think we're right to advocate higher environmental and labor standards, try to make sure everybody benefits.

We have a responsibility to lead the way on climate change, not be stuck in denial, because we're still the number one producer of greenhouse gases. Although shortly, unless we help them find a different way to get rich, China and India will be, just because they've got more folks.

And in the short run, we have a very heavy responsibility, I believe, to broaden and simplify this debt relief initiative; to lead the assault on the global diseases of AIDS, TB, and malaria that take out a quarter of the people who die, most of them very prematurely before their time every year; and to do more to universalize education so that everybody, everywhere, will be able to take advantage of what we're coming to take for granted.

Now, we've had a lot of wonderful talks over the last 8 years, but I think that I do not believe that a nation, any more than a church, a synagogue, a mosque, a particular religious faith, can confine its compassion and concern and commitment only within its borders, especially if you happen to be in the most fortunate country in the world. And I can't figure out for you what you think about whether these sweeping historical trends are, on balance, good or bad. But it seems to me if you believe that people are, on balance, good or bad or capable of good, we can make these trends work for good.

And I'll just close with this. There is a fascinating book out that I just read by a man named Robert Wright, called "Non Zero." He wrote an earlier book called "The Moral Animal," which some of you may have read. This whole book is about, is all this stuff that is happening in science and technology, on balance, good or bad, and are the dark scenarios going to prevail, or is there some other way?

The argument of the book, from which it gets its title, is basically an attempt to historically validate something Martin Luther King once said, "The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice." It's pretty hard to make that case, arguably, when you look at what happened with World War I, with Nazi Germany and World War II, with the highly sophisticated oppressive systems of communism. But that's the argument of this book, that the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.

The argument is that the more complex societies grow and the more interconnected we all get, the more interdependent we become, the more we have to look for nonzero sum solutions. That is, solutions in which we all win, instead of solutions in which I win at your expense.

It's not a naive book. He says, "Hey look, there's still going to be an election for President. One person wins; one person looses. There's still going to be choices for who runs the company or who gets the pulpit." [*Laughter*] There will be choices. It's not a naive book. But he says that, on balance, great organizations and great societies will have to increasingly look for ways for everyone to win, in an atmosphere of principled compromise, based on shared values, maximizing the tools at hand. Otherwise, you can't continue—societies cannot continue to grow both more complex and more interdependent.

So I leave you with that thought and whatever it might mean for you in trying to reconcile your faith with the realities of modern life. And again I say, as Americans, we have, I think, a truly unique opportunity and a very profound responsibility to do something now on debt relief, disease, and education beyond our borders.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; Pope John Paul II; former Senator Bob Dole; and Nohra Pastrana, wife of President Andres Pastrana of Colombia.

Remarks on Departure for the Hay Adams Hotel and an Exchange With Reporters

September 14, 2000

Patients' Bill of Rights

The President. Thank you so much. I want to begin, obviously, by thanking Dr. Anderson, the AMA, and the physicians who are here behind me from various medical organizations. I want to thank Ron Pollack, the

director of Families USA, who has been such a long and tireless champion of health care.

As is often the case when I get up to speak, everything that needs to be said has pretty well been said, but I hope to bring it into some sharper focus in terms of what will have to happen now in the next few weeks if we're going to actually get a real and meaningful Patients' Bill of Rights.

Time is running out in Congress, and there is no more important piece of unfinished business. You see these numbers up here—18 million a year. We're trying to pass a minimum wage law. It will affect 10 million people a year. We're very proud here that we reached across party lines to pass the family and medical leave law. It has affected about 25 million people in the first 5 years for which we have statistics.

I have already provided the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights to 85 million Americans who are covered anyway by Federal health plans. And yet, you see that the remaining Americans, nearly 200 million of them, have the experience that leads 18 million of our fellow citizens to suffer delay or denial of care over a year.

Now, what are the rights in the Patients' Bill of Rights. Let me just state them one more time. We should never forget: The right to the nearest emergency room care; the right to see a specialist when recommended by your physician; the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of a treatment such as chemotherapy or a period of pregnancy; the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes you or a loved one great harm.

Now, as I said, these are protections we have provided to 85 million Americans who get their health care through Federal plans. Fact: What did it cost to provide these protections? Less than a dollar a month. That's a fact. Even the Republican majority's Congressional Budget Office concedes that the costs to cover all Americans would be less than $2 a month. And only congressional legislation can provide all Americans and all plans the patient protections they deserve.

Last fall, thanks to the leadership of Congressman Norwood, a physician and a Republican, and Congressman Dingell, a Democrat from Michigan, the House of Representatives passed such a bill with a majority of 275 Members, including 68 Republicans. Nearly a year later, I am confident we now have the votes to pass the very same bill with the same protections in the Senate if—big if—we can get it up to a vote.

The bill's vital signs, in other words, are growing stronger, but it's still a near-run thing. If it were a tie, I know someone who would like to break it. And as Al Gore always says, whenever he votes, the people win.

But this is not about politics. I was glad that Dr. Anderson said what he did. If you took a survey in any community in America except Washington, DC, there would be almost no difference in the opinion on this legislation between Republicans, Democrats, and independents.

Now, let me remind you what the daily toll is. Ron's got the running total up there, but nearly 50,000 Americans every day face a delay or denial of care—nearly 50,000. Every hour, more than 2,000 people fail to get the treatment they need. We can't turn back the counter, but we sure don't have to run it up.

And this is not about statistics. This is about real people with real problems who deserve real care so they can get on with real life instead of the politics of Washington, DC. That's what this Families USA tour is all about. It's about—let me just mention two—people like Joan Bleakley, who lost her sight in her left eye, in part because her HMO forced her to wait 3 weeks before seeing a neurologist; people like Doug Bolden—you will remember him if you went with me to Missouri to the Patients' Bill of Rights event down there—a big, burly emergency room nurse, whose patient was forced by his HMO to leave one hospital and travel more than 50 miles to another, suffered a heart attack and died along the way because he wasn't entitled to health care at the nearest emergency center.

And believe me, these are not isolated examples. I've heard many, many more, and you've got the numbers here to back it up. So again, what this is about is whether the Senate leadership will let the votes be counted and allow a free and fair vote on Norwood-Dingell. The American people need to be reminded. The rules of the Senate, which

were set up to avoid measures being dealt with too rapidly, give everything but our annual budget the option of being subject to a filibuster, which takes 60 votes, not 51, not a majority—60—to pass.

Now, there is no question that this has been debated forever. We do not need any more time for a debate. And the people who aren't for this bill ought to just stand up and tell the American people why they're not for it and why they think the doctors, the nurses, and 300 other health care provider and consumer organizations are wrong, and the HMO's and the insurance companies are right. And then, they ought to let everybody vote.

But it is an abuse of the filibuster to deny the majority of the United States Senate, representing an even bigger majority of the American people, a chance to have their way on an issue this fundamental to democracy.

We don't need any more time to debate this. They don't need to put on the brakes to look at it again. This thing has been hanging around for 2 years now, and it's been debated in and out. It's time to listen to the doctors, the nurses, the patients, the other consumer and provider experts, to listen to a majority of Members of Congress, including the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, who would vote for this bill today. The bill should not be held up or watered down.

Again, I am willing to reach agreement. We reached an honorable compromise on one major provision with opponents of the legislation in the Senate, which everyone could live with. But we cannot abandon our commitment to a bill that covers all Americans—all Americans—with the right to the specialists they need, the nearest emergency room care, the right to keep a physician during a course of treatment, the right to hold health care plans accountable, the right, in short, that allows doctors, not people who have no training in medicine and are concerned only with the bottom line to make these decisions; and also, a system that provides access to important clinical trials. In other words, a strong, comprehensive, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

We can do this. If we just let the Senate vote, we can put progress over partisanship, health care over special interests, and restore trust and accountability to our health care system. We should do it now. But every single American should know what's going on.

In order to prevail on legislation that has the support of more than three-quarters of the American people, including 70 percent or more of every political group in America, we have to do one of two things: We've got to persuade the leadership of the Senate to let a majority vote on this, and if a majority's for it, to pass it; or we have to find 9 or 10 more votes between now and the time they go home to break a filibuster that is, in my judgment, an abuse of the filibuster system. There is no debating this. Everybody knows what the deal is. Everybody what the differences are.

Meanwhile, I will keep negotiating. I will keep trying, but I will not abandon the people who are part of these numbers up here, because I've heard too many of their stories.

Again, I thank the doctors; I thank the nurses; I thank Families USA; and I thank all the American people. We can do this, and we can do it in a nonpartisan way, if we can just get the roadblocks out of the way.

Thank you very much.

Wen Ho Lee

Q. Mr. President, could you take a question? I was wondering, Mr. President, if you share the embarrassment that was expressed yesterday by the Federal judge in New Mexico about the treatment of Wen Ho Lee during his year of confinement under Federal authorities?

The President. Well, I always had reservations about the claims that were being made denying him bail. And let me say—I think I speak for everyone in the White House—we took those claims on good faith by the people in the Government that were making them, and a couple days after they made the claim that this man could not possibly be let out of jail on bail because he would be such a danger of flight or such a danger to America's security, all of a sudden they reach a plea agreement which will, if anything, make his alleged offense look modest compared to the claims that were made against him.

So the whole thing was quite troubling to me, and I think it's very difficult to reconcile

the two positions, that one day he's a terrible risk to the national security and the next day they're making a plea agreement for an offense far more modest than what had been alleged.

Now, I do hope that, as part of that plea agreement, he will help them to reconstitute the missing files, because that's what really important to our national security, and we will find out eventually what, if any, use was made of them by him or anybody else who got a hold of them.

But I think what should be disturbing to the American people—we ought not to keep people in jail without bail, unless there's some real profound reason. And to keep someone in jail without bail, argue right up to the 11th hour that they're a terrible risk, and then turn around and make that sort of plea agreement—it may be that the plea agreement is the right and just thing, and I have absolutely no doubt that the people who were investigating and pursuing this case believe they were doing the right thing for the Nation's security—but I don't think that you can justify, in retrospect, keeping a person in jail without bail when you're prepared to make that kind of agreement. It just can't be justified, and I don't believe it can be, and so I, too, am quite troubled by it.

Q. Mr. President, can you explain to me, are you thinking in terms of clemency for him, for Wen Ho Lee?

The President. I'd have to look at that. It depends on, if he's in fact—he has said he's going to plead guilty to an offense which is not insubstantial, but it's certainly a bailable offense, and it means he spent a lot of time in prison that any ordinary American wouldn't have, and that bothers me.

Visit of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India

Q. Mr. President, tomorrow morning, right here on this lawn, you are going to welcome the Prime Minister of India who spoke today on Capitol Hill, and he's calling for stronger U.S.-India security relations and also fighting against terrorism around the world, especially across the border from Indian border—across-border terrorism. So what do you think, sir, coming out from this historical visit and, also, following your visit in March that you've been in India?

The President. Well, first, I am delighted that the Prime Minister of India is coming here after my trip there, and I was honored to be the first President in over 20 years to go. They're the world's largest democracy. We need to have a better and closer and more constructive relationship with them, and I hope that this will be the next step in that, and I think we'll make some specific agreements.

The United States is strongly opposed to terrorism in any form, and I still hope that, if not while I'm here, then in the future, because of the groundwork we've laid, the United States can play a positive role to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, which has been at the core of the difficulties between India and Pakistan for more than half a century now.

If you look at how well—I will say this again—if you look at how well the Indians, the Pakistanis, and the Bangladeshis who have come to America have done, the extraordinary percentage of them that are involved in the hi-tech economy, the professions, building our country across a broad range of areas, it is tragic to think of what this conflict has done to hold back the people who live on the Indian subcontinent, who are still all of them living on around $500 or less a day, on average, and who have proven by their stunning success in this country, that they have the ability to be at the cutting edge of the 21st century.

So I hope they can lay this burden down, and I hope we can help them, and in the meanwhile, of course, we'll have to oppose terrorism in all its manifestations.

Thank you very much.

President's Upcoming Visit to Vietnam

Q. Mr. President, could you explain to the American people about Vietnam? Why you've decided to go?

The President. [*Inaudible*]—another press conference with the Prime Minister tomorrow, and I will answer some more questions then. But I've got to leave.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. in the South Portico at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Dr. Edgar Ratcliffe (Andy) Anderson, executive vice president, American Medical Association.

Remarks to the National Campaign Against Youth Violence Luncheon

September 14, 2000

Thank you. Let me, first of all, say I'm glad you're here, and I'm glad that all of you who have made contributions to this endeavor to make sure it succeeds. I came by, overwhelmingly, just to say thanks, and a special word of thanks to you, Jeff, for taking this on when it would have been easy to take a pass, and to you, Steve, for taking this on when it would have been easy to take some more established way of being philanthropic and civic, with a more guaranteed but a much more limited return. I guess AOL didn't get where it is by looking for guaranteed but limited returns. [*Laughter*] So I thank you very much. [*Laughter*]

I'm almost done being President, and so I'm thinking a little bit not so much about the past but about why I and my administration did certain things when we did them and why I thought this was worth trying to do.

And one thing is, I really believe that ideas and dreams have consequences. If you have a bad one and you implement it in the most aggressive way, it still won't have a good outcome. And if you have a good one but you don't implement it very well, you won't have a very good outcome. But if you have a good one and you do it, you do everything you can to realize it in a smart way, it has results.

And I think that one of the things Presidents are supposed to do is to imagine things that everybody wants but is afraid to say out loud they might do. I always thought we could balance the budget. And then once we did, I realized we ought to say we could make America debt-free. If I had said any of that in 1992, people would have said, "You know, he seems like a very nice person, but we really should"—[*laughter*]—"have somebody who's a little more well-grounded."

And that brings me to this issue. This is a good news/bad news story. The good news is, crime is down 7 years in a row, violent crime at a 27-year low; juvenile crime has been dropping after going up, and juvenile violence has been dropping, after going up for many years. The bad news is, we still have the highest rate of violence committed by and committed against young people of any industrialized nation.

So anybody who's satisfied with the trend, I think, is wrong. But we should be encouraged and empowered by the trends, because it shows we can do better. But just like we had to start out when we had a deficit of $290 billion a year and we'd quadrupled the debt in 12 years, we had to first of all say, "Well, we're going to cut in a half in a certain number of years, and then we'll get rid of it." And then we realized we could get rid of it, so we said, "Well, why don't we go after the debt, too, and keep interest rates down and keep the economy going?"

Well, now, it's not like we don't know what to do here. And it's not like we don't know what works. And we've got all this evidence. So I think our goal should be to make America the safest big country in the world and the safest big place in the world for a child to grow up and live. That should be our goal.

Now, if that's our goal, the first thing we've got to do is, do what Steve says, and get everybody involved from all sectors of society. And the second thing we have to do is, do what Jeff said; we have to have a strategy. And the strategy he outlined, you know, to educate, replicate—or whatever word he used—and generate leadership—[*laughter*]—that's about as good as it gets. [*Laughter*] How did I do? Did I do pretty good?

So what I'd like to do, just briefly review what's been done that I have some notes on to say thanks and then talk about where we go from here. Because I want you to know, I wouldn't have asked you to do this if I didn't think you could make a big difference.

We had a meeting like this a few years ago on teen pregnancy and got a lot of people together, and the committee just took off with it. And teen pregnancy's dropped dramatically. Now, did that committee do it all? No. Were there economic and other factors that helped? Of course. Did they make a big difference? You bet.

We started a few years ago with five people in a room to have a Welfare to Work Partnership to try to prove that the welfare reform