

Apr. 29 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

of good will, friendship, understanding, and unity across all the lines that divide us, that can propel us into an even brighter era of respect and success.

Now I would like to introduce the athlete that has been chosen by her teammates to represent the Olympians here today, a person whose grace and excellence on the ice—and I must say, even more after the competition—must have been a source of enormous joy and pride, not only to her teammates but to all Americans.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ms. Michelle Kwan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Hybl, president, and Dick Schultz, executive director, U.S. Olympic Committee; Mayor Tasuku Tsukada of Nagano, Japan; Mayor Deedee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT; and Robert H. Garff, president, board of trustees, Salt Lake City Olympic Organizing Committee. Following the President's remarks, Michelle Kwan, silver medalist in women's figure skating, presented a U.S. Olympic team jacket to the President.

Statement on Bipartisan Support for Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

April 29, 1998

I am extremely pleased that today at least nine Republican Members of Congress joined as cosponsors to H.R. 3605, the "Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998." In announcing their support for this legislation, they are sending a strong signal that it is unacceptable for this Congress to adjourn this year without passing a strong patients' rights bill.

I commend Representatives Ganske, Bass, Forbes, Fox, Gilchrest, Graham, Horn, LaTourette, and Leach for their leadership, and I look forward to working with them. We have learned again and again that when we reach across party lines we can pass important legislation that improves our Nation's health care system. Making the "Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998" bipartisan provides new momentum towards ensuring that a Patients' Bill of Rights will become the law of the land.

The "Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998," recently introduced by Representative Dingell, provides long overdue protections that Americans need to renew their confidence in the Nation's rapidly changing health care system. It allows patients to see the specialists they need, to get emergency care wherever and whenever a medical emergency arises, to talk freely with doctors and nurses about all the medical options available—not only the cheapest, and to appeal when they have grievances about their health care.

I urge Congress to send me legislation that gives Americans the health care protections they need and deserve. I look forward to working with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights this year.

Message to the Congress Reporting a Certification Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

April 29, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Sen-

ate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), Effectiveness of Australia Group, that:

Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic

chemicals and their precursors, dual-use processing equipment, human, animal and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons application, and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and

The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been under-

mined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 29, 1998.

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 30.

The President's News Conference *April 30, 1998*

The President. Good afternoon. Please sit down. Before I take your questions I'd like to make a few comments on a couple of matters that I believe are essential to the strength of America in the 21st century.

Five years ago we started a new economic course for a new economy, a combined strategy of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, increased investment in education, science, technology, and our people. Today we received more good news than that that strategy is working. The latest economic report shows that in the first quarter of 1998, our economy grew at 4.2 percent. Wages are rising while inflation remains low. This expansion is not fueled by big Government deficits but by booming business investment.

In the first quarter, unemployment was the lowest in 28 years, inflation the lowest in 30 years, consumer confidence at its highest level in 30 years. For 5 years in a row now, our economy has been rated the most competitive in the world.

We are living in an American economic renaissance in which opportunity is abundant, communities are getting stronger, families are more secure and more prosperous. But we cannot allow the hum of our growing prosperity to lull us into complacency.

As estimates of the possible budget surplus expand, so, too, the suggestions that we immediately commit to spending that surplus on tax cuts or new spending. But Americans have worked too hard for too long to put our economic house in order. So I will strongly resist

the use of a single penny of the surplus until we have first saved Social Security for the new century.

Nor can we turn our backs on America's responsibility to lead in the world. We see that, by the way, in the commitment today of the Vice President and Mrs. Gore as they represent our Nation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel.

Today, the health of our economy is also deeply affected by what goes on in global affairs and by the health of the global economy. Therefore, I call on Congress to step up to its responsibility and renew our commitment to the International Monetary Fund and to pay our United Nations dues. I am confident we can do this in a bipartisan fashion.

The debate over NATO enlargement has been a model of bipartisan action. I want to thank Senators Lott and Daschle, Senators Helms and Biden for their leadership on this issue. I hope for a strongly positive vote in the Senate later today, because by admitting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic we come even closer than ever to realizing a dream of a generation, a Europe that is united, democratic, and secure for the first time since the rise of nation-states on the European Continent.

At the threshold of the 21st century, we are on the rise at home and abroad. But we have to continue this progress. We have to continue to work if we want economic advances and strong national security. We have to continue