

103–382), which amended title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89–10).

## Remarks on the Patients' Bill of Rights

August 1, 2001

**The President.** Today I'm very pleased to announce that Congressman Norwood and I have reached an agreement on how to get a Patients' Bill of Rights out of the House of Representatives.

Charlie started on this issue 6 years ago. He's worked diligently to protect Americans, patients, from wrongdoings. I appreciate so very much his spirit, because I share the same concerns. And now after long hard labors, we've reached an agreement on how to amend his bill, that will meet the principles that I outlined.

When I first came to Washington, I gave—right after I came to Washington, I gave a speech that talked about the principles necessary for a Patients' Bill of Rights. In that speech, I wanted a bill—a bill that was good for patients, a bill that allowed for people to be able to air their grievances, a bill that did not encourage frivolous lawsuits.

Charlie also shares the deep concern—I'll let him express his own concerns—but there's no question that he, himself, wanted to get a bill. He was practicing the art of what is possible. It's a spirit we need more of in Washington: people who come to this city with the intent of doing what's right, the intent of having accomplishment, the intent of not playing—you know, bickering over politics and getting intransigent because you don't get everything you want.

And so after a lot of labor and a lot of hard work and a lot of discussion, we shook hands in the Oval Office, about 10 minutes ago. And Charlie is going to head up to the Hill. I've spoken to the Speaker. And he's going to take—we're going to work on the language of the agreed upon amendment. And it'll give the Members something positive to vote for.

I want to thank Charlie Norwood for his hard work, for his—the southern gentlemen that he is—for his willingness to work with

the White House. It's a good signal for a lot of folks in Capitol Hill.

Now, Mr. Norwood.

[At this point, Representative Charlie Norwood briefly discussed the agreement, saying it would protect patients by ensuring that people could choose their own doctor, that a patient who was harmed would have recourse in some type of court setting, and that there would be good, independent, external review.]

**The President.** Get to work up there on the Hill, Charlie. Thank you very much. I appreciate—[inaudible]

Thank you, all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the James S. Brady Briefing Room at the White House.

## Statement on Northern Ireland

August 1, 2001

This morning I telephoned Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern to state my strong support for the package of proposals their governments released today to the political party leaders in Northern Ireland.

I believe the package is fair and that it charts the way forward in areas central to the Good Friday agreement. The package allows the people of Northern Ireland to sustain devolved government and establish a police service with broad public support. It provides further steps for normalizing the security presence in Northern Ireland and assuring the stability and integrity of the Good Friday agreement's political institutions. The proposals also recognize that a commitment to democratic governance and normalized security requires all parties to renounce violence and deal decisively with paramilitary weapons. Consequently, substantial progress on decommissioning is an essential part of today's package.

In my conversation this morning, I commended the Prime Ministers for their continuing leadership on behalf of peace. I reiterated to them that the United States stands ready to help in any way that the governments and the parties find useful. I now urge all parties in Northern Ireland to reflect

carefully on today's proposals and to do everything in their power to make permanent the progress of the past 3 years by taking the next steps to implement the Good Friday agreement.

### **Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders on Education Reform Legislation**

*August 2, 2001*

Listen, thank you all for coming. It's my honor to meet with the Senate conferees and the chairman of the Education Committee in the House and, of course, the Secretary of Education to discuss the Conference Committee on Education and the education reform package and how best to—what I can do to help move the bill and to work with the Members to get a—to continue the spirit of reform that was a part of the Senate bill and the House bill.

Today one of the things that I hope the Nation notices is that the NAEP is out, the national assessment statistics. And one of the things—one of the powerful statistics is that States that use strong accountability systems, States that measure, States that say every child could matter are the States that perform best when it comes to teaching children the basic skills, in this case, math. It so happened to be that one of those States was Texas; the other was North Carolina.

But it is a strong message to the advocates for reform who sit here in the Oval Office, strong message for the Members who doubt whether or not accountability is important, that accountability is crucial for reform. And after all, we're all united in making sure every child can learn in America and no child, not one child is left behind.

So I want to thank the Members for coming. I'm hopeful that we can get a bill on my desk as soon as possible. I know that's the intent of the two chairmen. And when I do—when it is, and when I sign it, it will be really good for the public education of the country.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:51 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to NAEP, the National Assessment

of Education Progress. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Patients' Bill of Rights**

*August 2, 2001*

Today's action brings us an important step closer to ensuring that patients get the care they need and that HMOs are held accountable.

I appreciate the bold leadership and hard work of Speaker Hastert, Congressman Norwood, Congressman Fletcher, and others for their efforts to make patient protections a reality for all Americans after years of gridlock.

As this bill heads to the conference committee, I remain committed to extending the hand of cooperation to all who share a commitment to achieving real results for better health care for every American.

### **Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting on the Administration's Agenda**

*August 3, 2001*

Good afternoon. The Vice President and I are pleased to welcome the Cabinet to the Rose Garden. Together with Congress, we are proving that a new tone, a clear agenda, and active leadership can bring significant progress to the Nation's Capital. We are ending deadlock and drift and making our system work on behalf of the American people.

Six months ago I chose a distinguished Cabinet, took a solemn oath, and promised to fight for the things close to my heart. My administration pledged to bring stability and high standards to Washington and to lead for the sake of all Americans.

Six months later I'm proud of my Cabinet and the White House staff, who have worked with such energy and have brought integrity to their jobs. I'm grateful for the good will shown by Congress, and I am pleased with the progress we have made together, progress that touches every American family.