

and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on Vouchers To Provide Rental Assistance

October 1, 1999

The Department of Housing and Urban Development yesterday released \$280 million in rental assistance vouchers to help 50,000 families in 35 States move from welfare to work. These housing vouchers are an integral part of our efforts to reform welfare, reward work, and provide affordable housing for low-income families. They will help families move close to a job, reduce a long commute, or secure more stable housing that will help them get or keep a job.

Today, our economy is strong, incomes are up, and poverty is at the lowest rate in 20 years. But there are still more than 5 million low-

income families who need affordable housing. That is why I have asked Congress for an additional 100,000 rental assistance vouchers to meet the critical housing needs of families moving from welfare to work, the homeless, and the elderly. As Members of the House and Senate meet in conference to debate this year's budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, I want to underscore my strong commitment to this initiative. Congress should not turn its back on families that are playing by the rules and moving from welfare to work. A budget without new vouchers would shortchange the American dream.

Statement on the Fire at the Department of Commerce

October 1, 1999

I am relieved that today's fire at the Department of Commerce was extinguished quickly and apparently without any serious injuries. The DC Fire Department and all those who worked to put out the fire deserve credit for ensuring the safety of the Department of Commerce em-

ployees who work at the Herbert Hoover Building. I hope that the damage can be repaired quickly and that Secretary Daley and his entire team can be back to full speed as soon as possible.

Statement on Proposed Legislation on Nuclear Waste

October 1, 1999

Yesterday's nuclear accident in Japan is a tragic reminder that we must do everything in our power to ensure safe, responsible handling of radioactive materials. Upon reviewing Senate bill 1287, regarding potential nuclear waste disposal at Yucca Mountain, I have determined that it would not adequately ensure the protection of public health and safety. If this bill is presented to me in its current form, I will veto it.

I am encouraged that this latest Senate bill, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1999," does not seek to authorize interim storage of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain before a thorough scientific analysis of the site has been completed. That would be an unconscionable mistake, and I have consistently opposed such proposals in the past. However, the bill would take away the existing authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect public