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Statement on Signing the Victim Rights Clarification Act of 1997
March 19, 1997

Today I have signed into law H.R. 924, the "Victim Rights Clarification Act of 1997," to ensure that victims of crime and their families will not be prevented from attending a criminal trial in Federal court simply because they intend to exercise their right to give a statement during a sentencing hearing, once guilt has been decided. I commend the Congress for responding to the initiative led by crime victims and their families, and by a bipartisan group of State attorneys general. As I have said before, when someone is a victim, he or she should be at the center of the criminal justice process, not on the outside looking in. The Act, of course, does not limit the courts' authority and obligation to protect the defendant's right to a fair trial under the due process clause.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 19, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 924, approved March 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105–6. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland in Helsinki
March 20, 1997

Summit With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, what did you think of President Yeltsin's conciliatory remarks on his arrival here?

The President. I was quite encouraged. I felt good about it. I'm looking forward to the meeting. And I thank President Ahtisaari for making it possible for us to be here.

Q. Are you finding—how are you finding a bum knee? Is that compatible with international diplomacy?

The President. So far we're doing all right. My knee and I are getting around pretty well.

NOTE: The exchange began at 5:48 p.m. in the Yellow Room at the Presidential Palace. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Tentative Agreement in the Dispute Between American Airlines and the Allied Pilots Association
March 20, 1997

I am pleased by the announcement yesterday that the negotiating teams for American Airlines and the Allied Pilots Association have reached a tentative agreement on their longstanding labor dispute. This tentative agreement will be presented on Friday to the APA board of directors for approval and subsequent ratification by the union membership.

I want to commend the management of American Airlines and the leadership of the Allied Pilots Association for their commitment to each other and to the traveling public. I think it speaks well of the parties and their intentions that this tentative agreement was reached more than 5 weeks before the April 28 "cooling off" deadline. When labor and management work together, as they did here, U.S. industries are