

would draw resources and attention away from the essential work of reforming the public schools that serve the overwhelming majority of the District's students. In short, S. 1502 would do nothing to improve public education in the District of Columbia. The bill won't hire one new teacher, purchase one more computer, or open one after-school program.

Although I appreciate the interest of the Congress in the educational needs of the children in our Nation's Capital, this bill is fundamentally misguided and a disservice to those children.

The way to improve education for all our children is to increase standards, accountability, and choice within the public schools. I urge the Congress to send me legislation I have proposed to reduce class size, modernize our schools, end social promotions, raise academic standards for all students, and hold school systems, schools, and staff accountable for results.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
May 20, 1998.

## Radio Remarks on the Northern Ireland Peace Accord Referendum *May 20, 1998*

Tomorrow the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have an opportunity to join hope to history. I know that as you go to the polls and consider the merits of the April 10 accord, you will reflect on the past three decades, so marred by hatred and bloodshed, fighting and fear. I hope you will also reflect on the decades to come and the opportunity you now have in your hands to build a lasting peace for yourselves and your children. This Friday, you can turn the common tragedy of Northern Ireland's past into a shared triumph for the future.

As you face the future, you can count on America. We were blessed with the arrival of your ancestors and relatives who helped to build our Nation. We want to return the favor with trade and investment, with friendship and part-

nership. But to those of any party or persuasion who would revert to violence, you must know that you will find no friends in America.

To everyone voting tomorrow, let me say, you can do nothing to erase the past, but you can do everything to build the future. The world is with you, but the choice is yours. May you make the right choice for peace, for your children, for your future. And may God bless you all.

NOTE: The remarks were recorded at approximately 11:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House on May 20 for later broadcast, and they were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 21. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks on Senate Ratification of the Protocols of Accession to NATO for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic *May 21, 1998*

Thank you very much. I suppose I should begin with an apology for having to dash off and pick up the paper, but I would hate to lose this document after all the effort we put into getting to this point. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Vice President, thank you for your leadership on this issue. Senator Roth, Senator Biden, Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, General

Ralston, Mr. Berger, to the Ambassadors of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the other members of the diplomatic corps who are here, to Senators Levin and Lieberman and Lugar, Mikulski, and Smith, I thank all of you so much.

Ladies and gentlemen, before we begin, I would like to make a couple of brief comments.