

the people of Northern Ireland who want an enduring peace and a normal life, I call upon all those involved to find the way to get the peace process back on track. I am ready to assist Prime Minister Blair, Prime Minister Ahern, and the parties in any way I can to achieve this goal.

**Memorandum on Occupational Illness Compensation for Energy Contractor Personnel**

*July 15, 1999*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Energy, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Assistant to the President for Economic Policy*

*Subject: Occupational Illness Compensation for Energy Contractor Personnel*

Contractor personnel working for the Department of Energy (DOE) and its predecessor agencies helped our Nation win the Cold War but often faced dangerous working conditions. A small number of them were exposed to beryllium, a metal used in the production of weapons, and subsequently contracted chronic beryllium disease (CBD), a debilitating lung disease for which there is no cure. Most of those exposed worked under contract for the DOE and are not covered by the Federal workers' compensation program. As a result many of those with CBD have not received the occupational illness benefits otherwise available to regular Federal employees.

Today, I am pleased to announce that my Administration will submit draft legislation to the Congress that would create a new program to give DOE contractor employees with CBD and beryllium sensitivity the same benefits—certain medical costs and lost wages—now available to Federal employees. The American people believe in fairness, and I am sure that they would find it fair to provide this reasonable compensation to this small group of people who contributed so much to their country's well-being and who now are suffering from this incurable disease.

Under my draft legislation, the Department of Labor would administer a program similar to the Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) program, which currently

provides Federal workers a proportion of lost wages, medical costs, rehabilitation, and training. My draft legislation also would compensate workers whose beryllium sensitivity forced them into lower-paying jobs. As with all workers' compensation systems, the program will serve as an "exclusive remedy," barring individuals with work-related illness claims from bringing litigation against the Federal Government.

Recognizing that other toxic and radioactive materials also may contribute to occupational illnesses, I direct you to participate in an interagency review led by the National Economic Council focusing on whether there are other illnesses that warrant inclusion in this program and how this should be accomplished. This interagency review should be completed by March 31, 2000.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

**Statement on Senate Action on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation**

*July 15, 1999*

Tonight's party line vote for a weak, unenforceable Patients' Bill of Rights is the wrong course for America. The Republican leadership's bill is a Patients' Bill of Rights in name only.

It fails to protect more than 110 million Americans—including the vast majority of Americans in HMO's. For those it does cover, this bill fails to ensure patients' access to the specialists they need; fails to ensure patients the rights to keep their doctors throughout a course, a treatment; fails to prevent insurance company accountants from making final calls on medical decisions; and it fails to hold health plans accountable for actions that harm their patients.

If Congress insists on passing such an empty promise to the American people, I will not sign the bill. Passing a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights should not be a partisan issue. This should be about protecting patients, not insurance companies.

We will not stop working on this critical issue until we provide patients the protections they need. The American people know the difference between a good and bad bill.

Every major doctors, nurses, and patients organization in the country knows the difference. I believe that the will of the people will still prevail in this Congress.

**Statement on the Death of  
Congressman George E. Brown, Jr.**  
*July 16, 1999*

I was greatly saddened to learn of the death of Congressman George Brown. When he last visited the White House, I noted that he was affectionately known as Mr. Science. His legacy of service and lifetime of contributions helped sustain American leadership across the frontiers of scientific knowledge. George Brown's support for science was drawn from his deep belief that science and technology could help achieve a peaceful world and a just society. For almost 40 years, from his earliest days fighting racial inequality, George Brown challenged us to build a better world. Our Nation has lost a good man and an irreplaceable voice for science and justice.

Hillary and I extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Marta, and to his family.

**Statement on Review of Title III of  
the Cuban Liberty and Democratic  
Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996**  
*July 16, 1999*

Today I am notifying the Congress of my decision to suspend for another 6 months implementation of provisions of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act that allow legal action against firms trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba. I take this action because it is in America's national interest and because it will hasten the day when the people of Cuba enjoy freedom and democracy.

I allowed Title III to enter into force in July 1996. It has put businesses around the world on notice that by trafficking in expropriated American property in Cuba, they risk significant liability in the United States. Coupled with aggressive implementation of Title IV of the law, this provision has helped deter such activities.

Since 1996, I have exercised the authority provided by the law to suspend the right to file suit. This has enabled the United States,

in efforts led by Under Secretary of State Eizenstat, to work constructively with our friends and allies for the promotion of freedom and democracy in Cuba.

During this last 6-month period, friends and allies, in both word and deed, have steadily increased pressure on the Cuban Government to respect human rights and move toward democracy. Many national leaders have publicly and privately pressed senior Cuban officials on the need for reform. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution, sponsored by Poland and the Czech Republic, condemning Cuban human rights abuses. The European Union renewed its Common Position, committing member countries to take concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba. A number of nongovernmental organizations have also increased support to democratic groups on the island.

The Cuban Government's disgraceful human rights record underscores the need for our coordinated international strategy. Showing disdain for universally recognized human rights, the Government in February promulgated a draconian law that criminalizes a wide range of democratic activities, including any journalism independent of the state. After a closed trial in March, the regime sentenced four courageous leaders of the "Internal Dissident Working Group" to harsh prison sentences merely for speaking out about their nation's future. International condemnation of these acts has been clear and swift. Countries long eager for warm relations with the Castro regime have clearly reassessed the wisdom of that approach.

The growing international consensus on the need for concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba gives us confidence that our multilateral strategy is working. It is sending a strong message to the Cuban Government that the time for change is now—and a strong message to the Cuban people that we stand with them in their efforts to build a democratic future. I once again pledge my administration's strongest efforts to work with our friends and hasten the day when our Cuban brothers and sisters enjoy the rights and freedoms that we all cherish.