

June 8 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Letter to the Senate Democratic Leader on the Patients' Bill of Rights June 8, 2000

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am writing to express my strong support for your effort to give the Senate its first opportunity to vote for the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights. It is long past time that the Congress acted to deliver real patient protections for all Americans in all health plans.

It is my understanding that the members of the Senate/House Conference who support a strong, enforceable, Patients' Bill of Rights have reluctantly concluded that the likelihood of an acceptable bill emerging from the conference is remote. After 8 months of inaction since the House passed the Norwood-Dingell Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act, and with very few scheduled legislative days remaining, it is time for the Congress to act to pass this legislation and give Americans the patient protections they deserve.

Congress has failed to pass this measure for years, and this delay has real consequences. According to a recent study, each day without a strong Patients' Bill of Rights results in harm to thousands of patients because insurance companies refused a patient a diagnostic test, a necessary procedure, or a referral to a specialist.

It is my hope that the Senate will approve this legislation today and take the next important step toward the enactment of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. I urge the Senate to put the interests of patients before those of the special interests and replicate last fall's bipartisan achievement by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Statement on Senate Action on the Patients' Bill of Rights June 8, 2000

I am disappointed that today's vote in the Senate means that the American people will continue to wait for the long overdue patient protections that they deserve. However, we continue to enjoy overwhelming bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and are now

within a single vote of a bipartisan majority in the Senate. I am encouraged by this progress and urge the supporters of a real Patients' Bill of Rights to redouble their efforts to pass this critically important legislation.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico

June 9, 2000

Mexican Economy

Q. President Clinton, do you want to say something about the Mexican economy? How do you see the development of the last 5½ years under President Zedillo?

President Clinton. I think President Zedillo has done a truly remarkable job. Mexico has

had 5 years of growth, in excess of 5 percent a year, after the very difficult financial crisis in '94. And I think it's a real tribute to him and to the people he put on his team, as well as to the hard work and industry of the people of Mexico.