

Deanne Benos
Domestic Policy Council
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Clinton, Hollywood stars call for gun control

By Deborah Charles

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Nov 30 (Reuters) - Actors Whoopi Goldberg and Gregory Peck joined President Bill Clinton at a star-studded Beverly Hills fundraiser on Tuesday in calling for tighter gun control laws.

A host of Hollywood stars and musicians donated up to \$10,000 each to promote gun control and to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Brady Bill, which imposed background checks on gun purchasers.

The law, named for former White House spokesman Jim Brady who was seriously injured in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, has stopped 470,000 people from buying guns, according to Justice Department data released on Tuesday.

Clinton has called for new gun-control measures this year following a string of schoolyard shootings, including the April killings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, in which two teenage gunmen killed 13 people and themselves.

"Can anyone doubt that there will be another Columbine ... Can anyone doubt that the clock is ticking?" asked Peck, who received an award from the Handgun Control group to recognize his efforts to reduce gun violence.

The White House has sought to seize on public dismay at the schoolyard shootings to mobilize the Republican-controlled Congress to pass a series of gun control measures this year.

These include: requiring background checks on gun show weapon sales, banning violent juvenile offenders from owning guns when they turn 21, requiring child safety locks to be sold with handguns and banning the import of high-capacity ammunition clips.

The right to bear arms is constitutionally guaranteed and none of the gun-control measures made progress in Congress.

Clinton, while hailing the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban passed in 1994, called on Congress to do more.

"I've come here to say, you have to keep fighting," Clinton said, saying 12 children die every day from gun violence. "No one believes America is as safe as it should be or can be."

As Goldberg introduced Clinton at the dinner, which included musical performances by Paula Cole and Dweezil Zappa, she said one of her granddaughters recently asked if she might get killed at school.

school.

“This was kind of chilling, because it wasn't even like I could say 'No, no, it's not going to happen,’” Goldberg said. “We should not ... be speechless when our children say: 'Am I going to make it to Christmas?’”

Reuters/Variety

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Wednesday September 22 10:26 PM ET

Violence sells tickets, report says

By Christopher Stern

WASHINGTON (Variety) - A new study to be released Thursday confirms what most people have always known: violence sells.

Fifty of the top grossing movies in 1998 contained a total of 2,319 violent scenes, and 1,377 included "serious violence," according to the Center for Media and Public Affairs.

The Washington-based public interest group's report, titled "I'm Okay, You're Dead!," noted that the top 10 movies included almost two-thirds of all scenes of serious violence. Five of the 10 most violent movies carry a PG rating, it added.

The Academy Award-winning "Saving Private Ryan" was the most violent movie, with 262 scenes of serious violence, but it included acts of violence that had "redeeming social" and "artistic" values, the group said.

The researchers also said CBS was the most violent network, with an average of 10 serious acts of violence per episode. Cable's USA came in second with an average of eight violent acts per episode. The report also claimed that most violent TV series are rated TV-PG.

Neither CBS nor the Motion Picture Assn. of America were willing to comment on the study.

The report is the latest study that tabulates incidents of violence and/or sex on television. Other reports have also found that violent programming is prevalent on TV, but industry executives often have questioned the methodology of researchers. Some studies say that absurd and comedic violence found in cartoons featuring Bugs Bunny is just as troubling as the gun play and fisticuffs on CBS' "Walker, Texas Ranger."

Center for Media and Public Affairs president Robert Lichter criticized the current content codes used by the TV and movie industries, saying in many cases it appears that the content labels were decided by a coin toss.

"Hollywood doesn't just show violence, they merchandise it," Lichter added.

The Federal Trade Commission is investigating accusations that the entertainment industry is marketing adult-oriented entertainment to children. The FTC study, which can use subpoenaed documents, is supposed to be wrapped up within a year.

Reuters/Variety



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Tuesday September 21, 7:10 am Eastern Time

Company Press Release

SOURCE: Levi's Strauss & Co.

Levi's(R) and the Goo Goo Dolls Extend Challenge to America's Youth To Help Fight Gun Violence

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NEW YORK, Sept. 21 /PRNewswire/ -- As Levi's® Fuse '99 wraps up, headlining band, the Goo Goo Dolls, and Levi's® continue their support for PAX, a non-profit anti-violence. Yesterday, at an exclusive party at the Bowery Ballroom in Manhattan, Levi's® and PAX, with the support of the Goo Goo Dolls, challenged America's youth to take action against gun violence by logging onto <http://www.levismusic.com> and ``signing" the Levi's® virtual denim wall in support of PAX. In an effort to spread the importance of a society free of gun violence, the challenge is being extended online for two weeks starting today and ending on Tuesday, October 5.

Each virtual signature collected supports PAX's goal to solicit one million signatures by the end of the year as part of its Youth Petition to End Gun Violence. With this, PAX strives to reach youth all over the country with messages about making a difference for a more peaceful society. The Petition from America's Youth to our nation's leaders is intended to implement common sense solutions to the gun violence.

``This was monumental for us to be able to reach out to so many young adults simultaneously about anti-violent behavior and how it can benefit society," says Dan Gross, founder of PAX. ``The Goo Goo Dolls and Levi's® have given us the opportunity to communicate our message on a local and national level and this is what we have been striving toward since we founded PAX."

In addition to singing their way around the country, the Goo Goo Dolls have been extremely instrumental with Levi's® in voicing their opinions on anti-violence. At the launch of Levi's® Fuse '99 in July, the Goo Goo Dolls, Levi's® and PAX kicked off a ``De-Fuse the Violence" campaign in support of PAX, where the Goo Goo Dolls signed a gigantic denim mural. To extend the campaign beyond the kick-off, the Levi's® Fuse Box, an urban lounge on wheels, followed the tour to 20 cities carrying the denim mural. At each concert venue, the mural was used to collect signatures for The Petition and to help raise awareness around the anti-violence message. Concert-goers, emerging talent from Levi's® First Stage and local media all signed the mural in support of PAX.

Levi's® is also donating a \$100,000 grant and a percentage of all Levi's® Fuse '99 t-shirt proceeds to PAX in support of their efforts. PAX representatives helped to spread a positive message with MTV's ``Take A Stand Against Violence" action brochures and CDs, as well as other informational materials at each of the 44 Levi's® Fuse '99 venues.

PAX was co-founded by Talmage Cooley and Dan Gross in 1997. PAX's mission is to create a powerful national movement, which brings all Americans together in support of common sense social and

political solutions to the gun violence epidemic. Through an innovative communications and media strategy, PAX will amplify the gun violence issue, empower individual action and unify the grassroots movement, leading ultimately to a passionate and informed demand for fundamental change.

Levi® Strauss created the world's first pair of jeans in 1873 and today is the number one jeans brand in the world. For more information on Levi's® Fuse '99, other Levi's® music sponsorships and the brand, visit <http://www.levi.com>.

SOURCE: Levi's Strauss & Co.



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School News

Entertainment Headlines

Wednesday September 22 5:05 AM ET

D.C. culture warriors target Hollywood again

By Christopher Stern

WASHINGTON (Variety) - The U.S. Senate is poised to establish a Special Committee on American Culture, headed by a vocal critic of Hollywood, which will have the power to subpoena documents and witnesses.

Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) is expected to head the bipartisan Culture Committee. He has suggested Hollywood is responsible for creating a culture of violence and profanity that has undermined the morality of America's youth. A Senate subcommittee is expected to vote as early as Wednesday to decide whether the full Senate should vote on establishing the committee.

Entertainment industry lobbyists had expected the Senate to reject Brownback's call for a special committee, but are now less optimistic. "If you asked me three weeks ago, I would have said maybe not. Now it looks likely," one industry source said.

Brownback spokesman Erik Hotmire pointed out that the special committee will also look at family issues such as out-of-wedlock births and divorce, not just the entertainment industry. The goals of the committee include collecting data on the impact of pop culture; exploring links between violent entertainment and crime; and investigating possible connections between explicit sexual material and teen sexual activity.

But creative industry lobbyists, who were working Tuesday night to turn back Brownback's efforts, point out that the Federal Trade Commission is already investigating the entertainment industry in connection with marketing violence to young people. In addition, President Clinton has asked the Surgeon General to look at the effects of popular entertainment on kids. And Congress is also still weighing a proposal to create a national commission on youth violence that would also take a look at popular culture's impact on the behavior of the nation's teenagers.

Congress has been struggling with ways to address youth violence since April, when two students killed 13 people at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., before taking their own lives. Republicans have been quick to blame popular culture for inciting the violent spree and a handful of other incidents that have struck the nation's school yards during the last several years. But Democrats insist most of the blame should be targeted at the firearms industry, which is resisting tougher gun control laws.

Under the proposal now circulating, the committee would only be authorized to work until Dec. 31, 2000.

Reuters/Variety



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