

5. The two sides recognize that unresolved legal issues adversely affect the relationship between the two peoples. They therefore will accelerate efforts through the Legal Committee to address outstanding legal issues and to implement solutions to these issues in the shortest possible period. The Palestinian side will provide to the Israeli side copies of all of its laws in effect.

6. The Israeli and Palestinian sides also will launch a strategic economic dialogue to enhance their economic relationship. They will establish within the framework of the JEC an Ad Hoc Committee for this purpose. The committee will review the following four issues: (1) Israeli purchase taxes; (2) cooperation in combating vehicle theft; (3) dealing with unpaid Palestinian debts; and (4) the impact of Israeli standards as barriers to trade and the expansion of the A1 and A2 lists. The committee will submit an interim report within three weeks of the entry into force of this Memorandum, and within six weeks will submit its conclusions and recommendations to be implemented.

7. The two sides agree on the importance of continued international donor assistance to facilitate implementation by both sides of agreements reached. They also recognize the need for enhanced donor support for economic development in the West Bank and Gaza. They agree to jointly approach the donor community to recognize a Ministerial Conference before the end of 1998 to seek pledges for enhanced levels of assistance.

#### IV. Permanent Status Negotiations

The two sides will immediately resume permanent status negotiations on an accelerated basis and will make a determined effort to achieve the mutual goal of reaching an agreement by May 4, 1999. The negotiations will be continuous and without interruption. The U.S. has expressed its willingness to facilitate these negotiations

#### V. Unilateral Actions

Recognizing the necessity to create a positive environment for the negotiations, neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Interim Agreement.

This Memorandum will enter into force ten days from the date of signature.

Done at Washington, D.C. this 23d day of October 1998.

B. Netanyahu  
For the Government of the State  
of Israel

Y. Arafat  
For the PLO

Witnessed by: William J. Clinton  
The United States of America

NOTE: The joint memorandum, accompanied by a timeline attachment, was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release. On October 28, a press release version of the memorandum was made available on the White House Internet site.

## Statement on Signing the Federal Employees Health Care Protection Act of 1998

October 23, 1998

The Federal Employees Health Care Protection Act of 1998, H.R. 1836, that I have signed into law makes several critical improvements to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). For example, it gives the Office of Personnel Management's Inspector General critical new debarment authority to crack down on fraudulent providers and, when necessary, to debar those who defraud the program; it contains essential new provisions to maintain and improve consumer choice, the hallmark of

FEHBP, by allowing fee-for-service plans to re-join FEHBP; it makes health care more affordable for certain Federal employees and retirees of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Federal Reserve Board by allowing them to participate in the FEHBP; and finally, it ensures that certain Federal physicians who provide high quality services will receive appropriate compensation for their services, which is critical to attracting and maintaining a high quality Federal physician work force.

I want to note, however, my objection to a provision in this legislation that appears to expand preemption of State law remedies for FEHBP enrollees who are injured as a result of wrongful benefit delay or denial by their plan. As I have consistently stated, I believe that a right without remedy is not a right at all. I strongly believe that Federal employees should have the right to legally enforceable remedies, including under State law, to protect them when health plans do not provide contractually obligated patient protections. I therefore want to clarify that my enactment of this legislation should in no way be construed to indicate my support for this preemption provision. I also would like to reiterate my disappointment that

the Congress has adjourned without passing a Patients' Bill of Rights that would give new protections and remedies to all Americans, including Federal employees. Assuring that health plans provide needed patient protections and adequate remedies will be one of my top priorities for the next Congress.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
October 23, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 1836, approved October 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-266. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

## Statement on Signing the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 *October 23, 1998*

I have signed into law H.R. 4328, the "Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999."

This bill represents a significant step forward for America. It protects the surplus until we have saved Social Security for the 21st century, contains an agreement to fund the International Monetary Fund, and puts in place critical investments in education and training, from smaller class sizes to after-school care, and from summer jobs to college mentoring. I am pleased that this bill honors my commitment to maintain fiscal discipline by providing additional resources for essential new investments, which are fully financed within the limits of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement.

Specifically, the legislation provides needed funds for education and training, including a down payment on my plan to reduce class size in the early grades by hiring 100,000 new teachers. It provides added resources to protect the environment, to move people from welfare to work, to strengthen law enforcement, to enforce civil rights, and to further efforts that advance health, research, and development. And with this legislation, funds can be made available to farmers suffering through the worst farm emergency in a decade.

First, this legislation provides an additional \$4.4 billion for education and training, furthering the goal of life-long education to help Americans acquire the skills they need to succeed in the new global economy. In addition to funding my class size initiative, this bill will help advance child literacy by meeting my full request for the America Reads program, and by increasing funding for Head Start. It also supports an important part of my child-care initiative: the focus on improving the quality of child-care programs and the funding provided for after-school programs should help approximately 1,600 21st Century Community Learning Centers, serving nearly a quarter of a million children, to provide extended learning activities and related services in safe and constructive environments with adult supervision.

I am pleased that included in this legislation are three other high-priority education initiatives—GEAR UP, Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants, and Learning Anytime, Anywhere Partnerships—that were recently authorized in the Higher Education Act. Charter School funding will provide start-up resources to about 1,400 schools, serving approximately 400,000 students; my Youth Opportunity Areas initiative will provide intensive training and related services to help 50,000 disadvantaged youth in very