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Assault Weapons Ban - 5/5

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ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN PASSAGE

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
5.5.94

This afternoon, in the House of Representatives, the national interest prevailed. This vote was not about winners or losers;

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this vote was about whether the Congress was prepared to go beyond business as usual in the fight against crime because we live in extraordinarily dangerous times for the American people. The House rose to the occasion.

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Two hundred and sixteen Members of the House of Representatives stood up for America's police, for our children, and for safety on America's streets. By doing so, they made one thing very clear: the days when criminals and terrorists have legal access to assault weapons will soon be over.

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The 19 assault weapons banned by this proposal are deadly, dangerous weapons. These guns were designed for one purpose only: to kill people -- and as long as violent criminals have easy access to these weapons, they will continue to kill people. We're determined to turn that around.

↓
TURN

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In the last year, there has been a sea change in the crime debate. To be sure, the national consensus in support of hunters and sportsmen remains intact. And so long as I am President, the rights of hunters will be protected. But we have also overcome the partisanship that has divided us.

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We have come together in the belief that more police, more prisons, tougher sentences, and better prevention -- together -- will make our neighborhoods safer and our homes more secure.

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This legislation now becomes part of our larger strategy to fight crime and make the American people safe in their homes. This is what the Mayors and Governors want -- the people responsible for public safety at the local level.

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This is what every major police organization wants -- representing those who put their lives on the line protecting the American people.

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And lastly, this is what the American people want: The right to be safe and secure in their homes without their freedoms taken away -- by criminals or by an unresponsive or unreasoning federal government.

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I want to thank Congressman Schumer for the tenacity and determination he demonstrated in leading this fight in the House.

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And every Member of the House of Representatives who voted for this today deserves the thanks of the American people for casting a smart vote in the face of extraordinary political pressure -- because it was the right thing to do. My remarkable Cabinet, led by Attorney General Reno and Secretary Bentsen, joined us in our efforts.

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Let me conclude by extending the hand of friendship to ^{7 Both sides of the aisle} my friends on both sides of the aisle, Chairman Jack Brooks in particular, whose magnificent leadership is going to bring us the toughest and most significant anticrime bill in memory.