

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

can help to ease poverty that makes peace hard to achieve and harder still to sustain.

Today's agreement is remarkable in another respect as well. Even if it didn't have a thing to do with peace, we would still be here, because it is the first free trade agreement ever signed by the United States which incorporates into the body of the text labor and environmental protections, a landmark achievement for which the negotiators on both sides deserve extremely high praise.

For the United States, this follows through on our commitment to ensure that the drive toward globalization reinforces protections for our workers and for air, water, and other natural resources. The first trade agreement to have undergone an environmental review under a new U.S. policy requiring such analyses, this trade agreement is one that all Americans can be proud of.

For Jordan, it represents a farsighted commitment to worker and environmental protection that is very much in keeping with Jordan's visionary commitment to peace. In today's world, developing countries can achieve growth without making some of the mistakes developed nations made on our path to industrialization. In the information age, the byproduct of the industrial

age, the idea that to grow more you had to exploit both workers and the environment, is simply no longer true.

Today, it is possible to grow an economy faster, while protecting air, water, and keeping children in school. This trade agreement embodies that big idea. Now we must turn our energies to implementing it as soon as possible. The insistent voices urging us to build a future that is healthier, more just, more prosperous, and more peaceful are not patient, nor should they be. This is a very good day.

Again, let me extend my congratulations to the negotiators, my thanks to the King of Jordan and his Government and my great hope that this will be the beginning of even stronger bonds between our people and a real trend in modern commercial agreements among good people and good nations everywhere.

Now, I'd like to invite His Majesty to come up here and make a few remarks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Halaiqa of Jordan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of King Abdullah II of Jordan.

Remarks at a People for the American Way Reception October 24, 2000

Thank you very much, Ralph. I want to thank you and your predecessor, Carole Shields, and the other board members of the People for the American Way. I thank Representative Sheila Jackson Lee from Houston for joining us tonight. Where are you, Sheila? She's here somewhere—right there. Thank you. And I want to thank Mary Frances Berry. You know, we go back to the Carter administration together. We've been friends for way over 20 years, and now she's the Chair of our U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She's done a magnificent job. *[Applause]* Thank you.

I smiled when I walked in and put my arm around her. I said, "Mary Frances, that gray hair looks a lot better on you than it does on me." And we concluded that we had both earned every one of ours in the last 8 years,

and we're proud to have them. So thank you, Mary Frances Berry. Thank you.

I want to thank you for hosting this event. I thank all of you for participating, because one of the great questions the American people will answer in this election is the future of the Supreme Court, the future of the Federal courts generally, and what the shape of American life will be when it comes to the individual rights of American citizens, and potentially as important, the power of the United States Congress and the Federal Government to protect the American people from all manner of things, in the face of a determined effort by what is already on occasion a majority in the Supreme Court to limit the ability of the Congress to do it.