with the strong support and work and partnership of the Fellow Employees Organization, the federal payroll is \$300,000 smaller than it was the day I took office. And -- and -- we have had good early retirement programs for the federal employee, we have worked with them in a constructive way. the government is working better, and it has freed up money to invest in putting another 100,000 police on the street, in improving education and advancing the environment and doing all these things.

But as part of our philosophy of government, we want a government that is both smaller and more active, that gives people the tools to make the most of their own lives and acts as a catalyst for new ideas. And that's what we're doing here today . And this is perhaps the best example of all the wonderful work the Vice President has done in five years of reinventing government, of how you can have a government that's smaller and still does more to meet the real needs of the American people. So I want to thank him for that.

What this report does is point out that we are quite close to making sure that our federal health plans actually comply with the Patient's Bill of Rights that I have proposed. And today after I speak I am going to sign a directive over here on this desk which directs all our federal agencies to finish the job by taking the necessary steps outlined in the Vice President's report to me.

Now, I want you to understand clearly what this will mean -- just this action will mean to the lives of the American people. With the authority of the federal government we will ensure that a third of all Americans -- a third of all Americans -- are protected by a Patient's Bill of Rights. Now, that's every person on Medicare, every person on Medicaid, including children and people with disabilities, all of our federal employees and their families that are covered, all of our military personnel, and members of the biggest health care system in America -- all of our

veterans and all their families.

A third of the American people will have now a Patient's Bill of Rights that says this:

- You have the right to know all your medical options, not just the cheapest. • You have a right to choose a specialist for the care you need. • You have the right to emergency room care wherever and whenever you need it. • You have the right to keep your medical records confidential -- very important. • You have the right to bring a formal grievance or appeal of a health care decision with which you disagree.

And we are proving we can make these rights real now for nearly 90 million Americans. That's how many people we're talking about. And we can do this without increasing the deficit, without burdening the system or consumers. With this step we are setting a standard for the nation.

But we must not stop here. And that's why I am so glad to see Congresswoman Morella and Congressman Stark here, because now the Congress must pass national legislation to protect all Americans with a Patient's Bill of Rights. We are doing all we can do here with the stroke of the President's pen, but it should be an example that the rest of America should follow.

I know there will be voices of opposition in the Congress and in the health care industry. But every American deserves the protection of a Patient's Bill of Rights. Those of you who are retired fellow employees who are still under a plan, you will be covered today. I bet you feel just as strongly as you did before I came here to sign this that everybody whose not in a plan you're in deserves the same protection. And we need to be clear and unambiguous about that.

I look forward to working together with members of Congress in both parties who have shown the determination to do something about this. This Patient's Bill of Right is in keeping with our profoundest obligations to our parents, to our children, to the neediest, to the most vulnerable among us -- in keeping with our oldest ideals enshrined in the Bill of Rights, and it is an essential part of our effort and our obligation to strengthen our nation for the 21st century.

We want the benefits of managed care. We all like it when health care inflation is not going up at three and four and five times the rate of inflation. It gives all of you who are on fixed incomes more disposable income for other things that are terribly important to you. But we must never, ever, ever sacrifice the fundamental quality of care and the security that gives people, knowing that they live in a country that not only has the best health care system in the world in theory, it's the best in the world, in fact, in their lives.

Now, Vice President talks about some of the things we have been doing in the last several years. A couple of years ago, Congress passed a law I strongly supported that says you can't lose your health insurance if you change jobs because someone in your family has been sick. The balanced budget amendment that I signed into law last year extends the Medicare trust fund until 2010. And we now have a Medicare Commission meeting and working on how to preserve and protect Medicare well into the 21st century.

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The balanced budget law also contains an unprecedented \$24 billion over the next five years to add up to 5 million more children to the ranks of the insured. And we're working with the states to do that. And Secretary Shalala is doing a great job in working with the states to make sure that we pick up more of these kids that don't have any health insurance. And just last week I directed federal agencies with programs with children to do more to enroll children as quickly as possible.

This Patient's Bill of Rights is the next important step, to make sure every American family has the quality health care all families need to thrive. It's especially important as our health care system continues to change.

Now, 35 years ago, President Kennedy proposed a Consumer Bill of Rights to protect Americans from unsafe products. He said, we share an obligation to protect the common interests in every decision we make. Those rights are still protecting us today, those consumer rights. Every time we rent a car or use a credit card or buy a toy for a child, the rights we are helping here to establish with the Patient's Bill of Rights will protect our children and our grandchildren 35 years from now and beyond.

This is a good day for America, and I am proud to sign the executive memorandum to ensure the Patient's Bill of Rights to nearly 90 million of our fellow citizens.

Thank you very much.

END

11:12 A.M. EST

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2/19/98 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 2/19/98SUBJECT: DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON HEALTH CARE FOR 2/20 EVENT

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	☒	☐	McCURRY	☐	☒
BOWLES	☒	☐	McGINTY	☐	☐
McLARTY	☐	☐	NASH	☐	☐
PODESTA	☒	☐	RADD	☐	☐
MATHEWS	☒	☐	REED	☒	☐
RAINES	☐	☐	RUFF	☐	☐
BLUMENTHAL	☒	☐	SMITH	☐	☐
BERGER	☐	☐	SOSNIK	☒	☐
ECHAVESTE	☐	☐	SPERLING	☒	☐
EMANUEL	☒	☐	STREETT	☐	☐
GIBBONS	☐	☐	TARULLO	☐	☐
STEIN	☐	☐	VERVEER	☐	☐
IBARRA	☐	☐	WALDMAN	☒	☐
KLAIN	☐	☐	YELLEN	☐	☐
LEWIS	☒	☐	BEGALA	☒	☐
LINDSEY	☐	☐	<u>CLERKS</u>	☐	☒
MARSHALL	☒	☐		☐	☐
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REMARKS:

COMMENTS TO STAFF SECRETARY

RESPONSE:

FEBRUARY 20, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT
THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE SECRETARY OF LABOR

Last November, I directed you to review the health care programs you currently administer and/or oversee and report on the level and adequacy of consumer protections they provide. Specifically, I asked you to advise me on the extent to which they are in compliance with the "Consumer Bill of Rights" recommended by the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry.

Yesterday, you formally conveyed your report to me through the Vice President. Vice President Gore advises me that your agencies are well on their way to coming into full compliance with the consumer protections recommended by the Quality Commission. In fact, he informs me that your agencies have every potential to serve as strong models for health plans in the private sector.

Under your leadership, we are showing that it is possible and desirable to ensure that patients have the tools they need to navigate through an increasingly complex health care delivery system. We are showing that common sense solutions for all too common problems in our health systems are the right prescription for not only beneficiaries of Federally-administered programs, but for our private sector colleagues as well. At least as important is that the Federal experience illustrates that the provision of consumer protections can be done without excessive costs or regulations.

While the news is encouraging, your reports also indicate that we have not completed the job. Although Federal health programs are taking a leading role in providing protections to consumers, your report indicates we have the regulatory and administrative authority to come into virtual compliance with the "Consumer Bill of Rights," and I believe that this should be one of the Administration's highest priorities.

Therefore, I hereby direct you to take the following actions consistent with the mission of your agency to come into compliance with the "Consumer Bill of Rights".

For the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services,

First, I direct you to take all appropriate administrative actions to ensure that the Medicare program comes into substantial compliance with all of the major elements of the "Consumer Bill of Rights," including access to specialists and the availability of culturally competent treatment information, by no later than next year.

Second, I direct you to take all appropriate administrative actions to ensure that the Medicaid program comes into substantial compliance with all of the major elements of the "Consumer Bill of Rights," including access to specialists and the availability of culturally competent treatment information, by no later than next year.

Third, I direct you to issue a letter to all state Medicaid directors to clarify immediately that states are required to assure emergency room care protections are consistent with the "Consumer Bill of Rights".

For the Director of the Office of Personnel Management,

First, I direct you to notify all 350 participating carriers that they must come into compliance with the "Consumer Bill of Rights," particularly with regard to access to specialists, continuity of care, access to emergency room services.

Second, I direct you to work with each participating carrier to ensure they come into full compliance with the "Consumer Bill of Rights" by the end of next year.

Third, I direct you to propose regulations to prohibit practices which restrict physician-patient communications about medically necessary treatment options within the next three months.

Fourth, I direct you to adopt, by this fall, the consumer satisfaction (Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey) to help FEHBP enrollees make informed choices about their plans.

For the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs,

First, I direct you to take the necessary administrative action to ensure that a sufficient appeals process is in place throughout the Veteran's Health System by September 30, 1998.

Second, I direct you to issue a policy directive to ensure that beneficiaries in the Veteran's Health System are provided information consistent with the "Consumer Bill of

Rights" by September 30, 1998.

For the Secretary of the Department of Defense,

First, I direct you to establish strong grievance and appeals rights consistent with the "Consumer Bill of Rights" throughout the military health system by September 30, 1998.

Second, I direct you to issue a directive to promote greater use of providers who have specialized training in women's health issues to serve as primary care managers for female beneficiaries and to assure access to specialists for beneficiaries with chronic medical conditions by September 30, 1998.

Third, I direct you to issue a policy directive to ensure that all patients in the military health system can fully discuss all treatments options. This includes requiring disclosure of financial incentives to physicians and prohibiting "gag clauses" by September 30, 1998.

For the Secretary of Department of Labor,

First, I direct you to propose regulations to strengthen the internal appeals process for all ERISA plans to ensure that decisions regarding urgent care are resolved within not more than 72 hours and generally resolved within 15 days for non-urgent care.

Second, I direct you to draft and release, no later than this spring, proposed regulations that require health plans to ensure the information they provide to plan participants is consistent with the "Consumer Bill of Rights."

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 20, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT CONSUMER BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES CEREMONY

The Old Executive Office Building

12:11 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, first of all, Peter, for your outstanding remarks and the power of your example. And I accept your offer to play golf.

I thank all the commission members and the members of the staff for a truly remarkable piece of work. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Secretary Shalala and Secretary Herman, who cochaired the commission and who, I believe, did a remarkable job and I thank you very much.

I thank the Vice President for his work in overseeing this effort and for his concern.

This whole health care issue is very personal to me and to our family, to the First Lady. When I was running for President I met person after person after person who had a cost, a quality or an accessibility issue with the health care system. But long before that, as a governor in what my opponents used to call a small southern state, I had the great gift that representing a small population gives you, of knowing a high percentage of the people who hired me -- from all walks of life and all social strata, from all different circumstances.

And I just kept -- I had such ambivalent feelings. I could see in my own state that we had the finest health care system in the world. I saw miracle after miracle after miracle; I saw person after person given a chance to reconstitute his or her life -- and then all these terrible problems arising from the cost or the quality or the accessibility issues.

So we've worked very hard on them. The Vice President mentioned the quality issues. I would also like to say, this has been a very good year across the board for American health care. In the balanced budget bill we have \$24 billion to provide health insurance to another 5 million children, about half of those who don't have health insurance -- something that has become very important because the number of uninsured Americans has continued to rise since 1993. Ironically, even as the percentage of people in the work force eligible to purchase health insurance with the involvement of their employers has gone up because of prices, the coverage has gone down.

We had a significant step in reforming the Medicare program to add many years of life to the trust fund and provide more choices, including preventive care to Medicare recipients and earlier tests for mammographies for younger Medicare-eligible women. We had what the American Diabetes Association called the most significant advance in the care of diabetes since the discovery of insulin 70 years ago in this bill. We will -- in a day or so, I'm going to sign the bill reforming the Food and Drug Administration and its procedures. The FDA, I might point out, has already won an award for its groundbreaking work in accelerating the approval of drugs while continuing to meet safety standards to try to increase the availability of possibly life-saving medication more quickly.

So a lot of good things happen. Yesterday, I signed an adoption bill which was the product of an overwhelming bipartisan consensus in Congress which will revolutionize adoptions, including adoptions of children with special needs, which also will have a terrific health impact on some of the most vulnerable children in this country. So I want you to see this commission's work against that backdrop. There is an emerging consensus in America that while people may not have wanted to bite the whole apple at once in 1994, almost the whole populace wants to keep nibbling away at the apple until we actually have solved the problems of cost, accessibility and quality for all responsible American citizens.

What this commission has done today with their Health Care Consumer Bill of Rights is a truly extraordinary thing -- all the more extraordinary because the commission actually represents all walks of life and all the different financial equities in the health care debate in America. And again, let me say, I thank you very much. We will be much closer to making these rights reality for every American because of the courage of the commission and because of the composition and the broad experience of the different commission members.

Throughout our whole history, our strength has come from our families, from our individual citizens, from our continuing commitment to redefine and expand the parameters of opportunity and freedom, and at the same time, to do it in a way that brought us closer together as a society instead of dividing us further. Those values were in America's Bill of Rights, and they are certainly in this Health Care Consumer Bill of Rights.

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Today, our families face so much change and, of course, the changes in the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other and the rest of the world are quite profound. I think, in a major way the mission of our administration here must be to try to help America prepare for these changes so that we can expand the opportunities they present and adequately meet the challenges they present, and so that we can go forward together.

Health care is changing dramatically, as we all know. The Vice President detailed some of those things. And we have worked hard to help people deal with these changes. Now, there are still particular problems that plainly require specific solutions. Millions of Americans have seen their health plans convert to HMOs and new kinds of health insurance. In many cases, managed care does bring lower costs and improved preventive care, and the health care industry, I believe, as a whole truly shares our goals of improving quality. And I have never been one who believed that improving efficiency involved the sacrifice of quality and, often, not

even a sacrifice of quantity.

Our administration has reduced the size of the federal government by 300,000, eliminated a few hundred programs and several thousand pieces of legislation, and I have yet to have a single American citizen come up to me and say, why did you get rid of this or that. So we believe that you can have efficiency and improve quality and often improve the sheer volume of service, as well. That's one of the things that technology makes it possible for us to do.

Still, I think it's fair to say that almost every family feels some insecurity at the scope and pace of change in the world, including the scope and pace of change in the health care industry. And very often people feel actually lost because they have come up against this change in a way that is, to be charitable, not positive.

There are so many people in this country that because of these changes feel like they're always going to be on the losing end of cost-cutting and quality issues in every sector of life, maybe even where they work, and they certainly are most frightened of it when it comes to health care -- even more frightened than when it comes to their own job, I think, because with the unemployment rate being low and real flexibility in American labor markets, Americans have proved that they are incredibly resilient at getting new jobs, and increasingly, those new jobs are as good or better than the ones they lost -- something that was not true just a few years ago. But when it comes to health care, you can't be sure of that kind of recovery, and no matter how much confidence you have in your own resilience, somebody else has got to help you.

So even if we are trying to give Americans more job security in a changing environment by keeping unemployment low and intensifying our efforts to help people if they do lose their jobs to get better skills and find a job that is as good or better, we have got to recognize that the elemental insecurity that a loss of confidence in the quality, the accessibility or the affordability of health care can breed in our society is staggering.

The flip side of that is that if we can address those concerns, the increased confidence people have in the stability of the society as it affects their family and their lives will make them immeasurably more able to deal with the challenges of technology and globalization and change that no one can repeal.

So I don't think it is possible to minimize the peripheral impacts, positive impacts of having the right kind of consumer bill of rights in health care -- and how much it will do to the sense of stability people feel on the job; how much it will do to increase employee productivity when they're not worried about their husband or their wife who got cancer three years ago, or if they're not worried about what's going to happen if their kid is in a car accident, like Peter was. If they know that at least they're going to have the best chance they can get it will have a terrific impact to stabilize and sort of harmonize our society in ways that I think will be immensely positive for the economy. And, obviously, the business leaders on this commission agree.

Now, consider the consumer protection issue in the larger context. Today, Americans receive consumer protection when they purchase cars, use credit cards, buy toys for their children. All this commission is recommending is that we extend that kind of protection when a person visits a doctor, checks into a hospital or buys into a health plan. Whether it's traditional health care or managed care, we have to make sure it's not inferior care. There are basic standards that I believe every American should be able to count on wherever they live, whatever their needs. Those standards ought to be the right of every citizen.

Here is what the Health Care Consumer Bill of Rights says: You have the right to be informed about your health plan in plain English. You have the right to choose the right doctor for the right type of care; the right to medical services in an emergency wherever and whenever the emergency arises; the right to know all your medical options, no matter how much they cost; the right to respectful care and equal treatment at every health care facility by every health care provider; the right to know your medical records are confidential and only used for legitimate purposes; the right to express your concerns about the quality of care you receive and to take action when that care is inadequate.

This Consumer Bill of Rights, as has already been said, is the product of a broad consensus from a broad group of business leaders and health insurers, working people and health advocates, doctors and nurses. There are still those who oppose it and that is their right. But this is a case where the national interest must prevail over the narrow interest, where the family's interest must prevail over the fear of change.

I ask those who are afraid, on the other side, to balance in their equation the fear that has been in the hearts of all the Americans who have confronted the health care system without this Consumer Bill of Rights. We all have to bear our fair share of the uncertainty of change if we are all going to feel secure in the face of the future. And that seems to me to be the best argument that we can take to those who do not yet agree that this is the right thing to do.

These protections, in fact, are long overdue, and now we have to act to make them real for all Americans. Some will require federal standards to be implemented. Where they do, I challenge Congress to make them the law of the land. There will be no more important tests in the coming months of our commitment to strengthen our families. And I look forward to working with Congress.

You heard the Vice President say there's broad bipartisan support for moving forward here. But we shouldn't wait for Congress to act, especially when it's not necessary. So today I am acting within my power as President to implement the rights to the extent that I legally can. I'm directing every federal agency that administers or manages health plans to adopt the protections of the Consumer Bill of Rights, and to report back to the Vice President about where they need legislation to do so. With this step we can ensure better quality health care for tens of millions of Americans, including all Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and all federal employees. And I challenge all private health plans to adopt the Consumer Bill of Rights voluntarily, to give their members greater confidence and security.

In that connection, I want to thank GTE and one of our commission members, an officer of GTE, Randy McDonald. They are the first large company to guarantee the Consumer Bill of Rights to all the 400,000 people on their health plan, employees and their family members. It's an extraordinary step. And if they can do it, others can follow. I don't know if Randy is here today, but if he is, will you stand up? Thank you very much. God bless you.

Finally, it would be wrong of us to end this without acknowledging that there can be no rights without responsibilities; that our community can only go forward when there is a corresponding responsibility for every opportunity and every right.

The new world of health care offers greater choice and more fundamental opportunities for health than ever before. And today, we outlined the rights that every American should have in dealing with that health care system. But every American also has an enhanced obligation to take an active role in his or her own health care and to take responsibility for his or her own health. We spend a lot of money in this country every year that we wouldn't spend if we'd just go through the day in a sensible way every day. And we have to acknowledge that, and we cannot blame the health insurance industry or the health care providers or anybody else in the wide world for the burdens we impose on ourselves for the extra cost, the lower income, the reduced productivity that are the direct result of daily choices made by individual citizens that they do not have to make in the way they live their lives, and we ought to be honest about that.

And we should never point the finger at other people when we have problems until we have first examined ourselves and what we have to do. And I know a lot of companies are looking at ways to reward responsible behavior and ask that some payment be made for that behavior that imposes costs on society as a whole. That's a large part of what we're attempting to do in settling this issue of the marketing and selling of tobacco to young people in America in ways that violate our laws. So I think that has to be a part of this; we can never lose sight of it.

When President Kennedy proposed a Consumer Bill of Rights over 30 years ago, he said, "Under our economic as well as our political form of democracy, we share an obligation to protect the common interest in every decision we make." I am convinced, as I have said repeatedly, that the coming years will be a time of remarkable breakthroughs in science and medicine, remarkable breakthroughs in the space and in the ocean, remarkable breakthroughs in the structure of human genes. There will also be a time of remarkable opportunity to relate to other people around the world, economically and culturally. They can be, this next 50 years, the best half-century human society has ever known. But we have to look after the common interest. No matter how individualized our computers, our telephones, our fax machines, our self-employment -- no matter what happens, we will still have to protect the common interest if we want to have safe streets, good education, good health care, a clean environment and a healthy economy.

Today, by standing up for individual rights, this commission has advanced the common interest, and America will be much better for it.

Thank you very much.

END

12:29 P.M. EST

TODAY - WE
SEND A
SIGNAL TO EVERY

UNACCEPTABLE
OUTRAGEOUS PRACTICE
HEALTH

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

1) ENROLLMENT KK
2) MEDICARE

For Immediate Release

August 21, 1996

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE SIGNING OF THE
HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The South Lawn

2:50 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you so much. Thank you very much for that wonderful introduction, Merit, and thank you for the courage of your example.

I want to begin by recognizing the members of Congress who are here who worked on this so hard. In addition to Senators Kassebaum and Kennedy, we have Senator John Breaux, Senator Bill Cohen, Senator Byron Dorgan, Senator Carl Levin, Congressman Mike Bilirakis, Congressman John Conyers, Congressman Harris Fawell and Congressman Dennis Hastert, Congressman David Hobson and Congressman Bill Thomas. I thank all of them for their work on this. (Applause.)

I thank Secretary Shalala for her hard work; the SBA Administrator, Phil Lader, who is here. I'd also like to recognize a gentleman in the audience who did a lot of work with the First Lady on this and who is, I'm sure, happy to be here today, our former Surgeon General, Dr. Everett Koop. Thank you, sir, for being here. (Applause.) And Dr. Henry Foster, it's nice to see you; thank you for being here, sir. (Applause.)

There are so many others I'd like to thank. I want to thank all those -- the consumer groups, the business groups, the labor groups, the grass-roots people, the people who were personally affected by health care problems and problems in our system, who are here. All of you worked so hard to make this day a reality. I want to thank all the people who worked on the staff at the White House, people especially who worked with the First Lady from 1993 on. All of you should take some great satisfaction in seeing this day come to pass, and I want you to know that I will never forget the work that all of you have done and the service you have rendered to the American people and we thank you. (Applause.)

But a lot of people who worked on health reform were just folks, people that Hillary met

traveling around the country, or people that I had the good fortune to run into who told me their stories and who helped to work to make this day a reality. People like Dan Lumley, who is here with us today, a man we met on our bus tour, from Portland, Oregon. And there have been many others who have helped, like Kristin Hopper and Tensia Alvarez, who are here with their families today. We thank you for coming here with your families. And let me again especially thank Merit Kimball and her wonderful parents, Jack and Rosemary, who have come here today. They have had the courage to tell their story and to fight for their cause and on behalf of tens of millions of other Americans. They have given us the hope that together we can make things better for more Americans.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act shows what happens, as Senator Kassebaum said and Senator Kennedy said, when we work together, when we cross party lines and put the interests of the American people first. This bill is a clear boost to our values as Americans. It offers opportunity by allowing people to take their health insurance from job to job. It rewards responsibility by helping people to work who desperately want to work. It brings us together in a common community to do what's right by all of our people, saying that we ought to make it possible for more and more people to succeed at work without losing the security of knowing that when they need health care it'll be there.

Health care reform is measured by how many lives it improves. With this bill we take a long step toward the kind of health care reform our nation needs. It seals the cracks that swallow as many as 25 million Americans who can't get insurance or who fear they'll lose it. Now they're going to be protected.

Never has such a measure been more needed for our people. Our new economy presents Americans with opportunities like never before to work their way into better paying jobs. And yet our health care system has worked to paralyze many workers who fear losing their health care coverage if they take those better jobs and change their employers. At the same time, millions of Americans find themselves labeled as people with pre-existing conditions, from cancer to AIDS, which disqualifies them and their families for coverage -- including the husband, the pregnant wife -- who lose their insurance; the young woman who can't change jobs because her new insurance doesn't cover diabetes; the small business owner who faithfully pays group health insurance premiums for years and then finds that his coverage won't be renewed because one of his employees has developed a heart condition.

No more. This bill changes all that. Today we declare a victory for millions of Americans and their families. No longer will you live in fear of losing your health insurance because of the state of your health. (Applause.) No longer need you hesitate about taking a better job because you're afraid to lose your coverage. And no longer will small businesses be denied access to insurance for their employees. The Health Insurance Reform Bill I sign today will protect the health care of millions of working Americans and give them and their families something that cannot be measured -- peace of mind.

The bill also addresses other problems in getting more affordable insurance to our workers. It makes it easier and less expensive for the self-employed to purchase their insurance. As Senator

Kassebaum said, it phases in a tax deduction of 80 percent for the self-employed and helps to even the playing field with bigger businesses. Second, it prevents fraud and abuse. It toughens penalties and helps us to go after bad apple health care providers who bilk the system of billions of dollars from Medicare, from Medicaid and from private insurance companies. I especially want to thank Secretary Shalala for her work on these fraud and abuse provisions.

Third, it makes the health care system more simple. It will modernize, streamline and cut the cost of insurance paperwork by devising a uniform electronic system for paying health care claims. It will provide steps to protect the privacy of people in the system as it does so. Fourth, it allows the establishment of a limited number of medical savings accounts to allow us to study this approach and see how it works, to determine whether this new approach can make a positive contribution to health care coverage and to affordability. And, fifth, it helps with long-term care. It provides consumer protections and makes long-term care insurance more affordable. ~~This bill~~, in short, does a very great deal.

I want to echo what Senator Kennedy said -- Senator Kassebaum, we are deeply in your debt. We're going to miss you, and you must be very proud that here in the last months of your career in the Senate you have done such a magnificent things. We thank you so much, ma'am. (Applause.)

Senator Kennedy, as I told you before we came out here, when I woke up this morning and thought about signing this bill today, I remembered a day a very long time ago, almost 18 years ago now, when I moderated a panel on health care reform in Memphis, Tennessee, at one of our many conventions, in 1978. And you were there, telling the American people in 1978 that every person in America deserved the health care that your son had when he was first taken ill.

I'm proud of you for these two decades of commitment, sir. Thank you. (Applause.)

And if you'll forgive me a personal note, I believe, Hillary, that this justifies all those days on the road and all those nights you stayed up reading the incomprehensibly complex issues of health care. (Applause.) Thank you.

I wish this bill had contained the provision to eliminate the differential treatment of mental health coverage, or at least taken some positive steps in that direction. (Applause.) I know this is something that is especially important to Tipper Gore, and I know that we all know that we're going to have to deal with that.

And we have to do more, and this is also very important. We must find a way to provide coverage for workers and their families who are in transition. I have proposed a plan which we put in our balanced budget to cover 3 million workers and their families, including 700,000 children, who today have nowhere to turn for affordable health care because the worker is changing jobs. If a person is doing the right thing, trying to be responsible, dying to go to work, we should help those kind of people to get back on their feet without being thrown flat on their back without health insurance.

Our mission in pursuing health care reform from the start has been to provide more fairness and quality for the American people. That's why we worked to strengthen the Medicare trust fund, although we must do more and our balanced budget plan does that. That's why we've worked to preserve and protect Medicaid; why we focused on the problems of health care costs, which, thanks to efforts in the private sector, to our own efforts, and to the general direction of our economy with growth with low inflation, inflation in health care slowed to 3.9 percent in 1995, the lowest in 23 years. And for the first half of this year, it is down to less than 2 percent, and may go lower still. We must not let this be a temporary development. (Applause.)

That's also why we've worked to raise childhood immunization rates dramatically; to increase investment in biomedical research, including funding for breast cancer and AIDS; why we've expedited the FDA process in approval for new drugs, so that people who need a miracle might be able to find it; why we fought to protect our children from the harmful effects of tobacco advertising aimed at them.

But now we need to build on what we have achieved. I was encouraged to see Senator Kassebaum with her coach's mentality saying that the game is not over and we still have another month this year. And, Senator, I'm suited up and ready to play. And I appreciate you saying that. (Applause.)

This is a particularly happy day for me because, like yesterday when we signed the minimum wage bill and the bill which gave such strong incentives to small businesses to invest in their own businesses, and made it so much easier for people to adopt children who were willing to take on that profoundly important responsibility -- these two days together, and this day especially, helps ordinary Americans from the growth and progress in the American economy. America is on the right track not only when the overall numbers look good, but when from when every responsible American family can participate in that.

It's good that we have 10 million new jobs, record numbers of new businesses, that we have the lowest deficit and the highest rates of homeownership in 15 years. That's very good. But it's even better when every single American who is willing to be responsible for his or her family and his or her work can participate in those trends. And with portable health care, the minimum wage increase, additional incentives for small business growth, more pension security, moving people from welfare to work, that will help all Americans to be a part of our 21st century America.

We have more to do -- in educational opportunity, in helping people with their child care and child-rearing obligations, in helping people to buy their first home -- in finishing the job of balancing the budget so that we can keep interest rates down and inflation down. But we are clearly moving on the right track.

I look forward to working with Congress when they come back in September and to continuing this effort. I want to say again, this bill passed almost unanimously. This is a bill that both Senators Kennedy and Kassebaum can be proud of because they brought all their colleagues along with them. This is a bill that people who have been working in the House for years and

years and years on health care reform can be proud of, and so can everybody else who showed up and voted for it. And, Congressman Hastert, I want to echo what Senator Kassebaum said -- we appreciate your work and we know how much you did to get those last few difficult issues resolved in a way that we could all live with.

We can do things when we work together and put the American people first. And whenever we work on behalf of our families and our children, as we do with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, America always wins.

So, now, in the names of the families and children who will have better lives because of it, I am honored to sign this profoundly important piece of legislation. And I'd like to ask the members of Congress to come up and join me, along with the families who are here. Thank you very much, and God bless you. (Applause.)

(The bill is signed.) (Applause.)

END

3:05 P.M. EDT