

on State accountability systems, so we need the NAEP for every State.

You know, not long ago, accountability was controversial. Today, the concept is widely shared. But to make a difference in the lives of children, it must be more than a concept. Accountability must be tough, yet realistic and workable. The Congress has some work to do before we reach that goal, and the time is running short.

We're now in August. In 35 days, school starts in New York City; 34 days, schools open in Oakland, California. In Kansas City, Missouri, children report for class in 26 days. Principals and teachers need to make their plans for changes that will come immediately and for changes that will come next year.

We're asking a lot of our schools and our teachers and our students. They have a big job ahead of them, and so do we, here in Washington. And now is the time, Congress, to get the job done.

Two years ago, when I spoke to the Urban League Conference in Houston, my reforms for America's schools were just a

set of proposals. And now, these proposals are within weeks of becoming reality. I'm thanking the Urban League for your support, and I ask you to continue to work with Congress to make sure they become the law of the land. I ask you to join me in building a system of education worthy of all America's children, so that every child has a chance in life and not one single child, in the greatest land on the face of this Earth, is left behind.

Thank you all for having me, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer, Kenneth D. Lewis, vice chairman of the board of trustees, and Leland C. Brendsel, trustee, National Urban League. The President also referred to title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103-382), which amended title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89-10).

Remarks on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation *August 1, 2001*

The President. Today I'm very pleased to announce that Congressman Norwood and I have reached an agreement on how to get a Patients' Bill of Rights out of the House of Representatives.

Charlie started on this issue 6 years ago. He's worked diligently to protect Americans, patients, from wrongdoings. I appreciate so very much his spirit, because I share the same concerns. And now after long hard labors, we've reached an agreement on how to amend his bill, that will meet the principles that I outlined.

When I first came to Washington, I gave—right after I came to Washington, I gave a speech that talked about the prin-

ciples necessary for a Patients' Bill of Rights. In that speech, I wanted a bill—a bill that was good for patients, a bill that allowed for people to be able to air their grievances, a bill that did not encourage frivolous lawsuits.

Charlie also shares the deep concern—I'll let him express his own concerns, but there's no question that he, himself, wanted to get a bill. He was practicing the art of what is possible. It's a spirit we need more of in Washington, people who come to this city with the intent of doing what's right, the intent of having accomplishment,

the intent of not playing—you know, bickering over politics and getting intransigence because you don't get everything you want.

And so after a lot of labor and a lot of hard work and a lot of discussion, we shook hands in the Oval Office about 10 minutes ago. And Charlie is going to head up to the Hill. I've spoken to the Speaker. And he's going to take—we're going to work on the language of the agreed-upon amendment. And it'll give the Members something positive to vote for.

I want to thank Charlie Norwood for his hard work, for his—the southern gentleman that he is—for his willingness to work with

the White House. It's a good signal for a lot of folks in Capitol Hill.

Now, Mr. Norwood.

[*At this point, Representative Charlie Norwood made brief remarks.*]

The President. Get to work up there on the Hill, Charlie. Thank you very much. I appreciate—[*inaudible*].

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the James S. Brady Briefing Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Representative Norwood.

Statement on Northern Ireland

August 1, 2001

This morning I telephoned Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern to state my strong support for the package of proposals their Governments released today to the political party leaders in Northern Ireland.

I believe the package is fair and that it charts the way forward in areas central to the Good Friday agreement. The package allows the people of Northern Ireland to sustain devolved government and establish a police service with broad public support. It provides further steps for normalizing the security presence in Northern Ireland and assuring the stability and integrity of the Good Friday agreement's political institutions. The proposals also recognize that a commitment to democratic governance and normalized security requires all

parties to renounce violence and deal decisively with paramilitary weapons. Consequently, substantial progress on decommissioning is an essential part of today's package.

In my conversation this morning, I commended the Prime Ministers for their continuing leadership on behalf of peace. I reiterated to them that the United States stands ready to help in any way that the Governments and the parties find useful. I now urge all parties in Northern Ireland to reflect carefully on today's proposals and to do everything in their power to make permanent the progress of the past 3 years by taking the next steps to implement the Good Friday agreement.