

my administration has proposed the creation of the common ground partnerships, an innovative initiative that would combine expanded English language instruction with education in civics and life skills. This initiative, which my FY 2000 budget funds at \$70 million, will help ensure

that those who become Americans learn not only the words of the citizenship oath but also the broader language of our civic life. I hope that Members of Congress from both parties will recognize the power of this important initiative to build a stronger American community.

### Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation *September 17, 1999*

I am pleased that the House of Representatives will have an opportunity in just a few weeks to vote on a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. This will, at long last, give Members of Congress an opportunity to put patients' interests ahead of the special interests.

A bipartisan majority of the House has already expressed support for the Norwood-Dingell pro-

posal, a plan that would provide for an enforceable set of meaningful patient protections that would be extended to all Americans in all health plans. I am confident that the Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights will be adopted, if the House leadership permits a fair process for debating and voting on this important issue.

### Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 1999 *September 17, 1999*

I am pleased to send warm greetings to all those observing Yom Kippur.

On this most solemn of holy days, Jews across our nation and around the world prepare for the new year through fasting, prayer, and quiet reflection. Examining their thoughts, words, and deeds of the past year, they strive to acknowledge and learn from their transgressions, seek forgiveness from those whom they may have offended, and ask for God's mercy.

This Day of Atonement can offer a powerful lesson to people of all faiths about the true spirit of reconciliation and the unconditional

love of God. It can teach us not only to face our own failures, but also to love and forgive one another as God loves and forgives us. As the Jewish people set aside this time to repair their relationships and renew their souls, let us all vow to work together to heal divisions, promote tolerance and understanding, and share the blessings of peace in the year to come.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a meaningful Yom Kippur.

BILL CLINTON