

MARCH 3, 1999

REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY, HOUSE AND SENATE DEMOCRATS JOIN PRESIDENT CLINTON AND VP GORE TO UNVEIL DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today expressed her strong support for the "Families First: 1999 Democratic Agenda" during a news conference with President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and Congressional Democrats.

Rep. Schakowsky said, "This is a pro-working families, pro seniors, and pro public education agenda that will address kitchen table issues affecting every American. It will help improve the quality of life for the people of Illinois and the citizens of our nation."

"Democrats in Congress have taken the lead and it is now up to the Republicans to decide whether they want to finally begin working on issues that our constituents care about. We are prepared to roll up our sleeves and begin working on saving Social Security for our children and grandchildren, protecting Medicare for our senior citizens, passing a Patients' Bill of Rights that will hold the HMOs accountable, and providing our children with the tools necessary to succeed in the twenty-first Century," added Rep. Schakowsky.

Items in the agenda include:

- Investing the budget surplus to save Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt. This protects programs that provide health and retirement security and have lifted millions of senior citizens from poverty.

- Passing a Patients' Bill of Rights. Passing a Patients' Bill of Rights that lets medical professionals and patients make medical decisions not HMO bureaucrats, and will hold HMO accountable for their actions

- Modernizing Public School. Reducing the average class size to 18 students for the first through the third grades and modernizing public schools is a wise investment in our children's future.

Other priorities contained in the agenda include safeguarding the environment, protection our neighborhoods, and ensuring fair pay for women and minorities.