

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Imports of Crude Oil *April 28, 2000*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 232(c) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1862(c)), I am notifying you that I concur with the findings of the Secretary of Commerce in his report, "The Effect on the National Security of Imports of Crude Oil and Refined Petroleum Products," which determined that imports of crude oil threaten to impair the national security.

Further, I have accepted his recommendation that trade remedies not be imposed but that existing policies to enhance conservation and limit the dependence on foreign oil be contin-

ued. I am taking this action because we have already proposed additional tax credits to promote renewable and efficient sources of energy, new tax incentives to support the domestic petroleum industry, and further investments in energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources, as the report suggested.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address *April 29, 2000*

Good morning. Next week, when the full Congress returns from Easter recess, they'll have less than 75 working days left to make this year a year of real progress for the American people. There is no more important critical piece of unfinished business than our need to ensure that every American, young and old, has adequate, affordable health care.

Today I want to again urge the Congress to step up to this challenge by making the passage of a strong Patients' Bill of Rights and the provision of a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit top priorities when they return to Washington.

This critical legislation is long overdue. The more than 190 million Americans who use managed care or other insurance plans have waited too long for a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. They deserve the right to see a specialist, to emergency room care wherever and whenever they need it, and the right to hold health care plans accountable for harmful decisions.

Last year, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, the House passed a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that provides the right protections all Americans need and deserve. It's a bill I would sign. But more than 6 months later, the bill

is still languishing in Congress. Despite their pledge to complete a real bill, the Republican majority has not only delayed action, it's actually considering legislation that would leave tens of millions of Americans without Federal protections.

A right that can't be enforced isn't a right at all, it's just a request. We need a strong bill that protects all Americans and all plans, not one that provides more cover for the special interests than real coverage for American patients.

Congress also has an obligation to strengthen Medicare and modernize it, with a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit. No one creating a Medicare program today would even think of excluding coverage for prescription drugs. Yet more than three in five older Americans still lack affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage.

Just this week we saw further evidence of the unacceptable burden the growing cost of prescription drugs places on senior Americans. According to a report by the nonprofit group, Families USA, the price of prescription drugs most often used by seniors has risen at double the rate of inflation for 6 years running, a burden that falls hardest on seniors who lack drug