

in private health plans. It builds on my administration's previous action to provide critical patient protections to the 85 million Americans in Federal health plans. But the only way to give every American in every health plan the right to see a specialist, to go to the nearest

emergency room—not the cheapest—and to hold health care plans accountable when they cause harm, is to pass a real, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Whether it is this year or next year, Congress should come together to pass this long overdue legislation.

Statement on the Death of Lars-Erik Nelson

November 21, 2000

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of the death of Lars-Erik Nelson, one of New York's most distinctive voices and one of America's leading journalists. He was a fearless, independent, no nonsense reporter and columnist who believed in getting to the heart of a story and getting it right.

Lars-Erik Nelson distinguished himself as a foreign correspondent and as a skilled Russian translator, but his real gift was translating com-

plex stories about our democracy for the American people. He did it with humor and a dogged pursuit for the truth. As his friends knew, beneath his gruff exterior was a gentle spirit and a warm heart. Hillary and I will miss him and the unique insight that he shared with New York and the entire Nation. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Mary, and his entire family.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony

November 22, 2000

The President. I want to thank Secretary Clickman and National Turkey Federation Chairman Jerry Jerome and President Stuart Proctor for being here. And I want to welcome the young people who are here, especially those who are from the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington.

[At this point, there was a noise from the far end of the Rose Garden.]

The President. I am—what's all that noise up there? *[Laughter]* What is it? It sounds like another turkey about to fly down here. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the National Turkey Federation for once again donating this year's tom turkey. This is the eighth I've had the privilege to meet and set free in the Rose Garden. *[Laughter]*

I'm told that Jerry, the turkey, traveled all the way here from Wisconsin, proving that the Cheese State is about more than good cheese. It's also, I might add, about a very well-behaved turkey. *[Laughter]*

Tomorrow we will celebrate the first Thanksgiving of the new millennium and the last one of our Presidency. As Hillary and Chelsea and I sit down to our dinner, we will give special thanks for the privilege it has been to live here and to serve for the last 8 years.

It's still a bit of a mystery when exactly the first Thanksgiving was actually held. Some say it was in 1513, when Ponce de Leon landed in Florida. But the expert opinions about that are divided, and a recount is still underway down there. *[Laughter]* Others say it occurred in 1541, when Francisco Vasquez de Coronado arrived on the Texas panhandle. Some conspiracy theorists say neither of those are true.

The most popular story, of course, and the one all of us learned as kids, is that Native Americans and Pilgrims shared a feast of thanks to celebrate their first harvest in 1621, soon after the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts. It was a famous meal of maize, squash, and venison and lasted 3 whole days. Now, that would take a lot of turkey.

But no matter what its roots, Thanksgiving is a tradition that has been celebrated in this country since our beginning. George Washington was the first President to declare a national day of thanks, in 1789. And Abraham Lincoln made the tradition a permanent one in 1863, in the darkest days of the Civil War, because he recognized, as he put it, “the blessings of fruitful years and healthful skies.”

The times have changed, but the message hasn’t: to give thanks for all God’s blessings, for our strong families, our spirited communities, and the good fortune of living in our country’s most prosperous and peaceful time.

I am profoundly grateful on this Thanksgiving that we have now more than 22 million new jobs, poverty and unemployment at record lows, and the highest homeownership in history. The American people worked hard for these results, and I hope they’re thankful for them as well.

We should also be grateful for the strength of our democracy and the freedom we enjoy, thanks to the courage and patriotism of our men and women in uniform and the strength and abiding power of the Constitution and the rule of law.

As we gather around our dinner tables with family and friends and celebrate our great bounty, we must not forget, also, those who will

be hungry this holiday season. That’s why it is so important that all Americans, like the young people here today, not only give thanks but give something back to their communities to help those who are less fortunate than themselves.

Almost 50 years ago, President Truman began the tradition of keeping at least one turkey off the Thanksgiving dinner table. And I am very pleased to follow in his footsteps and to hereby officially pardon this turkey in order that he be sent to the petting zoo in Fairfax County, Virginia, to live his remaining days in peace and happiness making children happier, if not more peaceful.

Thank you, and Happy Thanksgiving. Let’s bring the turkey up.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Jerome, chairman, and Stuart Proctor, Jr., president, National Turkey Federation. The President also referred to Kidwell Farm at Frying Pan Park in Fairfax County, VA, future home of the turkey. The Thanksgiving Day proclamation of November 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Capital Area Food Bank and an Exchange With Reporters November 22, 2000

The President. First of all, I want to thank Secretary Glickman and all the people that he mentioned for the work that they’ve done that he discussed today. And I want to say a special word of appreciation to Lynn Brantley. Thank you for your kind comments, but actually, the District of Columbia could better do without me than you. You have been great, and I thank you so much for everything you have done. This lady has been working on hunger issues since she marched with Dr. King. She’s been at it a long time, and she’s still a young lady. *[Laughter]* So she’s got a long way to go, and we thank her.

I want to thank the wonderful DC Delegate, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and DC City Council chair Linda Cropp and Vincent Orange, Ward

5 councilmember. And I want to say a special word of appreciation—this may be my last public chance to do it—to Representative Tony Hall from Ohio, who, for years and years and years, when it was popular and when no one paid attention, has been the number one opponent of hunger in the United States and around the world in the entire United States Congress. Thank you, Tony Hall, for everything you have done. Thank you.

I also want to point out that we have some participation here from one of my favorite accomplishments as President, the establishment of AmeriCorps, the national service corps. We have AmeriCorps volunteers, and I think we even have some alumni here. And I want to