

think now we have to understand that we cannot maintain or sustain our economy unless we make the preservation and even the improvement of the environment an integral part of our economic policy.

In other words, I believe global warming is real. I do not think it is an accident that 9 hottest years on record have all occurred in the last 11 years. I don't think that's an accident. I don't think it's an accident that '97 was the hottest year on record, and every month in '98 has been hotter than every month in '97. And I think there are at hand the means to continue to grow the economy and improve the environment in ways that will make sure it's all here a hundred years from now for our great-grandchildren.

Let me just mention a couple of other things. I believe that, with regard to the economy—I think it's obvious—and around our table I had a fascinating conversation talking about the global economy, in particular, as you might imagine, Japan and Asia, China, and we talked about Russia. We have a lot of challenges in the global economy; we have a lot of challenges in the area of world peace, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, dealing with terrorism, and trying to stop people from killing each other because of their ethnic, racial, and religious differences.

There will be plenty to do in the post-cold-war world to create a trade-centered, people-centered, peaceful network of national cooperation and institutions to help deal with those who won't be part of that framework.

We also have to recognize, I think, that we have an incredible opportunity and an obligation here—and those of you from New York, I'd say, should feel it especially—to prove that we can bring free enterprise to the areas of America

which haven't received it yet. There are still neighborhoods in New York City that have double-digit unemployment rates, largely because of underinvestment and low skill levels, not because most people aren't responsible; most people in most neighborhoods get up and go to work every day, pay taxes, and try to be good citizens. So we're never going to have a better time than the next couple of years to try to help.

And the last thing I'd like to say is I think that this theme, that Hillary and I have worked on, of one America means something to me. It means one America across all the lines that divide us. It means an America in which citizens commit themselves to serve their fellow human beings, which is why I'm so proud of our AmeriCorps program, our national service program. It also means that we understand that the unity we have is a precious gift, and we should manage our differences with dignity and decency and always strive for unity over division; always put people over politics; always put progress over partisanship. That's what I believe.

And if we do those things, I think we're going to do just great in the 21st century. And I'm going to do everything I can for the next 2½ years to make sure that that is exactly what we do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Bruce and Claude Wasserstein; event cochairs Alan and Susan Patricof; Steve Grossman, national chair, Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, and Fran Katz, national finance director, Democratic National Committee; and fashion designer Ralph Lauren.

The President's Radio Address

August 1, 1998

Good morning. Today Hillary and I are at the fire station in Amagansett, Long Island, New York, one of many beautiful communities on Long Island, where we're joined today by doctors, nurses, breast cancer patients, and public health advocates to talk about something that

concerns all Americans, making a Patients' Bill of Rights the law of the land.

I'm also very proud to be joined by Congressman Michael Forbes and his family. Congressman Forbes is a Republican who is cosponsoring

bipartisan legislation to achieve a genuine Patients' Bill of Rights.

We all know that our health care system is rapidly changing. Since 1990 the number of Americans in managed care has nearly doubled. Today, most Americans, 160 million of us, are in managed care plans. I think that, on balance, managed care has been good for America because it's made health care more affordable and more accessible for more Americans. But sometimes cost cutting can lead to lower standards. That's when the bottomline becomes more important than patients' lives. And when families have nowhere to turn when their loved ones are harmed by health care plans' bad decisions, when there's a denial of specialist care or emergency care when they're plainly needed and recommended by physicians, when those kinds of things happen, we know we have to take action.

Whether in managed care or traditional care, every single American deserves quality care. I'm doing everything I can as President to help to meet that challenge. For 9 months I have worked in good faith with lawmakers of both parties to pass a strong, enforceable, bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights, a bill that covers individual and group plans, a bill that guarantees access to specialists and emergency room care, a bill that guarantees doctors are not receiving secret financial incentives to limit care, a bill that guarantees a remedy to families who have suffered harm because of bad decisions by their health plans. And for 9 months the American people have waited.

Finally, the Republican leadership has proposed a partisan bill that does not provide these guarantees. Now they've left town without taking action, leaving millions of Americans without the health care protections they need. Any bill that doesn't guarantee these protections is a Patients' Bill of Rights in name only.

Today the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the National Breast Cancer Coalition, the American College of Emergency Room Physicians, the American Small Business Alliance, and the National Partnership for Women and Families have all come

forward to say the plan of the Republican leadership is an empty promise; it simply will not protect the American public or ensure the quality health care they deserve. Now Congress should rise to its responsibilities and guarantee a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they should reject proposals that are more loopholes than law.

Until Congress acts, I will continue to do everything I can to ensure that more Americans are protected by a Patients' Bill of Rights. In February I signed an executive memorandum that extends those protections to 85 million Americans in Federal health plans. Last month the Department of Veterans Affairs put in place a new health care appeals procedure for 3 million veterans.

Today we're building on our efforts. I'm pleased to announce that the Defense Department is issuing a directive to make the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights real for more than 8 million servicemen and women, their families, and Defense Department employees. These men and women stand ready every day to keep our Nation safe. They should not have to worry about the health care they or their families receive.

This action brings us one step closer to a Patients' Bill of Rights for all Americans, but Congress must act. And so once again, I ask Congress to do its part. There are just a few weeks left in this legislative session, only a few weeks left to improve health care and strengthen our families. Let's put progress ahead of partnership. I ask all Members of Congress to join Congressman Forbes, me, and the other Democrats and Republicans who want a real Patients' Bill of Rights.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Amagansett Fire Station in Long Island, NY. In his address, he referred to his memorandum of February 20 on Federal agency compliance with the Patient Bill of Rights (*Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1998 Book 1* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), p. 260).