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1st Anniversary of Brady Bill, Kentucky, Feb. 29, 1995: [Implementation]

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**President William J. Clinton
First Anniversary of
Brady Bill Implementation
February 28, 1995**

[Acknowledgments: Vice President Gore, Attorney General Reno, Secretary Rubin, Kentucky State Police Commissioner Jerry Lovitt (just back from a weekend tour in the Kentucky Army National Guard, where he is a Chief Warrant Officer. [Jim Brady acknowledgment in first paragraph])]

I want to say a special word about a man who has always understood his responsibility to the larger community and to his country. Jim Brady dedicated his life to public service. In no small measure because he did, fourteen years ago, his life was changed forever. In spite of all the hardship and pain that followed, he never looked back, but instead, fought on, determined to do his part to prevent the tragedy that struck him from striking again. Thank you, Jim.

In many ways, Jim and Sarah Brady are exactly what I'm talking about when I talk about the New Covenant. I believe the best way for us to preserve the American Dream for all Americans is to build a new partnership in our country: between Americans and their government, and especially, Americans with their communities and each other. I call that partnership the New Covenant.

Government's responsibility is to expand opportunity while shrinking bureaucracy; to empower people to make the most of their own lives; and to enhance our security, not just abroad, but at home. At the same time, we must demand more responsibility from every citizen in return -- responsibility for our country, for our communities, for our families and ourselves.

A crucial part of our job in Washington is to help arm the American people -- and America's police officers -- to fight crime and violence. The Brady Bill may be one of the things I am most proud of as President. Today marks the end of its first full year in effect. We put an end to seven years of politics-as-usual to pass the Brady Bill in 1993.

Now, a year after it was implemented, we know the Brady Law works. National estimates show that over 40,000 convicted felons, fugitives, drug dealers, and gang members were prevented from purchasing a handgun in the Brady Law's first eleven months.

According to a recent study by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, that's only about 3 and a half percent of all the people who applied to buy handguns. Contrary to the alarmist claims of some special interests, the Brady Law isn't infringing on the rights of legitimate handgun owners. It's doing exactly what it was designed to do -- keeping weapons out of the hands of criminals.

There are thousands of examples around the country of its success. Let me share three of them with you. In March 1994, the Brady Law stopped a handgun purchase by a man in Kansas under a restraining order for allegedly stalking his wife and threatening to kill her.

In April, the Brady Law led to the arrest of a suspected drug dealer in Texas with outstanding warrants for possession of cocaine and heroin with intent to distribute.

In November, the Brady Law helped to catch two gang members, both convicted felons, who traveled from California to Nevada to purchase weapons.

These are the people the Brady Bill was meant to stop -- law-abiding Americans are the people the Brady Bill was meant to protect. The test for the Brady Bill was simple -- could it save one life? Protect one child walking home from school, so she would feel a little safer? Could it spare one woman from abuse? If it could, it would be a success. It has done all of these things many times over. The Brady Bill has passed with flying colors.

After years and years of the same old Washington excuses and tired old partisan politics, the last Congress stood up to the special interests and stood up for the American people. They heard the pleas of countless victims and answered the call of America's police officers. They passed the Brady Bill and they banned 19 deadly assault weapons. Some of them laid down their seats to do it, but America is safer for their courage.

As well as these two laws are working, some people in Congress actually want to take back. I will not let anyone take this protection away from the American people. **Mark my words: The Brady Bill and the Assault Weapons Ban are working, and they are here to stay.**

Thank you.