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Crime Bill - 9/13/94

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Statement of the President
Crime Bill Signing
September 13, 1994

The American people have been waiting a long time for this day.

In the last twenty-five years, half a million Americans have been killed by other

For 25 yrs, ~~the system~~ crime has
Americans. And the system that is supposed
been used as a tool issue to % crime, while
to punish criminals has made excuses.
System made excuses for not being able
to prevent crime, ~~the~~ no more excuses, no more
issue of safety & security

In the last six years, children have become
the most likely victims of violent crime and its

most likely perpetrators. ^{For 6 yrs, Wash. State} ~~And too many~~
^{a criminal who action}
~~politicians in both parties have made excuses.~~

And in the last two years, Meghan Sposato
lost a mother she hardly knew, Polly Klaas
lost her life to a felon who should never have
been back on the streets, and James Darby
lived in fear only to lose his life walking
home. And some people in Washington still
tried to keep this day from happening and
made excuses yet again.

Today, at last, the waiting ends. The
bickering stops. The era of excuses is over.
The law-abiding citizens of this country have
made their voices heard: Never again should
people in Washington put politics and party

ahead of law and order. From this day
forward, let us put party behind us —
Dem & Rep, Law & City, roll up
on scenes of roll back violence
bring down crime

This Crime Bill is one of the things I ran
for President to get done. The single most
important right we must protect is every
American's right ^{be and to} feel safe.

Not so long ago, kids grew up knowing
they would have to pay if they broke a
neighbor's window playing ball.

They knew they'd be in trouble if they lied or stole, because their parents and teachers and neighbors cared enough to set them straight.

And everybody knew that anybody who committed a serious crime would be caught and convicted, and would serve their time in jail. The rules were simple.

People followed them. And punishment was swift and certain for those who did not.

Now, too many kids don't have parents who care. Gangs and drugs have taken over ~~streets and unsupervised~~ our schools. And every day we read about another criminal who has literally gotten away with murder.

The American people haven't forgotten the difference between right and wrong. The

system has. ~~Signing this Crime Bill~~
~~When I sign this Crime Bill, we~~

are taking a big step toward
will ~~finally~~ bring the laws of our land back in
line

with the values of our nation, and beginning

the long, hard work to restore the clear line

between right and wrong.

There must be no doubt whose side we are on. People who commit crimes must be caught, convicted and punished. This bill puts the government on the side of those who abide by the law, not those who break it; of the victims, not the attackers; and of the brave men and women who put their lives on the line for us every day, not the criminals.

That's why police and prosecutors and preachers fought so hard for this bill. And that's why I am so proud today to sign it into law.

When I sign this bill, "three strikes and you're out" will become the law of the land -- and the penalty for killing a law enforcement officer will be death.

We will cut the federal bureaucracy by 270,000 positions -- to its lowest level in 30 years -- and use the savings to put 100,000 more police on the streets and build prisons to keep 100,000 violent criminals off the streets.



We will give our young people something

to say yes to -- places to go after school where

*When they can do
something*
they are safe, where teachers replace gang

leaders as role models.

~~And~~ with this law, we will make it illegal
for juveniles to own handguns -- and we will
finally ban assault weapons that have no place
on our streets.

But, my friends, even this law -- the toughest, smartest in history -- cannot do the job alone. Even when we put a new police officer on your block, that officer can't make your street safe again unless you come out of your home and help.

Even when we keep our schools open late
and give kids an alternative to drugs and
gangs, your children won't learn the
difference between right and wrong unless you
~~teach it to them.~~ ^{and} Our country won't be safe
again until every American takes responsibility
for themselves, their families, and their
communities.

The hard work of passing this bill is over.

Now, we begin to make it work in every city

and town in America. Today, I am naming

Vice President Gore, whose reinventing

government report first proposed the cuts in

the bureaucracy that will pay for this bill, to

head the President's Prevention Council.

I want him to work with every department to make this a coherent, cost-effective effort to give communities the tools they need to prevent crime.

In a few weeks, I will name the head of our program to put 100,000 new police on the street.

And early next month, the Justice Department will award grants to put new police on the street in 150 cities and towns that applied last year.

And in the coming months, Vice President

Gore and I will hold forums on crime and

violence across the country, leading up to a

meeting here at the White House next year, ^{to launch} to

a national effort, in each and every community, ^{to} talk with people from the front lines, whose ^{to} ~~to~~ ~~to~~ ~~to~~ implement the crime bill and to ~~reinforce~~ ~~the~~ values and common sense guided this Crime

^{into our daily lives}
Bill every step of the way.

Today, we remember thousands of officers
who gave their lives to make our nation safer,
whose names are inscribed in a stone
memorial just a mile away from here. We
remember the innocent victims whose lives
were lost and whose families were shattered
by the scourge of violent crime.

And we remember three victims -- James
Darby, Polly Klaas, and Jody Sposato --
whose deaths galvanized a nation and shamed
our political system into action. It is in their
memories that I dedicate this bill, and I hope
this law will always be remembered in their
names.

Today, the will of the American people has triumphed over a generation of political paralysis and division. Today, we have won a chance to work together without regard to party to solve other problems. In that spirit, let us dedicate ourselves to restoring the sense of right and wrong that built this country, and make it safe again for all our people.