

State. We can do that everywhere, and we should.

I mean, I have very strong feelings about this. These kids deserve a decent place to go to school because they can all learn. I was in Harlem the other day in a school that 2 years ago—listen to this—2 years ago had 80 percent of the kids doing reading or math below grade level. Two years later, a new principal, new morale, school uniforms—something I like—high standards, in 2 years they went from 80 percent doing reading and math below grade level, to 74 percent doing reading and math at or above grade level, a total turnaround. You can do this. We can do this all over America.

But it is illusory to think that we can tell all these kids and their parents they're the most important things in the world to us, "But here, go to school in broken windows and leaky roofs, and sit in this closet somewhere, or go out into a busted trailer, and we'll get around to you when we can." And meanwhile, we've got all the money in the world to spend on roads and airports, because they've got a bigger lobby than little kids do.

Now, this is not complicated here. We have fooled around with this for 2 years, and the problem is just getting bigger. So I say, before Congress goes home, let's do this for the kids in the future.

At the end of World War II when my generation was starting schools, the National Government under President Truman, with Republican as well as Democratic support, did not hesitate to help our children find the space to go to school.

In a world where education is even more important than it was then, where the student body is even bigger, and where it is much more diverse, in a world that is much more interconnected, there can be nothing more important than actually acting like we say we believe that our kids are the most important thing in the world to us. Let's do it with the school construction proposal.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to parent Glenda Parsons of Loudoun County, VA, who introduced the President.

Statement on Signing the Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000

October 24, 2000

Today I am extremely pleased to sign the "Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000," which invests over \$990 million over 10 years in an important new health option for thousands of low-income, uninsured women with breast or cervical cancer. I was proud to include it in my FY 2001 budget, and I am proud to sign this bipartisan legislation into law.

Women without health insurance are 40 percent more likely to die from breast cancer than those who are insured. Not only are they less likely to be screened, but the course of treatment they elect is often affected by their ability to pay for services. This important legislation will expand the limited treatment options now available to low-income, uninsured women with breast cancer who are in the unique situation

of learning about their condition through federally sponsored screening programs.

The new assistance today's action will provide for thousands of women with breast or cervical cancer continues my administration's long-standing commitment to breast and cervical cancer research, prevention, and treatment. It builds on a record of administration achievements that includes legislation to ensure the quality of mammograms and prevent drive-by mastectomies, increasing access to cancer clinical trials, and increasing funding for breast and cervical cancer research, prevention, and treatment from \$283 million to over \$620 million during my administration.

As important as today's achievement is, we have many health care issues that still must be

addressed. I urge the Congress to pass additional coverage expansions including a new, affordable health insurance option for parents and new health insurance options for Americans facing unique barriers to coverage, such as those aged 55 to 65, workers in small businesses, and legal immigrants. I also urge the Congress to pass legislation streamlining the enrollment of

uninsured children in health insurance programs. Taking these long overdue steps will bring us closer to our larger goal—ensuring that every American has access to high quality, affordable health insurance.

NOTE: H.R. 4386, approved October 24, was assigned Public Law No. 106–354.

Remarks on Signing the Jordan-United States Trade Agreement *October 24, 2000*

The President. Thank you very much. Your Majesty and members of the Jordanian delegation; Senator Lugar; Senator Moynihan; Representatives Bonior and Levin; Secretary Cohen and other members of the administration.

Let me begin by saying a special word of appreciation to Dr. Mohammad Halaiqa and to our Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky for the work they did on this agreement.

The American negotiators, led by Catherine Novelli, and their Jordanian counterparts have labored hard over these last few months and around the clock this past weekend, something that seems to be the order of the day for us lately, to conclude this very important agreement.

Most of all, it is a great honor to welcome King Abdullah to the White House again. He is a voice of reason and calm in a region urgently in need of both. His leadership has been especially important over these last difficult weeks, which have brought such suffering and loss in the Middle East, and thrown into sharp relief the choices facing all people in the region.

Down one path lie the enormous challenges of building a lasting, secure peace and the concomitant enormous benefits. Down the other path lies more bloodshed, more hatred, more shattered lives and broken dreams.

Though the path of peace is steep and has become steeper these last few weeks, in the long run it is the only path that offers the peoples of the Middle East hope for a normal life as part of the modern world. That is the path Jordan has chosen consistently.

It is critically important that the United States stand with Jordan and leaders like King Abdullah, struggling to give their people pros-

perity, standing for peace, understanding that the two pursuits go hand in hand.

As hard as that may be, there must be an end to the violence, and the Israelis and Palestinians must find a way out of confrontation back to the path of peaceful dialog, and they must do it sooner rather than later. For in the Middle East, as we have all learned, time does not heal wounds, it simply rubs more salt in them. The issues do not change. They just get harder to resolve.

The agreement we are about to sign will establish free trade between the United States and Jordan. It is a good and important agreement, one that I hope Congress will support on a bipartisan basis. It will be good for the United States, good for Jordan, good for the long-term prospects for peace in the Middle East. It will eliminate duties and break down commercial barriers to trade between our two nations in both products and services.

Under King Abdullah's leadership, Jordan already has made impressive strides in modernizing its economy, opening its markets, promoting the well-being of its people. This agreement will help to accelerate that progress. It will also cement the bonds of friendship that already exist between Jordan and the United States.

The record is clear that open trade creates opportunities, raises prosperity, and can lift lives in every country. Nowhere is this more apparent than here in the United States, where our exports in open markets have helped to fuel the longest expansion in our history. Nowhere are the benefits of trade more critically needed than in the Middle East. By opening markets, we