

Domestic Policy Council

West Wing, 2nd Floor

Crime and Guns Q&A/ Press Releases

**PRESIDENT CLINTON SALUTES THE MILLION MOM MARCH
FIGHT FOR COMMON SENSE GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION
May 13, 2000**

Today, in his weekly radio address, President Clinton will pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of mothers nationwide who will celebrate Mother's Day and show their support for stronger gun laws by participating in the Million Mom March. The March, with a kick-off event at the White House with the President and the First Lady, will take place in Washington, D.C., and in nearly 70 communities across the nation. Over 150,000 mothers, fathers, children and other supporters are expected to converge on the National Mall for the event, making it the largest gun safety rally in history. The President will commend the mothers for leading an unprecedented grassroots movement to push for common-sense gun laws that will reduce the tragic toll of gun violence in our nation, and he will urge them to continue their fight for a safer America for their children beyond Sunday's March.

MAKING THE VOICES OF AMERICA'S MOMS HEARD ACROSS THE NATION. On Sunday, mothers and families from across the country will join in the Million Mom March, a grassroots effort to focus the nation's attention on the terrible costs of gun violence and on the steps that can be taken to save more lives. The March has been organized by a group of mothers from across America who have become outraged by the lack of action taken by Congress to protect their children from gun violence. Many of these mothers have suffered tragic personal losses because of gun violence; many others have been stirred to action by the fear that criminals and children can too easily get their hands on guns. Accordingly, a key focus of the March will be highlighting the fact that gunfire takes the lives of 12 children every day, and participants will urge Congress and policymakers nationwide to pass preventive measures that will keep guns out of the wrong hands.

URGING CONGRESS TO PUT THE SAFETY OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN FIRST. For ten months – despite numerous gun tragedies at schools, workplaces, and even places of worship all across America – the Congress has refused to move forward on common-sense gun measures. During that time, an estimated 20,000 Americans have lost their lives in gun violence. The President has urged Congress to send him strong gun safety measures without delay, including provisions to close the gun show loophole; mandate child safety locks with every handgun sold; ban high capacity ammunition clips; bar the most violent juveniles from possessing firearms as adults; and hold adults accountable if they allow children easy access to deadly guns. The President has also proposed funding for "smart gun" research and development grants and a state-based licensing proposal that requires all new handgun purchasers to be trained in the proper handling and storage of firearms. And as part of his comprehensive gun violence reduction strategy, the President has also called on Congress to fund the largest national gun enforcement initiative in history. This \$280 million initiative would fund 500 new ATF firearms agents and inspectors; over 1,000 new federal, state and local prosecutors; expanded gun tracing and ballistics testing; and programs modeled on Richmond's "Project Exile" and Boston's "Operation Ceasefire." Pointing out that states and communities across the country are moving ahead on common-sense gun measures, the President will urge Congress to stop its stall tactics and send him a gun safety bill he can sign now.

**President Clinton Promotes Smart Gun Technology
to Protect Children from Gun Violence
May 12, 2000**

Today, President Clinton will announce that the Justice Department is awarding grants to two gun manufacturers for the research and development of "smart gun" technologies. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) will provide Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing, Inc. a total \$600,000 to expand their research efforts into smart guns. Smart gun technology, has the potential to limit a gun's use to its proper adult owner – and could prevent accidental shooting deaths of children, deter gun theft, and stop criminals from seizing and using the guns of police officers against them.

LEADING AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP SMART GUN TECHNOLOGY. NIJ, the Justice Department's research and evaluation arm, will award two grants of \$300,000 each to Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing, Inc. to fund additional smart gun research and development. Smart gun technologies show tremendous promise in reducing gun violence that results when firearms are taken intentionally or accidentally from their proper owner since they have the ability to distinguish an authorized user from someone who is not otherwise permitted to fire the weapon. Today's grants will support the design and testing of smart gun prototypes as well as additional research into specific technologies, including fingerprint identification and embedded microelectronics, to prevent firing by unauthorized users.

PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE EXPANSION OF SMART GUN TECHNOLOGY. In this year's budget, the President has proposed a \$10 million initiative to greatly expand the research, development and replication of smart gun technologies. Under the plan, NIJ would use the funding increase for additional smart gun research and development, to develop standards for smart gun technology use, and provide continued funding for ongoing research grants. NIJ has worked with the Sandia National Laboratories to study which existing technologies, such as radio frequency, voice recognition, biometrics, and touch memory technology, could be adaptable to a smart gun. NIJ has supported smart gun research over the past few years in response to FBI data showing that over the past decade, 113 weapons were stolen from police officers, and 57 officers were killed with their own guns.

PUSHING FOR COMMON SENSE GUN SAFETY MEASURES. The President today will once again stress the importance of common sense gun measures that can reduce gun violence by keeping guns out of the wrong hands. First, he will continue to urge Congress to complete its work on juvenile crime legislation and pass a final bill that includes the Senate-passed provisions to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks for handguns, bar the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, and ban violent juveniles from owning guns for life. Nearly a year has lapsed since these lifesaving measures passed in the Senate last May. The President will also renew his call on Congress to create a state-based licensing system that would apply to all new handgun purchases. Under the President's licensing plan, states would issue a license only to applicants who have passed a Brady background check and completed a certified safety course or exam.

**Guns
Q&A
May 10, 2000**

Q: Yesterday, the First Lady endorsed a series of gun-safety measures, which included requiring the licensing of all new handgun owners and the registration of all new handguns – this goes a step further than the President’s proposal. She also praised Governor Pataki for proposing a “ballistic testing” database to help law enforcement trace guns used in crimes. Why hasn’t the President proposed registration for all new handguns and what is his position on ballistic testing?

A: As the President has said, he believes gun registration is a good idea. But he also believes that the best next step to strengthen our gun laws is a state-based licensing system to help ensure that handgun purchasers may legally possess firearms and can safely handle and store them. This will help law enforcement efforts to keep guns out of hands of criminals, and it can help prevent accidental shootings. As the President stated after his meeting with organizers of the Million Mom March on Monday: he is frustrated that Congress has failed to listen to the majority of the American people and enact common-sense gun legislation to help protect our children from gun violence.

The President also supports ballistic tracing of guns, a tool that uses “fingerprints” of bullets or shell casings left at the scene of a crime to identify violent criminals and illegal gun traffickers – even in the absence of a firearm, to help make it more difficult for criminals to cover up crimes committed with firearms. The President’s budget request provides more than \$30 million (an increase of over \$20 million) to fund a groundbreaking National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) that will eventually give every law enforcement agency in the nation access to valuable information on gun criminals.

Q: What is the President’s reaction to the Senate’s move on the ESEA bill, which avoids the expected debate over gun-safety amendments?

A: Given the lack of progress by Congress on enacting common-sense gun legislation, it is understandable that Senator Lautenberg and others want to seek any legislative vehicle to address the gun-show loophole to help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. The President shares this frustration with Congress’ inaction, and agrees that it is past time that the Republican leadership to allow the conferees to meet on the Juvenile Justice bill and send the President legislation he can sign.

Q: Does the President support Senator Feinstein’s legislation that requires licensing of all handgun owners and registration of many firearms?

A: The President applauds the Democratic leadership for being proactive in addressing the problem of gun violence and their efforts in seeking common-sense steps to work towards a solution. As the President has clearly stated, he thinks registration of handguns is a good idea, but the first and most practical step to help keep handguns out of the wrong hands is to establish a mandatory state-licensing system for all new handgun purchasers.

Trafficking Victims Protection Act

Q&A

May 10, 2000

Q: Why does the Administration oppose H.R. 3244, the Trafficking Victims of Protection Act?

A: We oppose the sanctions provision of this bill but strongly anti-trafficking legislation that will further the Administration's efforts to fight trafficking as well as provide new and necessary tools in this effort. The Administration has made the fight against trafficking a priority. For nearly three years, the Administration has been working with federal agencies and foreign governments on ways to prevent trafficking protect trafficking victims, and investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases. We support anti-trafficking legislation that strengthens prosecutions of trafficking, assists victims, and enhances prevention efforts. However, we have concerns with this particular legislation and intend to work with Congress as the bill moves through the legislative process.

The Administration strongly opposes the bill's broad sanctions provisions, which we believe will have a debilitating effect on the fight against trafficking. These provisions could require the United States to impose sanctions on governments that are working with the United States in good faith in nascent and fragile efforts to combat trafficking. The bill's sanctions would: (1) be counterproductive to cooperative multilateral efforts needed to track down and punish traffickers, such as the proposed UN protocol on trafficking; (2) punish minor governmental violators as harshly as major governmental violators; (3) undermine the crucial efforts of non-governmental organizations in other countries working to help victims; (4) cut off U.S. foreign assistance designed to fight trafficking in persons, including law enforcement training and related support; and (5) discourage governments, many of whom have begun to address the problem but lack the resources to do so, from combating trafficking.

We have also some other concerns that the temporary residency visa ("T- visa") provision is likely to be too restrictive; the criminal provisions would make prosecutions more difficult; and the new reporting requirement would duplicate existing reporting requirements.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON MEETS WITH MILLION MOM MARCH
ORGANIZERS AND RENEWS HIS CALL ON CONGRESS TO
ENACT COMMON SENSE GUN LEGISLATION NOW
May 8, 2000**

President Clinton today, joined by Attorney General Janet Reno and senior White House officials, will meet with key organizers of the Million Mom March. The March is scheduled for Mother's Day, May 14, in Washington and communities across the country, and its purpose is to dramatize the toll that gun violence takes every day on American families. In today's meeting, March organizers will brief the President on the status of their grassroots rallies and their efforts to push Congress and other political leaders to take common sense action on gun safety. The President will express his strong support for these efforts and will call on Congress again to act on long-delayed legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

MOBILIZING MOTHERS AND FAMILIES AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE. On May 14, mothers and families from across the country will join in the Million Mom March, a grassroots effort to focus the nation's attention on the terrible costs of gun violence and on the steps that can be taken to reduce the violence. Highlighting the fact that gunfire takes the lives of 12 children every day, the participants in the March will call for steps to: limit handgun sales to one per month; close the gun show loophole; crack down on bad-apple gun dealers; boost funding for the ATF to allow better oversight of the gun industry; and halt the marketing of guns to children and criminals. President Clinton today will meet with key members of the March, including several mothers who have lost their children recently to gun violence. He will be briefed on the progress of the March plans and will pledge his support for the March and its efforts to reduce gun violence.

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO ACT NOW TO PROTECT AMERICA'S CHILDREN.

For ten months – despite numerous gun tragedies at schools, workplaces, and even places of worship all across America – the Congress has refused to move forward on common sense gun measures. The President has urged Congress to send him strong gun safety measures without delay, including provisions to close the gun show loophole; mandate child safety locks with every handgun sold; ban high capacity ammunition clips; bar the most violent juveniles from possessing firearms as adults; and hold adults accountable if they allow children easy access to deadly guns. The President has also proposed funding for “smart gun” research and development grants and a state-based licensing proposal that requires all new handgun purchasers to be trained in the proper handling and storage of firearms. And as part of his comprehensive gun violence reduction strategy, the President has also called on Congress to fund the largest national gun enforcement initiative in history. This \$280 million initiative would fund 500 new ATF firearms agents and inspectors; over 1,000 new federal, state and local prosecutors; expanded gun tracing and ballistics testing; and programs modeled on Richmond's “Project Exile” and Boston's “Operation Ceasefire.” The President today will renew his call on Congress to enact these proposals. Pointing out that states and communities across the country are moving ahead on common sense gun measures, the President will urge Congress to stop its stall tactics and send him a gun safety bill he can sign now.

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES GUN BUYBACK PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

April 28, 2000

Today, President Clinton, joined by District of Columbia Mayor Williams, Metropolitan Police Chief Ramsey, and Housing Secretary Cuomo, will announce a new gun buyback partnership between the District of Columbia and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Under the initiative – the largest ever in D.C. and one of the largest ever in the country – a total of \$350,000 will be made available to purchase an estimated 7,000 guns through a local gun buyback program jointly administered by the Washington Public Housing Authority and the Metropolitan Police Department. In addition, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms will trace all guns recovered in the buyback. A total of 85 communities across the country are now participating in the first round of HUD's BuyBack America program to launch similar local gun buyback programs and to take tens of thousands of unwanted guns out of circulation. Today's initiative is part of a comprehensive effort by the Clinton Administration to provide more tools for communities to reduce gun violence, and to advance common sense gun safety legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

TAKING THOUSANDS OF GUNS OUT OF CIRCULATION IN WASHINGTON. In the wake of the recent shooting at the National Zoo, President Clinton today will announce a major partnership between the federal government and the District of Columbia to fund the largest gun buyback in the city's history. Under today's partnership, HUD's BuyBack America program will provide \$100,000 and the Metropolitan Police Department will provide \$250,000 to fund the buyback, which will be held June 23rd and 24th. The District of Columbia Public Housing Authority will partner with the Metropolitan Police Department to conduct the buyback, which will fund the purchase of an estimated 7,000 guns and take them off the street and out of circulation permanently. Last August, the Metropolitan Police Department conducted two successful buybacks. The first, funded in part by HUD, yielded 600 guns; the second, 2,300 guns. According to an ATF report on the buybacks, the vast majority of firearms recovered (2,200) were handguns, and far exceeded the District's average annual recovery rate of 2,105 crime guns. Among the firearms frequently recovered were the types of guns often used in crimes and illegally trafficked by unlicensed dealers.

PROVIDING RESOURCES TO FUND BUYBACKS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. A recent study released by HUD shows that people living in public housing are more than twice as likely to suffer from gun-related victimization as the general population. And while gun crime is down by 35 percent since 1992, nearly 12 children are still killed every day by gunfire. To help reduce the toll of gun violence, President Clinton last September unveiled a \$15 million HUD gun buyback initiative – the largest gun buyback program in history. Under the first round of the BuyBack America Initiative, HUD is providing funding to a total of 85 communities to enable Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to partner with local law enforcement agencies to conduct local gun buyback programs. By reducing the number of firearms in circulation, buyback programs can help prevent accidental shootings, gun suicides, gun crime and unauthorized gun use. The HUD buyback program encourages a cap of \$50 for each working gun, and encourages PHAs to provide the awards in the form of gift certificates for goods or services rather than cash. Every HUD-sponsored buyback must be run by a local police department – with no amnesty

given for any crimes committed with returned firearms. And to ensure permanent removal from circulation, all guns are destroyed unless they are relevant to an ongoing law enforcement investigation, or they have been stolen from their lawful owner.

WORKING WITH D.C. LAW ENFORCEMENT TO COMBAT GUN CRIME. Today's initiative is another example of efforts by the federal government and the District of Columbia to work together to combat gun crime. Under innovative programs such as Operation Ceasefire, which has received nearly \$1 million in federal funding since 1995, local police are partnering with the U.S. Attorney and the ATF to increase gun enforcement and gun crime prevention programs. Also, through the Administration's Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, local police are working with the ATF to trace all crime guns recovered in the District to crack down on illegal gun traffickers that supply guns to juveniles and criminals.

KEEPING UP PRESSURE TO ENACT COMMON SENSE GUN LEGISLATION. In addition to announcing these new tools to combat gun violence, the President will again emphasize the importance of common sense gun measures that can reduce gun violence by keeping guns out of the wrong hands. Noting that the Congress missed an opportunity to pass gun safety legislation by the April 20th anniversary of the Columbine shootings, the President will urge Congress to complete work on juvenile crime legislation and pass a final bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for handguns, bars the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, and bans violent juveniles from owning guns for life.

Gun Buyback Event
Q&A
April 28, 2000

Q: Critics say that gun buybacks don't actually take guns out of the hands of criminals. Is there any evidence to suggest that gun buybacks actually reduce gun crime?

A: Every time we take a gun out of circulation through a buyback program, we help reduce the incidence of gun violence – not only gun crime, but also gun-related accidents, suicides, and other unintentional uses of guns. For instance, people living in a home with a gun have a suicide risk that is five times greater than those who live in a home without a gun. We also know that of the nearly 12 young people who are killed every day by gunfire, more than a third are by gun suicides and accidents. And many of the firearms obtained through buybacks are the types of guns frequently used in crimes.

Unfortunately, there haven't been any truly comprehensive studies of buy back programs, and there certainly has never been a program of the magnitude of the HUD \$15 million program – which could help communities to buy back tens of thousands of guns. That is why HUD will make money available from the initiative to study the effects of buybacks, and identify promising practices to help make the programs more effective. However, it is also important to note that another important element of gun buyback programs is the impact they have on communities and their citizens. Gun buybacks give people an opportunity to get involved with law enforcement in local efforts to reduce violence, and they give residents hope that they can change their communities for the better.

Q: Isn't it highly unlikely that a gun buyback would have prevented a tragic incident like this week's shooting at the zoo?

A: Well, there is an ongoing investigation into the zoo shooting and I believe that authorities do not yet have the gun used in that incident. Of course we may never know if one single action could have prevented the shooting. Still, this week's tragic incident serves as further proof that we must do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands – kids especially. Gun buybacks are just one way we can address this problem – and they work hand-in-hand with child safety locks for handguns, smart gun technology, and cracking down on illegal traffickers who supply guns to youth – are other ways which the President has also proposed. The President believes we must take action on all fronts in order to address the problem of gun violence in this nation. Today's announcement is simply one more tool the President wants to give local communities to support their gun violence reduction efforts.



Anna Richter

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To: Jason H. Schechter/WHO/EOP@EOP
cc: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
Subject: Additional Q&A on Buyback -

Q: Weren't the guns retrieved in the last D.C. buybacks older guns and guns that wouldn't have been used in crimes?

A: The ATF reviewed the two gun buybacks conducted by the District last year and found that among the firearms most recovered were types of guns that are frequently used in crimes, illegally trafficked, or recovered by law enforcement agencies. This includes three of the most commonly recovered crime guns in America (the Raven .25 pistol, the Davis .380 pistol, and the Jennings .22 pistol). These same types of firearms are also consistently among the most frequently recovered firearms used in crimes in the District. In addition, handguns account for over 80% of all crime gun traces conducted nationally by the ATF, and 2,200 of the 2,912 guns turned into the District's buybacks were handguns. It only makes sense that by taking these types of weapons out of our nation's communities, we are reducing the likelihood of countless gun-related tragedies.

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Feinstein/Kyl Victims' Rights Amendment
Q&A
April 27, 2000

Q: What is your current position on the Feinstein/Kyl victims' rights amendment?

A: The President has said before that he strongly supports a victims rights amendment. We have been working with Senators Feinstein and Kyl to address our concerns about certain provisions of their amendment in its current form. Despite a good-faith effort on all sides, we have not been able to reach agreement. But the President and the Vice President deeply appreciate the sponsors' efforts and hope we can keep working to pass a balanced victims rights amendment down the road.

**Gun Industry Lawsuit
Q&A
April 27, 2000**

Q: Yesterday, seven gun makers and a national trade group (National Shooting Sports Foundation) filed a lawsuit against HUD and a number of States and cities with gun lawsuits alleging that you have been engaged in an illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade. What is your response to their allegations?

A: We are disappointed that rather than follow the lead of Smith and Wesson to work with us and numerous cities to engage in good faith discussions, this group of manufacturers has instead decided to pursue the course of frivolous litigation.

We have been working for many months with municipalities across the country on ways to meet one of our most basic responsibilities: protecting public safety. That is why we pursued a comprehensive agreement with Smith and Wesson, worked with cities to encourage responsible and safe practices by the gun industry, and continue to fight for common sense gun safety legislation. We are absolutely committed to working on all fronts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children and reduce gun violence in this country.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation is suing public officials across the country simply for working together to reduce gun violence. That is absurd. If NSSF and others in the gun industry are serious about making our communities safer, they should abandon this fruitless and divisive effort and work with us to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Q: The gun industry members claim that your efforts jeopardize law enforcement and would force them to buy guns they don't want. Isn't that true?

A: No. Our highest priority in protecting the public safety is to ensure effective law enforcement. The Smith and Wesson code of conduct is fundamentally about helping law enforcement keep guns out of the wrong hands. Many of its provisions – from design to distribution of firearms – are specifically crafted to prevent criminals from getting access to guns and children from firing them. That's why many cities want to support manufacturers that abide by this code of responsible behavior. The National Shooting Sports Foundation can't explain why they oppose a voluntary code that will help law enforcement do its job.

Q: In light of this lawsuit and what appears to be stonewalling by the industry, are you preparing to file your own lawsuit against these gun makers anytime soon?

A: Yesterday's actions reflect a lack of seriousness on the industry's part about reducing gun violence. From the outset, we've said that we prefer negotiation to confrontation, but we haven't ruled anything out.

Q: Do you really think removing even a few hundred thousand guns from circulation through the HUD program will make a difference when there are over 200 million guns privately owned guns in America?

A: We believe it will make a difference, although we agree that it certainly isn't a solution on its own. HUD's buyback program is just one more tool that we are giving communities and law enforcement to improve public safety and reduce gun violence. But Congress has an important opportunity to give communities even more tools to reduce gun violence, which is why they should pass common sense gun legislation that requires Brady background checks at gun shows, bans the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, and requires child safety locks for guns.

Q: If the HUD program is a \$15 million initiative, why are only 85 communities participating? Why is so little money being spent out of the initiative so far (\$2.7 million)?

A: These communities represent the first round of funding. Last week, HUD announced that Public Housing Authorities can use FY 2000 funds toward buybacks and we expect many more communities to seek funding in the second round. HUD has already begun to receive applications for the second round of buybacks.

Q: What HUD program is funding the buybacks?

A: Housing authorities commit HUD Public Housing Drug Elimination Grant (DEG) funds to the buyback and HUD provides 43 cents in additional funds for every dollar of DEG money committed to the buyback. For the District of Columbia, this breaks down to \$70,000 in DEG funds and \$30,000 in matching funds. Buybacks must be carried out in cooperation with local police or sheriffs and the guns must be destroyed unless it turns out they were stolen or are needed for a criminal investigation.

PRESIDENT CLINTON HOLDS HATE CRIMES STRATEGY SESSION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, ANNOUNCES NEW HATE CRIMES REPORTS

April 25, 2000

President Clinton, joined by the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General and Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights will meet today with several state, local, and federal law enforcement officials to emphasize the need for federal hate crimes legislation and to highlight the successful partnerships between various law enforcement offices in prosecuting hate crimes. This strategy session is a follow-up to the White House Conference on Hate Crimes held in November 1997, where the President announced the creation of Hate Crimes Working Groups led by U.S. Attorneys across the country. Several U.S. Attorneys will report to the President today on the progress their working groups have made thus far. The President will also announce the release of two new resources on hate crimes – a local prosecutor's guide to preventing and responding to hate crimes, and a "promising practices" report that describes successful anti-hate partnerships – and he will renew his call for passage of an expanded federal hate crimes law.

STRATEGY SESSION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS. In his strategy session today, the President will hear from a range of state, local, and federal law enforcement officials about the need for federal hate crimes legislation. These law enforcement officials – who include state Attorneys General, local prosecutors, sheriffs and police officers – will emphasize that while the majority of these crimes should continue to be prosecuted at the state and local level, their work can be buttressed and made more effective by a broader federal role. They will also describe specific instances of hate crimes when local and federal law enforcement officials, working together, agreed that it was best for federal prosecutors to handle the cases. In addition, several U.S. Attorneys will brief the President on their Hate Crimes Working Group activities, including better cooperation with state and local law enforcement, training efforts for law enforcement officers, and work with community groups.

URGING PASSAGE OF EXPANDED FEDERAL HATE CRIMES LAW. The President today will also make the case for expanded federal hate crimes legislation. In particular, he will urge Congress to pass the bipartisan Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999. Current law prohibits acts of violence based on a person's race, color, religion, or national origin – but only if the acts of violence are intended to interfere with certain federally protected activities, such as voting or serving on a jury. The new legislation would remove this restriction on prosecutors and would make such acts of violence illegal even if they did not interfere with federally protected activities. In addition, the legislation would punish hate crimes based on a victim's sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Current federal law does not cover such cases.

ANNOUNCING LOCAL PROSECUTOR'S HATE CRIMES GUIDE. The President today will announce that the American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI), the research affiliate of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) is releasing "A Local Prosecutor's Guide for Responding to Hate Crimes." This guide will help local prosecutors prevent and respond to hate crimes. Copies will be distributed to prosecutors' offices throughout the country upon

request. The guide covers several issues that arise during hate crime prosecutions, such as: (1) working with outside agencies and organizations; (2) case screening and investigation; (3) case assignment and preparation; (4) victim and witness impact and support; (5) trial preparation; (6) sentencing alternatives; and (7) prevention efforts. By highlighting model protocols and procedures from offices around the nation, the resource guide will help prosecutors' offices develop policies and procedures on handling hate crime investigations and prosecutions. It also will provide a comprehensive roadmap to individual prosecutors who are handling hate crime cases. APRI, which is supported by funding from the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, established an 18-member advisory group which includes 10 local prosecutors, as well as representatives from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Anti-Defamation League, the Center on Hate and Extremism, the National Center for Victims of Crime, Facing History and Ourselves, a county sheriff's office, the FBI, and the DOJ Community Relations Service.

ANNOUNCING PROMISING PRACTICES GUIDE. The President today will also announce a new guide called "Promising Practices Against Hate Crimes: Five State and Local Demonstration Projects." This monograph, the second in the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Hate Crimes Series, examines five BJA-funded state and local programs that are among the nation's most promising models for confronting and reducing hate crime. The five initiatives discussed are the Simon Wiesenthal Center's National Institutes Against Hate Crimes in Los Angeles, the Victim Assistance Project in San Diego, the JOLT (Juvenile Offenders Learning Tolerance) Program in Los Angeles, the Civil Rights Team Project in Maine, and the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes in Massachusetts. The first program provides training to criminal justice professionals, the second addresses the emotional and practical needs of hate crime victims, and the last three focus on bias among youth, with an emphasis on removing hate from public schools. In early May, approximately 8,000 copies will be mailed to a cross-section of law enforcement and other criminal justice practitioners. Copies will also be available through BJA's clearinghouse (1-800-688-4252) and website (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA).

**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES
TO COMBAT AND PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE
APRIL 15, 2000**

In his weekly radio address today, President Clinton will discuss the responsibility we all have to help reduce youth violence. As we prepare to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, the President will talk about steps that the federal government and communities across the country are taking to keep our children safe. First, he will announce three new initiatives: \$41 million in Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants to 23 communities; \$60 million in COPS in Schools grants to hire 452 school resource officers in 223 communities nationwide; and \$20 million for a new program to fund counselors in elementary schools. Second, the President will highlight a new city-by-city initiative launched by the National Campaign Against Youth Violence to engage citizens from every sector in 15 communities across the country. Finally, President Clinton will announce that on May 2, he and the First Lady will host a White House Conference on Teenagers to address the challenges today of raising responsible teenagers.

GIVING COMMUNITIES THE TOOLS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

- President Clinton will announce more than \$41 million in **Safe Schools/Healthy Students** grants to 23 communities. Urban, rural, suburban, and tribal school districts will receive support to help link community-based services and prevention activities into a single, comprehensive community-wide approach to school safety, violence prevention and healthy child development. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative is a unique collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Justice, Education and Health and Human Services first launched in 1999. Fifty-four communities across the country are already participating in this multi-year initiative.
- The President will also announce the fifth round of funding for the **COPS in Schools** grant program, to provide more than \$60 million for 452 school resource officers in more than 223 communities nationwide. The COPS in Schools program, administered by the Justice Department's COPS Office, funds police officers to work in schools and to create a safer environment for students and teachers.
- The President will unveil his **Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Program**, which will make \$20 million available for innovative approaches to starting or expanding elementary school counseling. The program, managed by the Department of Education, will support the hiring and training of qualified school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers for elementary schools; provide greater student access to beneficial counseling services; and help identify effective strategies for providing counseling services to elementary school students that might be replicated and disseminated to other communities across the country.

CITY-BY-CITY TOUR OF THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE

- The National Campaign Against Youth Violence this week launched its City-by-City Campaign in Memphis, culminating in a nationally televised Town Hall on Violence yesterday evening. The purpose of the National Campaign's 15-city effort is to highlight and engage community partnerships to combat youth crime. The National Campaign Against Youth Violence – formed in response to the President's call to action last year – has been working with local business leaders, political leaders, educators, parents, teens, and law enforcement to help implement proven best

practices for preventing violence. To help other cities interested in developing a such public-private partnerships, the National Campaign has also produced, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, a best practices guide called "Corporate-Community Partnerships for Public Safety."

PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON'S WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TEENAGERS

- On Tuesday, May 2, President and Mrs. Clinton will host the White House Conference on Teenagers: Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth. The conference will feature some of the nation's leading experts on raising teenagers. These experts will discuss:
 - new scientific research that the preteen years are as important as the first three years of life, setting patterns for adult behavior and success;
 - the changing demographics of today's youth, the most diverse group of teenagers in history;
 - perceptions and realities about the role that parents play in the lives of their teenage children;
 - the risks, challenges and anxieties faced by today's teens;
 - the impact of new media on youth and parenting; and
 - what parents, communities, and young people themselves can do to avoid risk behaviors to build a safe and successful path to adulthood.

Attendees will also include parents and teens, educators, youth workers, foundation leaders, researchers, and policymakers. The opening session – which will be broadcast via satellite to locations around the country – will be followed by lunch, breakout sessions hosted by Administration officials and members of Congress, and a closing reception.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: STANDING WITH COLORADO VOTERS TO CLOSE THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE

April 12, 2000

Today in Denver, President Clinton will participate in a citizen rally sponsored by SAFE Colorado in support of a statewide ballot initiative to close the gun show loophole. The President will highlight the leadership that Colorado and other states are now demonstrating on gun safety -- but he will also point out that national legislation is needed to address this national problem. For over nine months, Congress has failed to act on the gun legislation passed by the Senate last May. That legislation includes a measure requiring background checks for all sales at gun shows, and it served as the model for the Colorado ballot initiative. The President today will again challenge Congress to put the interests of American families above those of the gun lobby and to pass common-sense gun legislation before departing for recess at the end of this week.

THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE: PROVIDING CRIMINALS WITH EASY ACCESS TO FIREARMS. Every year, an estimated 5 million people attend over 4,400 gun shows in convention centers, school gyms, and on fairgrounds across our nation. While most people who buy and sell guns at gun shows are law-abiding citizens, a dangerous trend is emerging: criminals, juveniles and other restricted persons are exploiting a loophole under current law that allows unlicensed individuals to sell guns at gun shows without conducting background checks or keeping the records necessary to help law enforcement trace a gun used in a crime. Since unlicensed individuals account for up to 50 percent of all sellers at gun shows, this loophole has made gun shows a prime location for illegal activities. In response to a presidential directive, the Departments of Treasury and Justice released a study last year documenting 314 gun show investigations linked to over 54,000 crime guns; 46 percent of the investigations involved the purchase or sale of firearms by felons and 34 percent involved the sale of firearms later used in serious crimes, including homicides.

COLORADO CITIZENS: TAKING ACTION TO CLOSE THE DEADLY GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE. Citizens working with SAFE Colorado filed the state ballot initiative to close the gun show loophole in March after the Colorado state legislature failed to pass gun show legislation supported by Governor Bill Owens. SAFE (Sane Alternatives to the Firearms Epidemic) Colorado is a bipartisan organization that lobbies in support of reasonable gun laws. The gun show ballot initiative is modeled on the Administration's gun show measure that passed the Senate last May, requiring background checks and recordkeeping for all firearms sales at gun shows and providing law enforcement up to three business days to complete background checks. In order to get the initiative onto the ballot this November, SAFE Colorado must collect at least 62,000 signatures in support by August. But the gun lobby has vowed to block the initiative and its stalling tactics at every turn have cut the amount of time available to collect the needed signatures. The President today will remind the people of Colorado of their power to make their voices heard, and he will urge them to stand up to the gun lobby and its allies. A recent survey shows that the gun show ballot initiative has the support of 83 percent of Colorado voters.

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO CLOSE THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE NATIONWIDE BEFORE RECESS. The President's participation at today's rally comes just one day after he joined Governor Parris Glendening for the signing of a new comprehensive gun safety law in

Maryland requiring built-in child safety locks on all handguns. The President will note that action on the state level is making a powerful difference. At the same time, he will also underscore the importance of pursuing a strong national framework for our gun laws. He will point out that a patchwork of inconsistent state gun laws enables criminals to exploit loopholes in states with weaker laws and commit crimes in states with stronger laws. He will also point out that Congress can pass lifesaving new gun laws far more quickly than all 50 states. Yet for over nine months, Congress has failed to act on common sense gun safety legislation that would require background checks at gun shows; mandate child safety locks with every handgun sold; ban the importation of high capacity ammunition clips; and bar the most violent juvenile offenders from possessing firearms when they become adults. Just yesterday, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Hyde and Representative Conyers sent a letter to Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Hatch urging him to schedule a meeting to work out their differences on pending gun provisions and to make progress on the legislation. The President today will once again urge congressional leaders to take action on this legislation before they recess this week.

MSNBC Town Hall on Guns
Q&A
April 12, 2000

Q: Is the ready availability of guns responsible for the recent shootings in schools, office buildings and places of worship?

A: These recent shootings have all been tragedies, and they all had different factors at play. But they did share one key element: guns in the wrong hands. We need to make sure we do everything we can to make sure that those who shouldn't have guns cannot get access to them. This includes tougher enforcement of our gun laws as well as strengthening existing laws to keep guns from falling into the hands of criminals, the mentally unstable, domestic abusers and perhaps most of all, our children. I have asked Congress to help us to do both, by passing my gun enforcement initiative to fund over 1,000 more gun prosecutors and 500 new ATF agents and inspectors, and to pass commonsense gun legislation that, among other things, closes the gun show loophole and requires child safety locks for new handguns.

Q: Can gun violence be curbed with more laws, or is this a result of a larger societal problem?

A: While no single law can prevent all instances of gun violence from occurring, we know that stronger gun laws can make a difference in preventing gun crime and accidents. When I took office, violent crime – especially gun violence – was on the rise for years. So, we put into place a strategy of more police on our streets and put strong new laws on the books, including the Brady Law and the assault weapons ban. The Brady Law alone has stopped over half a million gun sales to felons, fugitives, stalkers, and others who are prohibited by law from owning guns. As a result of our efforts, stronger State gun laws and local efforts to curb gun violence, gun crime is down 35 percent since 1993 and the homicide rate is at its lowest point in 31 years.

But no one thinks gun violence is at an acceptable level. We could build our success immediately if the Congress would pass the common sense gun legislation that has been languishing for over nine months. These are simple safety measures we can take – closing the gun show loophole that allows criminals to buy guns no questions asked at gun shows, requiring child safety locks for handguns to prevent young people from using guns to hurt themselves or others. We know these measures will save lives and there is simply no excuse for sitting on our hands.

But of course, we can do more to address violence beyond passage of laws. Responsible members of the gun industry can do their part by working with us to make meaningful changes in the way they do business. The media and entertainment industries can help change a culture that too often glorifies violence. Schools and community groups can reach troubled youth before their troubles simmer over. And most fundamentally, parents can talk to their children, teach them to resolve their conflicts peacefully, and raise them

with the right values. I believe that if we set our minds to it, and work together, we can make this the safest big country in the world.

Q: How can parents protect their children from the dangers of guns?

A: First of all, I think it is important for parents to remember that violent crime and gun crime have dropped significantly all across the country. Having said that, I believe we can all do more to help make our children safer from gun violence. I would say to parents that it is important to talk to your children, if they're old enough, about these recent shootings. And reassure them that these are rare occurrences. Parents should remind children that schools are still about the safest places in any community.

Just as importantly, for parents that have guns at home, I would urge them to keep their guns safely stored and locked away so that their children cannot get access to them. The accidental firearms death rate for children under age 15 in the United States is nine times higher than in 25 other industrialized nations. This is unacceptable. UCLA and RAND recently released a study that showed that over a third of all homes with children had at least one firearm. Among those homes, 43 percent had at least one unlocked firearm. This shows that parents need to take greater care to ensure that their children – or other children – cannot use their guns.

Q: Does there need to be more federal gun control laws or should gun control laws be done by the states?

A: Recently, we have seen more states making progress to enact stronger gun laws. Yesterday, I joined the Governor of Maryland as he signed into law a number of common sense measures that would, for instance, mandate internal child safety locks on handguns and require all gun purchasers to get training on safe storage and handling of guns. Last week, I was in California, where the Governor has signed into law measures to limit handgun sales to one per month and to ban all "junk guns." These are all important steps that will help reduce gun violence, and I plan to do all I can to help bolster these efforts.

However, I still believe that that a national framework for our gun laws is needed. A patchwork of inconsistent state gun laws allows criminals to obtain guns by exploiting loopholes in states with weaker laws to commit crimes in states with stronger laws. And Congress can pass lifesaving new gun laws far more quickly than all 50 states. Take the Brady law. Before we passed this historic law, some states required background checks, but most of them did not. Back then, criminals who couldn't pass a background check in their home state could simply buy guns in neighboring states that didn't require them. Today, background checks are required in every state and the Brady law has helped block over 500,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers from purchasing firearms.

Congress could act immediately to build on the success of the Brady law and pass common sense gun measures that passed in the Senate last spring that included measures requiring background checks at gun shows and mandating the sale of child safety locks. Instead, the Congress has allowed this lifesaving legislation to languish for over nine

months. Despite their inaction, states like Colorado and Oregon are considering ballot initiatives to require background checks at gun shows. They recognize the public safety benefits of getting this done in their own communities. But every child in America deserves that same level of protection. And only Congress can pass legislation that protects every child in every corner of our country.

Q: What can be done to make guns safer?

A: There is a lot we can do to make guns safer and prevent gun accidents and other unintended uses of firearms. First, we should require child safety locks for handguns. This is a common sense proposal I have been pushing for years. I issued a directive to require child safety locks to be distributed to all federal law enforcement. I proposed legislation to require such locks, and the Senate passed this measure last year. The Congress can and should enact this provision right away, along with other common sense gun provisions to close the gun show loophole and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. I was just in Maryland yesterday, where the Governor signed a new law to require built-in locks in handguns to make them even harder for unauthorized people to use them.

In addition to safety locks, we should help support “smart gun” technology that can limit a gun’s use to its proper adult owner. I think there is incredible potential in smart guns, which is why I have proposed \$10 million in my budget to expand and develop research into such technology. The agreement we reached with Smith and Wesson last month will advance gun safety significantly, by requiring external locks, internal locks, and smart guns within a few years. The agreement also require guns to be subject to performance tests, and other safety standards to ensure safer, higher quality guns.

Q: What are the main components of the Smith and Wesson agreement? Does it do anything to make guns safer?

A: The landmark agreement that we reached with Smith and Wesson, represents an unprecedented partnership between the government and the gun industry to bring about meaningful reforms in the way the industry does business. Under the agreement, they will make major changes to the way they design, distribute and market their firearms. This means that Smith and Wesson will not only make guns that are safer, but they will also take actions to help ensure that their guns don’t fall into the hands of criminals.

Smith and Wesson agreed to a number of changes in the way they design their guns that will help to make their guns safer. Handguns will have external safety locks, internal safety locks and eventually smart gun technology. Handguns will also have child safety features to help ensure that young children can’t fire them.

Just as importantly, Smith and Wesson will require dealers and distributors who sell their products to abide by a code of conduct and help ensure that guns don’t slip into the illegal market and get into the hands of criminals. Under the agreement, guns cannot be sold at gun shows without background checks, new limits will be placed on multiple handgun

sales, and safety training will be required before individuals can purchase their gun. These breakthrough measures show what is possible when we work together in good faith – and they disprove the gun lobby’s long standing claim that such reforms were impossible. We applaud Smith and Wesson’s leadership, and hope other responsible members of the gun industry will step forward too.

Q: What is your position on smart gun technology? Will it really work? When will it be available?

A: I support smart guns, which is why my budget provides \$10 million to fund the expansion, testing, and replication of such technologies. Smart gun technologies limit a gun’s use to the proper owner – preventing accidental gun death, theft, and other unintended gun use. Several handgun manufacturers have already started to experiment with smart gun technologies. Through a partnership the Justice Department formed with one gun manufacturer, a prototype of one type of smart gun technology has been developed. My budget will build additional partnerships with gun manufacturers to help speed the availability of smart gun technology to the average consumer. While it is hard to say when this will be widely available, Smith and Wesson has already agreed to make smart guns available in the next 36 months.

Q: What do you think of the NRA’s personal attacks on you?

A: I don’t care if the NRA wants to attack me, but this debate shouldn’t be about personal attacks. It’s not about politics. It’s about saving lives. The gun lobby wants to change the subject away from the reasonable gun safety reforms that are supported by the majority of Americans. The truth is, the NRA doesn’t have the arguments on their side, so they’re choosing to make it personal instead.

Q: What is your response to the NRA’s claims that your Administration has been abysmal at enforcing laws already on the books?

A: Well, what they don’t say is that federal firearms prosecutions are actually up 16 percent since 1992. Federal gun offenders are serving sentences that are about two years longer since I took office. And because of our unprecedented partnership with states and localities, overall prosecutions – federal, state, and local combined – are up 22 percent since 1992. More importantly, gun crime is down 35 percent since I took office in 1993. So, to say we haven’t been enforcing the law, and that the results have been disastrous, is just plain wrong.

I do believe that we should do all we can to enforce the law, which is why I proposed the largest increase for gun enforcement – to fund 500 more ATF agents and inspectors, over 1,000 federal, State and local gun prosecutors, more resources to trace more guns, and to expand ballistics testing so we can catch even more gun criminals. For all their talk about enforcement, the gun lobby and their allies have been uncommonly silent when it comes to supporting real resources to crack down on gun criminals. We’ve been doing

the job on enforcement, and we're putting our money where our mouth is. I hope the NRA will come around and support my enforcement proposals.

Q: Many supporters of gun control believe the next step is the licensing and registration of handguns. If you support registration in principle, why did you only offer a proposal to license handgun buyers in this year's State of the Union?

A: As I have said before, I believe gun registration is a good idea. But I also believe that the best next step to strengthen our gun laws is a state-based licensing system to help ensure that handgun purchasers may legally possess firearms and can safely handle and store them. This will help law enforcement efforts to keep guns out of the wrong hands, and it can help prevent many accidental shootings. So, I want to focus now on making the case for licensing, and pressing the Congress to pass common sense gun provisions such as closing the gun show loophole, requiring child safety locks for handguns, and banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

Guns – Procurement
Q&A
April 11, 2000

Q: Recently, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo joined several cities to announce their plans to restrict government contracts for law enforcement guns to only those manufacturers who sign onto the Smith & Wesson agreement. What is your response to reports that this procurement effort is running into obstacles?

A: As you know, the President plans to use every tool possible to reduce gun violence in America, and believes that it is certainly worthwhile to look into ways that we can reward responsible firearms manufacturers that work with us to achieve this goal. As the largest procurer of firearms in America, the federal government should look into ways that we can encourage reforms within the firearms industry – reforms that would help law enforcement do its job. So we are starting to explore what is possible, and we are heartened that many cities are as well. Of course, for us and for the cities, reviewing procurement policy is not something that can be done with a wave of the wand – and it is not something we take lightly. We especially want to emphasize that our foremost priority in procurement policy is to ensure the safety and effectiveness of law enforcement. We would do nothing to jeopardize their mission or their access to the best weapons for their needs. We believe the cities and public housing authorities share that sense of priorities.

Mental Health Records/Guns
Q&A
April 11, 2000

Q: Today's *New York Times* reports the "loophole" that exists in current law that allows many people with mental health problems to buy guns. What is the Administration going to do about this problem?

A: Today's story in the *Times* reveals a troubling problem. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) relies heavily on records provided by states for all the prohibited categories of gun purchasers – such as felons, domestic abusers, and individuals who have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution. The NICS does contain about 88,000 mental health records from the VA, but many states bar courts from sharing mental health records with law enforcement.

Under the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) created under the Brady Law, the Administration has provided over \$250 million in funds to states to improve their records relating to Brady background checks. This funding can be used by states to improve access to mental health records. In recognition of the importance of improving the accuracy of background checks, our FY 2001 budget proposes to double funding for the NCHIP program so even more records will be covered in each background check. We will look at the NCHIP program and other avenues in which we can work with states so to ensure that the NICS can access these vital records, and to ensure that guns are kept out of the hands of all prohibited persons.

PRESIDENT CLINTON TO PARTICIPATE IN LAUNCHING MARYLAND'S LANDMARK NEW GUN SAFETY LAW

April 11, 2000

Today President Clinton will visit Annapolis, Maryland, where Governor Parris Glendening will sign common-sense gun safety legislation that will require built-in child safety locks on handguns, ballistics testing for newly manufactured handguns to help solve more gun crimes, and safety training for gun purchasers. The visit will call attention to the growing number of states that are enacting new laws to prevent gun violence. The President will also underscore the importance of strong national gun laws, and urge Congress to follow the lead of states such as Maryland by putting the interests of American families above those of the gun lobby and passing the common sense gun safety legislation that has been stalled for over nine months.

HIGHLIGHTING STATE PROGRESS TOWARD COMMON SENSE GUN LAWS.

Maryland joins a growing number of States that are making guns safer and keeping guns out of the wrong hands. In Massachusetts, regulations requiring that all handguns sold in the state meet quality and safety standards including child-proofing features, tamper-proof serial numbers and consumer safety warnings have taken effect. In Colorado, citizens are working to push a ballot initiative to close the gun show loophole that has the support of 83 percent of the voters. Meanwhile, 68 cities and local governments across the country are taking efforts to support manufacturers that adopt safe gun and dealers responsibility standards.

UNDERSCORING THE NEED FOR STRONG NATIONAL GUN SAFETY LAWS.

While states are making important progress to reduce gun violence, national gun safety legislation is still needed. A patchwork of inconsistent state gun laws allows criminals to obtain guns by exploiting loopholes in states with weaker laws to commit crimes in states with stronger laws. And, Congress can pass lifesaving new gun laws far more quickly than all 50 states. That is why the President today will again call on Congress to pass common sense gun legislation requiring background checks at gun shows, mandating child safety locks for handguns, banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, and barring violent juveniles from owning guns for life. Last year, the Senate passed strong gun safety measures, with Vice President Gore's critical tie-breaking vote, on an amendment to close the gun show loophole. However, the Republican leadership has allowed this life-saving legislation to languish for over 9 months – despite bipartisan House and Senate votes in the last few weeks in favor of taking prompt action to move forward on gun legislation and the underlying juvenile justice bill. The President will call on Congress to follow the lead of States like Maryland and pass common-sense legislation by April 20, the one-year anniversary of the Columbine tragedy.

PAVING THE WAY FOR LIFESAVING GUN LEGISLATION. Below is a sample of common-sense gun measures proposed or already in force in states and communities across the country:

Child Safety Lock Laws. Last year, the Senate passed legislation to require child safety locks to be sold with every new handgun. Six states have laws requiring child safety locks or trigger locks: Connecticut, Massachusetts, California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Maryland is the first state to pass a law requiring "integrated" locks onto handguns.

Ballot Initiatives. In addition to legislation, some states will consider gun proposals through statewide referenda this year. Utah will consider a ballot initiative to ban concealed weapons from churches and schools. Colorado and Oregon will consider ballot to close the gun show loophole and require background checks on all sales at gun shows.

Local Gun Buybacks. Communities across the country have engaged in local gun buybacks to take guns out of circulation and prevent gun violence, including New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. Thanks to a \$15 million gun buyback program launched by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) last year, nearly 80 public housing authorities across the country have committed to conducting buybacks with local law enforcement.

Local Procurement Power to Promote Responsible Industry Practices. A total of 68 cities, counties, and State Attorneys General have agreed, in their law enforcement gun purchases, to support gun manufacturers that adopt safe gun and dealer responsibility standards. Communities that have made this pledge include San Francisco; Los Angeles; Bridgeport, CT; District of Columbia; Atlanta; Gary, IN; New Orleans; Boston; Detroit and Flint, MI; St. Louis; Albany and Buffalo, NY; Philadelphia; and Richmond, VA.

California

In 1999 California enacted a comprehensive set of new gun safety laws. These include new safety standards banning the sale of "junk guns," and a new law requiring that all guns be sold with child safety locks. Last year the state also enacted new laws limiting handgun purchases to 1 per person per month and passed the most expansive assault weapon laws in the country. California also requires a waiting period of 10 days for any firearm, registers assault weapons and maintains records of handgun transfers. California child access prevention laws make it a crime to leave a loaded weapon within reach or easy access of a child under 16. This year, the State Assembly also approved legislation requiring gun buyers to demonstrate they can safely operate the weapons.

Since 1992, violent crime in California has dropped by 25 percent and firearm-related deaths are down by 26 percent.

Connecticut

Connecticut requires gun purchasers to complete a safety-training course and receive a permit to purchase a handgun. Dealers must offer trigger locks for sale at the time of purchase. The state registers firearms, including information about both the buyer and seller. The minimum age for possession of a handgun is 21. Connecticut has child access prevention laws making it a felony to leave a loaded firearm within easy access of a child under 16. Connecticut recently barred issuing handgun permits to persons convicted of serious juvenile offenses.

Since 1992, violent crime rates have fallen by 21 percent in Connecticut and the number of firearm-related deaths is down by nearly 31 percent.

Florida

Florida places a 3-day waiting period for the purchase of handguns. In 1998, Florida voters passed a constitutional revision allowing counties to require background checks and waiting periods for gun show sales. In 1989, Florida was the first state in the country to pass a child access prevention law making it a crime to leave a loaded firearm within the reach or easy access of a child under 16 years old.

Since 1992, the violent crime rate in Florida has dropped by 8 percent and the number of firearm-related deaths is down by over 10 percent.

Hawaii

Hawaii requires gun purchasers to complete a safety-training course and receive a permit to purchase any firearm. Handguns are required to meet certain safety and performance standards in order to be sold. Hawaii law sets the minimum age for possession of a handgun at 21. Hawaii also has the broadest child access prevention laws in the nation that make it illegal to leave a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, within the reach or easy access of a child under 16 years old. All firearms in Hawaii must be registered. This year, the Hawaii Senate also passed a bill that would include a gun owner's ID card system and require the re-registration of all firearms. The House would require all registered firearm owners to provide their local chief of police with a list of all firearms currently in their possession.

The firearms-related death rate in Hawaii is more than seven points below the national rate. The number of firearms-related deaths has dropped by 37 percent since 1994.

Maryland

Maryland has a seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases and limits handgun purchases to one per month. The state police maintain permanent transaction records of all sales. The minimum age for possession of a handgun is 21 and it is a misdemeanor to leave a loaded gun within reach or easy access of a child under 16 years old. Handguns sold in Maryland are required to meet safety and performance standards that ban the sales of "junk guns." This year, the Maryland Legislature has passed and Governor Glendening will sign a bill that requires built-in child safety locks on handguns, ballistics testing for newly manufactured handguns to help solve more gun crimes, and safety training for gun purchasers.

Since 1992, the violent crime rate in Maryland has dropped by 12 percent and the number of firearm-related deaths is down by 6 percent.

Massachusetts

New Massachusetts regulations require all handguns sold in the state to meet quality and safety standards including child-proof features, tamper-proof serial numbers and consumer safety warnings. In addition, in 1998 the state passed quality standards that ban the sale of "junk guns" and access prevention laws that make it illegal to leave a firearm unless it is equipped with a

tamper-resistant safety device or is stored in a securely locked container. Massachusetts also increased the minimum age for purchase of a handgun to 21. In order to purchase any firearm, a buyer must first get a Firearm Identification Card (FID) and all rifles, shotguns and firearms purchased in the state must be registered. New residents must also register firearms.

Since 1992, the violent crime rate in Massachusetts has declined by 16 percent and the number of firearm-related deaths is down by 24 percent.

New Jersey

New Jersey requires gun buyers to obtain a permit and requires that child safety locks be sold with all guns. Handguns must also be registered at the point of purchase. New Jersey law prevents storing a loaded firearm within reach or easy access of a child under 16 years old.

Since 1992, the violent crime rate in New Jersey is down 19 percent and the number of firearm-related deaths is down by 3 percent.

[Sources: FBI 1992 and 1997 Uniform Crime Index; Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 7/99; Bureau of Justice Statistics, Survey of State Procedures Related to Firearm Sales, 3/2000]

McCollum Legislation on "Project Exile"

Q&A

April 10, 2000

Q: What is your position on McCollum's bill to expand Project Exile nationwide by creating a \$100 million grant program to encourage states to enact mandatory minimum sentences for gun offenders like those in the federal system?

A: First of all, the President strongly supports Project Exile, which was created by one of his U.S. Attorneys. And we support the goals of the McCollum bill to expand Project Exile to more jurisdictions and to get tough on gun enforcement. Our Administration has already invested considerable resources to help communities replicate Richmond's Project Exile, and other tough enforcement programs like Boston's Operation Ceasefire.

But frankly, we don't think his bill goes far enough to achieve the goal of tough enforcement. As you know, President Clinton unveiled the largest gun enforcement initiative in history that would pump \$280 million in FY 2001 into local communities for more prosecutors, ATF agents and inspectors, and gun tracing and ballistics testing to help catch more gun criminals and put them behind bars. The McCollum bill only provides \$10 million in FY 2001 for more enforcement and not a single penny would go to federal prosecutors to take more gun cases. If McCollum and the Republicans are serious about getting tough on gun criminals, they will put their money where their mouth is and pass our \$280 million initiative. And if they are serious about reducing gun violence in this country, they will join us in supporting common sense gun legislation that will keep more guns out of the hands of criminals in the first place.

Denver Gun Show Referendum
Q&A
April 10, 2000

Q: What does the President hope to accomplish this week by travelling to states in support of their efforts to pass stronger gun laws?

A: The President is determined to do everything he can to reduce gun violence, and to support passage of stronger gun laws across our nation. It is our hope that Congress will follow the lead of states like Maryland, and work together to pass the common sense gun safety legislation that has languished for over nine months. The President wants to make it clear that outside of the Beltway many states are successfully taking on the gun lobby and putting the public's safety first. But, while state and local laws can make a difference, a strong national framework for gun laws is still needed. Nearly 12 children are killed every day in gun violence; we shouldn't have to wait for every state to pass stronger gun laws when Congress could immediately pass legislation that could reduce gun violence nationwide.

McCollum Legislation on "Project Exile"

Q&A

April 7, 2000

Q: What is your position on McCollum's bill to expand Project Exile nationwide by creating a \$100 million grant program to encourage states to enact mandatory minimum sentences for gun offenders like those in the federal system?

A: First of all, the President strongly supports Project Exile, which was created by one of his U.S. Attorneys. And we support the goals of the McCollum bill to expand Project Exile to more jurisdictions and to get tough on gun enforcement. Our Administration has already invested considerable resources to help communities replicate Richmond's Project Exile, and other tough enforcement programs like Boston's Operation Ceasefire.

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Guns/Antitrust Case
Q&A
April 6, 2000

Q: It has been reported that the attorneys general of six states (Connecticut, New York, Maryland, California, Florida and Massachusetts) are opening antitrust investigations into possible collusion by some in the gun industry against Smith & Wesson. Is the federal government going to open an investigation as well?

A: There is no question that Smith & Wesson is under serious pressure because they chose to do the right thing. It took a lot of courage for Smith & Wesson to buck the powerful gun lobby and agree to make significant changes to the way they do business. We believe these changes will have a meaningful impact on gun safety and will help to reduce gun violence. However, we are concerned about the appearance that others in the gun industry are conniving to punish Smith & Wesson, and we understand that a growing number of states are looking into whether antitrust law violations have been committed. We have referred this matter to the Justice Department and if there are any legitimate concerns, we expect that they will act accordingly.

**Guns – Colorado
Q&A
April 5, 2000**

Q: What is the proposed Colorado ballot initiative on gun shows?

A: The Colorado ballot initiative would close the gun show loophole by requiring background checks and record keeping on all firearms sales at gun shows in the state. This initiative is similar to the Lautenberg gun show amendment passed by the Senate last year. This initiative has been endorsed by the Republican Governor Bill Owens, and recent polls show that it is supported by over 80% of Colorado voters.

Q: How much time does the Colorado initiative allow for background checks at gun shows, 24 or 72 hours?

A: Consistent with the Senate-passed language and current federal law for sales at gun stores, the Colorado initiative would allow law enforcement up to three business days to complete background checks at gun shows. As the President has said many times before, 95 percent of background checks are completed in two hours or less. In the small percentage of checks where longer than 24 hours is needed, the prospective purchaser is 20 times more likely to be prohibited under the law from owning a gun.

Tobacco – HUD Smokeshops
Q&A
April 5, 2000

Q: Senator Bond has criticized HUD for using economic development assistance to fund “smokeshops” that sell cheap cigarettes. Now that Secretary Cuomo supports Senator Bond’s proposal to bar HUD economic development assistance to businesses primarily engaged in the sale of tobacco products, does the Administration support applying this standard to all federal economic assistance programs?

A: First of all, this Administration has been consistent and aggressive in its efforts to combat youth smoking. We support restrictions on HUD’s economic development assistance programs to ensure that this funding is not being used to assist businesses primarily engaged in the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products. We are going to examine whether a similar approach is appropriate in other federal economic development assistance programs.

**Guns
Q&A
March 28, 2000**

Q: Several gun manufacturers that had been expected to sign onto the Smith & Wesson agreement have recently announced their opposition to the agreement. Does this discourage the Administration's efforts to work with other manufacturers in any way? If other manufacturers do not sign onto the agreement soon, does HUD plan on filing their lawsuit?

A: Despite the concerns a handful of other manufacturers have expressed with the agreement, we cannot dismiss its historic significance. The Smith & Wesson agreement proves that the gun industry – namely, the nation's largest handgun manufacturer – has the willingness and the ability to work with us toward reducing gun violence by improving the way their product is designed, distributed and marketed. The precedent has been set – and that is precisely why some of the industry are so worried now. The possibility of litigation by public housing authorities is still open, of course. But we are far from discouraged with our progress at this point. We plan to continue moving forward by engaging other responsible members of the industry, and by bringing more cities and states into our effort to push for reforms.

Guns – Procurement
Q&A
March 28, 2000

Q: Last week, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo joined several cities to announce their plans to restrict government contracts for law enforcement guns to only those manufacturers who sign onto the Smith & Wesson agreement. Do you support these efforts? And, is this something that your Administration plans to implement government-wide?

A: As you know, my Administration plans to use every tool possible to reduce gun violence in America, and I believe that it is certainly worthwhile to look into ways that we can reward responsible firearms manufacturers that work with us to achieve this goal. As the largest procurer of firearms in America, the federal government should look into ways that we can encourage reforms within the firearms industry – reforms that would help law enforcement do its job. So we are starting to explore what is possible. But I want to emphasize that our foremost priority in procurement policy is to ensure the safety and effectiveness of law enforcement. We would do nothing to jeopardize their mission or their access to the best weapons for their needs. I believe the cities and public housing authorities share that sense of priorities.

PRESIDENT CLINTON CALLS ON CITY LEADERS TO JOIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

March 12, 2000

In his address to the National League of Cities today, President Clinton will call on local officials to join him in the fight for common sense gun safety measures. Citing recent tragic shootings, the President will emphasize the importance of providing communities with more tools to fight gun violence – not fewer. Unfortunately, he will point out, some Republicans seem determined to block progress. Just days after the President's meeting to push key Congressional leaders forward on stalled gun safety legislation, the House Appropriations Committee threatened to undermine the Department of Housing and Urban Development's \$15 million Gun Buyback Program to take guns off the street and out of circulation. The President will urge Congress to resist the mounting pressures of the gun lobby by putting the concerns of American families first, and working to pass life-saving, common sense gun reforms before the anniversary of the Columbine killings, April 20.

PROTECTING LOCAL RESOURCES TO COMBAT GUN VIOLENCE. Even in the wake of recent gun-related tragedies, the House Appropriations Committee this past week nearly gutted HUD's \$15 million Gun Buyback program. The HUD program provides matching grants to public housing authorities and local police agencies to help launch community gun buyback programs that will take an estimated 300,000 firearms off the street and out of circulation in America. By reducing the number of firearms in circulation, gun buyback programs can help prevent accidental shootings, gun suicides, and unauthorized gun use, helping to reduce the toll of gun violence. To date, over 80 communities of all sizes and across all regions – including communities recently impacted by gun violence such as Flint, Michigan and Memphis, Tennessee – have been approved for HUD grants and plan to hold local buyback programs this year. If efforts to undermine the HUD Gun Buyback program had been successful, these local initiatives would have been placed in jeopardy. The original supplemental appropriations bill before the House Appropriations Committee included language to rescind FY 2000 funding for HUD's buybacks. After the Administration voiced its objections, the rescission language was dropped, but a subcommittee chairman continued to issue threats against the buyback program. The President today will note that it is simply unconscionable now to deny communities the tools to get more guns off the streets.

PUSHING FOR PROGRESS ON STALLED COMMON SENSE GUN LEGISLATION.

For eight months, the Congress has failed to complete action on common sense gun measures in the pending juvenile crime bill. The President today will once again challenge Congress to stand up to the gun lobby and pass common sense gun safety legislation by the one-year anniversary of the tragic shooting at Columbine High School on April 20th. Specifically, he will call on the Congress to: require background checks at gun shows; mandate the sale of child safety locks with handguns; bar the importation of high capacity ammunition clips; and hold adults accountable if they allow children easy access to loaded guns that are later used to kill or maim. Although Congressional Democrats have urged the Republican leadership to schedule a meeting within the next two weeks to break the logjam, the gun lobby has mobilized against the legislation and all efforts to make progress. The President will reiterate his call for Congressional leaders to work in good faith, work out their differences, and pass this life-saving legislation without further delay.

Gun Enforcement and Responsibility
Q&A
March 9, 2000

Q: What steps are State and local officials taking to bring down gun violence? Should the federal government embrace similar efforts?

A: We have worked all levels of government to crack down on gun violence in this country. We've made a lot of progress too: gun crime is down over 35 percent since 1993 and the homicide rate is at its lowest point in over 30 years.

We have invested significant resources to give local communities the tools they need to reduce gun violence. In Richmond, Virginia, our U.S. Attorney launched "Project Exile", where they are focused on putting more gun criminals behind bars. In Boston, local leaders from all sectors created "Operation Ceasefire" – where the entire community works with law enforcement to target enforcement efforts on the most serious offenders, and keep at-risk youth on the right track. Both cities have experienced significant drops in gun violence. And the federal government has been a vital partner in both of these communities' efforts – and in helping other communities to replicate their success.

In addition, we are helping cities across the country to crack down on illegal gun traffickers who supply guns to youth through our tracing initiative, we launched new efforts to crack down on "bad apple" gun dealers, and we have stepped up federal prosecutions of gun criminals – up 16 percent since I took office.

But as recent tragedies have demonstrated, we must do more. Nearly a dozen children are killed a day by gunfire. That is why I have proposed a \$280 million national gun enforcement initiative to provide an unprecedented level of resources to combat gun crime and violence – with 1,000 new federal, state and local gun prosecutors, 500 more ATF agents and inspectors; funding for more gun tracing and ballistics testing, and the development of smart gun technology. All of these efforts are designed to give communities more tools than ever before to bring down gun violence even further in this country.

Q: You've talked about holding parents responsible for allowing certain access to guns. Can you further explain your proposal and what type of "access" might qualify?

A: My proposal would create new criminal liability where adults knowingly or recklessly give children access to guns (which could occur without the explicit knowledge of the adult) and the gun is later used to cause death or violent injury. My proposal makes clear that when an adult fails to prevent a child from obtaining access to a gun – for example, by failing to store their firearms securely – and the child uses the gun to cause serious injury, criminal penalties will be available to punish the adult's knowing or reckless conduct.

Q: What might constitute “reckless” access under your proposal?

A: Generally, the “reckless” standard in my proposal applies to behavior that is a gross deviation from a standard of care that any reasonable person would have exercised. For example, “reckless” behavior would cover someone who – despite knowing that children would be home on a given day – left a loaded weapon on the kitchen table. On the other hand, it would not apply to someone who made every effort to safely store and lock a gun that was nonetheless stolen by a juvenile. Ultimately, however, what is and isn’t reckless behavior would need to be determined by a jury.

Q: How many States have these types of laws?

A: Seventeen states have Child Access Prevention laws: Florida, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

**Hate Crimes
Q&A
March 6, 2000**

Q: Is federal law enforcement taking any role regarding the hate crimes charge in the Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, case?

A: Federal law enforcement is cooperating with state and local law enforcement in this matter, and will continue to monitor the situation. Currently, the defendant is being charged under state law. In cases of hate crimes, the Administration has emphasized that state and local authorities should continue to prosecute the great majority of such crimes and that federal jurisdiction should be exercised only when it is necessary to achieve justice in a particular case. Nonetheless, we believe there needs to be a legislative fix to the existing federal hate crimes statute to remove needless jurisdictional limitations to allow federal prosecutions in appropriate cases.

Q: What specific changes to current federal law is the President supporting?

A: The President supports passage of pending federal legislation to expand the principal federal hate crimes statute. Current law prohibits any acts of violence that are based on a person's race, color, religion, or national origin and that are intended to interfere with certain specified federally protected activities. The proposed legislation would make illegal these acts of violence even if they were not intended to interfere with federally protected activities. Further, the proposed legislation would prohibit any acts of violence based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability, as long as there is a connection with interstate commerce.

Q: How can the Administration aid in deterring future hate crimes?

A: The Administration is working in a variety of ways to help prevent and punish hate crimes. First, federal law enforcement will continue to work with state and local authorities in investigating incidents where there is evidence of hate-motivated violence. Second, following the White House Conference on Hate Crimes, the Administration created working groups in U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country. These working groups, essentially federal-state-local Partnerships, include representation from the U.S. Attorney's Office, the FBI, state and local law enforcement and prosecutor's offices, educators, and community groups. The groups work to ensure close coordination on hate crimes investigations and prosecutions among responsible law enforcement agencies; promote training of police, investigators, and prosecutors in identifying and dealing with hate crimes; encourage victims to report hate crimes; and educate the public about the harm they cause. Finally, the Administration is also part of a public-private partnership that will develop a program for middle-school students to teach tolerance in the classroom and in their daily lives. The members of the partnership are AT&T, Court TV, the National Middle School Association, the Anti-Defamation League, and Cable in the Classroom, with assistance from the Departments of Justice and Education.

Q: Apart from supporting new legislation, what other activities has the Administration undertaken with respect to hate crimes?

A: At the White House Conference on Hate Crimes in November 1997, the President announced several initiatives to ensure effective law enforcement, including the creation of working groups in U.S. Attorney's districts across the country to improve coordination among local, state, and federal prosecutors; the addition of new FBI agents and prosecutors to work on enforcement of hate crimes laws; and the development of model curriculum for training law enforcement officers to deal with hate crimes. Since the conference, the Administration has committed significant resources to assisting enforcement of hate crimes and has issued publications such as "Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities" and "Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime." In his FY2001 budget, the President has requested \$20 million to promote police integrity and for hate crimes training for federal, state, and local law enforcement.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: CALLING ON ALL AMERICANS TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

March 4, 2000

In the aftermath of this week's tragic shootings, President Clinton today will call on Congress to put the interests of American families over those of the gun lobby and to enact long-delayed gun safety legislation. The President will convene a meeting of Congressional leaders Tuesday to break the logjam on this bill, and in today's radio address he will outline measures he believes must be in the final bill, including: closing the gun show loophole, requiring child safety locks for handguns, and banning importation of large capacity ammunition clips. The President also will challenge Congress to pass his plan to punish adults who recklessly allow children to have access to deadly weapons. He will press Congress to fund the development of "smart gun" technologies that can limit a gun's use to its proper owner, and to support his proposal for state-issued licenses for new handgun purchasers. And he will call on Congress to resist the pressure of the NRA, which has stood shamelessly in the way of common sense gun safety measures.

PUSHING CONGRESS TO PASS COMMON SENSE GUN LEGISLATION. For eight months -- despite numerous gun tragedies at schools, workplaces, and even places of worship all across America -- the Congress has allowed the common sense gun measures in the pending juvenile crime bill to languish. The House failed altogether to pass critical gun safety measures as part of its bill, but the Senate passed key Administration proposals to help keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. Today the President will demand that any final juvenile crime bill must contain gun safety measures and he will pledge to work with Congressional leaders to enact the Senate-passed provisions into law. The Senate gun provisions include:

- **Closing the gun show loophole.** In 1998, there were over 4,000 gun shows held across the country -- events where guns can be sold on a cash and carry basis with no questions asked. It is estimated that up to half the sellers at gun shows are not subject to the same laws as licensed gun dealers and therefore are not required to conduct background checks or keep sales records to help law enforcement trace guns later used in crimes. The Senate bill contained provisions, championed by Senator Lautenberg, to close this dangerous loophole and require background checks and record-keeping for all sales at gun shows. Reps. Blagojevich, McCarthy, Conyers and Morella have been leaders in the House on this issue.
- **Requiring child safety locks for handguns.** An estimated one-third of all privately-owned handguns are left loaded and unlocked. Child safety locks can reduce the unauthorized use of handguns by a child at play or a teen looking to commit a crime. Such a device might have prevented the tragedy in Michigan this week. Last year the Senate passed Sen. Kohl's amendment to require a child safety lock with every new handgun. Reps. Carson, Millender-McDonald, DeFazio and DeLauro have pushed this provision in the House.
- **Banning the importation of all large capacity ammunition magazines.** While the 1994 assault weapons law banned the future domestic manufacture and importation of large capacity ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds, those manufactured before the law's enactment were grandfathered. Since it is difficult to determine when clips manufactured by foreign companies were made, it has become relatively easy for foreign gun

manufacturers to circumvent the ban. The Senate bill contains Senator Feinstein's measure to close this loophole by banning the importation of all large capacity magazines – regardless of when they were manufactured. Rep. DeGette has also been a leader on this issue.

- **Extending the Brady Law to violent juveniles.** Although violent youths convicted in adult courts are barred from owning firearms as adults, the same is not true for youths found guilty of serious violent crimes in juvenile court. The President's proposal, championed by Senator Biden, would permanently ban all violent juveniles from buying guns.

HOLDING PARENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD ACCESS TO GUNS. The President will also call on the Congressional leaders to take a step beyond the Senate-passed provisions and pass his Child Access Prevention (CAP) proposal, which would hold adults accountable if they allow children easy access to loaded guns. Sixteen states have already adopted CAP laws. According to a study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, CAP laws help reduce fatal unintentional shootings by an average of 23 percent. The President's proposed legislation, championed by Sens. Durbin and Kennedy and Rep. McCarthy, would impose felony penalties on adults who knowingly or recklessly allow a child to have unlawful access to an unlocked gun that is later used to cause death or serious injury. Such adults could be imprisoned for up to three years, fined up to \$250,000, or both.

LEADING AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP SMART GUN TECHNOLOGY. The President has proposed a \$10 million FY 2001 budget initiative to fund the research, development and replication of "smart gun" technologies. These state-of-the-art safety innovations would limit a gun's use to its proper adult owner – and could prevent accidental shooting deaths, deter gun theft, and stop criminals from seizing and using the guns of police officers against them. Despite an NRA advertising campaign ridiculing smart guns, Congressional support for smart gun technology has grown rapidly, thanks to Rep. Pascrell, Senators Kohl and Boxer and others.

CALLING FOR A STATE-BASED LICENSING SYSTEM FOR HANDGUN

PURCHASES. President Clinton will also call on Congress to create a state-based licensing system that would apply to all new handgun purchases. Sens. Schumer and Feinstein and Reps. Nadler, Holt, McCarthy and Lowey have been active on this issue. Individuals seeking to buy a handgun would be required to obtain a photo license from their state of residence, and to present the license when they purchase a handgun. States would issue a license only if the applicant has passed a Brady background check and completed a certified safety course or exam. Such a system would differ from registration, which requires firearms owners (in addition to purchasers) to register all firearms in their possession with a governmental authority.

Newsweek/POTUS
Question and Answers
March 4, 2000

Q: You've talked about registering new guns. What does your plan involve? Why not register all guns?

A: We have licenses for driving and for hunting; I think we should have them too for buying new handguns. Under my plan, new handgun purchasers would first have to get a state-issued photo license showing that they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety training requirement. As a first step, I favor licensing of new handguns over registration of all guns because it's the next practical measure we can enact to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, and help prevent accidental shootings.

Q: Is there any chance of getting your plan through Congress this year?

A: It's always tough to break the stranglehold the gun lobby has on the leaders of this Congress. But we've taken on the gun lobby before and won – and it has made a tremendous difference for the American people. The Brady Law is a great example. People thought it would never pass. But we passed it, and it has prevented gun sales to over half a million felons, fugitives and domestic abusers. So I am willing to take the gun lobby on to pass common-sense gun legislation this year. The past week's tragedies are another reminder why Congress should follow the American people, not the NRA.

Q: Opponents of gun control often say that if they give an inch, you want a mile. In 1998, for example, you held a Rose Garden ceremony to celebrate the fact that gun companies had agreed to ship guns with safety locks. But now this doesn't seem to be enough. What do you say to those who see your efforts as the first step toward a complete crackdown on gun ownership?

A: I applaud the responsible leaders in the gun industry who agreed to ship guns with child safety locks, a common sense measure we should now make the law of the land. But there is clearly more we can do to keep guns out of the wrong hands, and with very little impact on responsible, law-abiding gun owners. I fired my first .22 when I was just a boy. I grew up in a state where half the people have a hunting and fishing license. This isn't about infringing on the ability of hunters and sportsmen to get their firearms. It's about saving lives.

Q: Law enforcement officials have often called for enforcing gun laws already on the books. In Denver, for example, officials are working with the NRA and Handgun Control on Project Exile. Studies show these programs work, but aren't being widely implemented. Do you support them?

A: Yes I do. We've put a lot of resources into local efforts like Operation Ceasefire in Boston, Project Exile in Richmond, and a recently-launched Project Exile in Colorado. I've announced a national gun enforcement initiative, to hire 1000 new gun prosecutors

and 500 more ATF agents and inspectors. We've worked with federal, state and local authorities to bring overall gun prosecutions up significantly, and we've increased federal gun prosecutions by 16 percent since I took office. With Project Exile, with tougher enforcement, with more prosecutions, we're sending a clear message to criminals: if you violate our gun laws, you will pay a severe price. That's partly why the murder rate is down to its lowest level in 31 years, why gun crime has fallen over 35 percent since 1993 and why the overall crime rate has dropped for seven years running – the longest continuous decline on record.

Q: Some say that no law could have kept this particular handgun out of a six year-old's hands. Is that true?

A: We can never know if any one proposal could have prevented these tragedies. Still, it is important to take common-sense steps to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. That's why I think all new handguns should be sold with child safety locks. That's why I've proposed \$10 million in my budget to fund the development and expansion of "smart gun" technology – technology that can limit a gun's use to the proper adult owner. That's why I've offered legislation to punish adults who recklessly let children have access to deadly weapons. A dozen children a day are killed by gunfire, many in accidents that could have been prevented. Just because a gun law won't make all the difference doesn't mean it won't make any difference. We have a responsibility to do what we can to bring down gun violence.

Q: Do you support setting aside a portion of the surplus to fund anti-gun law enforcement efforts such as increasing the number of ATF agents and prosecutors?

A: In January, I proposed the largest national gun enforcement initiative in history – and I did it without asking Congress to spend a single surplus dollar. My \$280 million gun enforcement initiative will provide federal, state and local enforcement with more tools than ever to crack down on dangerous gun criminals. It funds 500 new ATF agents and inspectors to help crack down on violent criminals, illegal gun traffickers and bad apple gun dealers. It funds over 1,000 new federal, state and local gun prosecutors and deploys gun enforcement teams in high gun crime areas. And it strengthens the hand of prosecutors by providing more resources to trace crime guns and bullets.

Q: Technology already exists to create a ballistics record from every new gun as it's manufactured. That way, bullets fired from every gun could be traced later. Do you favor requiring gun companies to create such ballistics records?

A: I strongly support partnerships with gun manufacturers to expand ballistics testing. We're already working with one manufacturer on a pilot project, and as part of my gun enforcement initiative, I've tripled funding for ballistics testing to create the first-ever national "fingerprint" network for bullets or shell casings left at the scene of a crime. With this system we can identify criminals and illegal gun traffickers – even in the absence of a firearm. Ballistics testing programs at the FBI and the ATF have already helped over 16,000 criminal investigations of gun crimes in over 40 states.

Q: What else can Americans do to end the sort of violent episodes that we witnessed this week?

A: All of us have a responsibility to act. This week's deadly incidents differed in many ways, but they shared one key element: guns in the wrong hands. So Congress can do its part by sending me common sense legislation that can help keep guns away from criminals, children, and others who should not have them. Responsible members of the gun industry can do their part by working with us to make meaningful changes in the way they do business. At the same time, these incidents speak to a larger problem we all have to address. The media and entertainment industries can help change a culture that too often glorifies violence. Schools and community groups can reach troubled youth before their troubles simmer over. And most fundamentally, parents can talk to their children, teach them to resolve their conflicts peacefully, raise them with the right values. In spite of this week's awful events, I still believe that if we set our minds to it, and work together, we can make this the safest big country in the world.

**Handgun Licensing
Q&A
March 2, 2000**

Q: If the President supports registration, why isn't he submitting legislation on it?

A: As the President has said, he believes gun registration is a good idea. But he also believes that the best next step to strengthen our gun laws is a state-based licensing system to help ensure that handgun purchasers may legally possess firearms and can safely handle and store them. This will help law enforcement efforts to keep guns out of the wrong hands, and it can help prevent many accidental shootings. So, the President wants to focus now on making the case for licensing, and pressing the Congress to pass common sense gun provisions such as closing the gun show loophole, requiring child safety locks for handguns, and banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

Q: This morning on the "Today Show", President Clinton said he wants to require all gun owners to have gun licenses. Isn't this really a form of registration? If not, what is the difference?

A: No. Licensing and registration are different proposals. Our licensing proposal would encourage states to create licensing systems that cover prospective purchases, not possession. These systems would ensure that all handgun buyers have passed a background check and know how to safely handle and store firearms. Registration, on the other hand, generally requires firearms owners to register all firearms in their possession with a central government authority. Registration also does not mandate any sort of safety requirement, as our licensing proposal would.

**Michigan School Shooting
Q&A
March 1, 2000**

Q: In response to yesterday's shooting in Michigan, the President called on the Congress to pass common sense gun legislation. Could any of your proposals have prevented or impacted yesterday's shooting?

A: Many of the details from yesterday's shooting are still unfolding (such as how the gun was obtained), and we may never know if any particular proposal could have prevented this tragedy. Still, we believe it is important to take common sense steps to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. And it does appear that at least two of the Administration's proposals -- requiring child safety locks and funding "smart gun" technology -- might have helped make yesterday's tragedy less likely had they been the law of the land.

The Senate-passed gun legislation from last summer contained an Administration proposal to require child safety devices, such as safety locks, or secure gun storage devices to be sold with every new handgun. Child safety locks have been shown to be particularly effective in preventing younger children from operating handguns. The President's FY 2001 budget also provides \$10 million to fund "smart gun" technology, which can limit a gun's use to the proper adult owner -- preventing unauthorized gun usage and accidents.

The Administration also proposed Child Access Prevention legislation in its omnibus gun bill last year, which would impose criminal penalties on adults who knowingly or recklessly allow a child to have unlawful access to a gun that is later used to cause death or injury. And the Senate last year passed provisions to increase penalties for transferring handguns to children and for the receipt of stolen guns. The President has repeatedly called on the Congress to make these provisions -- along with others to close the gun show loophole and bar violent juveniles from owning guns for life -- the law of the land without further delay.

It's true that no single law can offer a simple solution to this problem. But that is no excuse for inaction. The accidental gun death rate for children under 15 is, as the President has said, nine times higher than in the 25 other industrialized nations combined. All of us have a responsibility to do what we can to prevent further gun violence. And there is no good reason why American families must wait any longer for the Congress to enact reasonable gun legislation that can help make our communities, schools, and workplaces safer.

Q: What is the federal government doing in response to the shooting?

A: We've asked the relevant agencies to work together and with local authorities to provide support to the Michigan community. Education and DOJ have offered counseling

support. DOJ has also offered investigative support: the FBI and U.S. Attorney had a conference call with local authorities yesterday. ATF has two agents on the ground working to trace the gun. HHS usually waits to be asked by the state mental health authority, but will make a courtesy call today. We are coordinating with these and other agencies today to keep updated.

Final

**Recent Shootings
Q&A
March 1, 2000**

Q: Mr. President, what have you done, and what can you do, when something like these recent shootings occur?

A: We all have a responsibility to do what we can to prevent these horrible tragedies from happening in the first place. Now, many of the details from both shootings are still unfolding, and of course, we may never know if any particular proposal could have prevented these tragedies. Still, I believe it is important to take common sense steps to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals.

We know from experience that it can make a difference. My Administration took on the gun lobby and passed the Brady Law. This measure alone has stopped about half a million felons, fugitives, and domestic abusers from buying guns – saving an untold number of lives. We also took action to ban deadly assault weapons, and bar juveniles from owning handguns. As a result of these and other efforts to combat violence, crime is down for the seventh straight year, and since 1993, gun-related crime has dropped over 35 percent and the number of juvenile gun homicide offenders is down 57 percent.

But clearly, there is more we can do to keep guns out of the wrong hands. And it does appear that at least two of the Administration's proposals – requiring child safety locks for handguns and funding "smart gun" technology – might have helped make the tragedy in Michigan less likely had they been the law of the land.

The Senate-passed gun legislation from last summer contained my proposal to require child safety devices, such as safety locks or secure gun storage devices, to be sold with every new handgun. Child safety locks have been shown to be particularly effective in preventing younger children from operating handguns. My FY 2001 budget also provides \$10 million to fund "smart gun" technology, which can limit a gun's use to the proper adult owner – preventing unauthorized gun usage and accidents. I have also proposed Child Access Prevention legislation, which would impose criminal penalties on adults who knowingly or recklessly allow a child to have unlawful access to a gun that is later used to cause death or injury. Congress can and should make these provisions – along with others to close the gun show loophole and bar violent juveniles from owning guns for life – the law of the land without further delay.

It's true that no single law can offer a simple solution to this problem. But that is no excuse for inaction. All of us – parents, communities, the gun industry, members of Congress, my Administration – must do all we can to prevent further gun violence. And there is no good reason why Americans must wait any longer for Congress to enact reasonable gun legislation that can make our communities, schools, and workplaces safer.

Q: As a parent, how does the recent spate of violence make you feel? And what can you say to reassure parents that tragedies like these won't happen again?

A: As a parent – as an American – I feel a sense of outrage and sadness about these tragic incidents. No one should ever have to endure the pain that these families and communities have been put through during these last few days.

To parents, let me say first that we've been working on many fronts to help bring down gun violence – by strengthening enforcement of our gun laws, by offering legislation to close loopholes in those laws, by engaging communities in a campaign against youth violence. Now Congress should do its part by finally passing common sense gun measures like requiring child safety locks with every handgun and requiring background checks at gun shows. And I urge parents to do their part by being responsible about the ways they store firearms, to keep them out of the reach of children.

But it is important for parents to remember too that our schools are still very safe places, and that violent crime and gun crime has dropped significantly all across the country. Those of us in public life have an obligation to keep these facts in mind and not to be alarmist. I would say to parents that it is important to talk to your children, if they're old enough, about incidents like these. And reassure them that these are rare occurrences.

Q: What is the federal government doing in response to the shootings?

A: Michigan: We've asked the relevant agencies to work together and with local authorities to provide support to the Michigan community. Education and DOJ and HHS have offered crisis response services. DOJ has also offered investigative support: the FBI and U.S. Attorney have been in communication with local authorities. ATF has two agents on the ground and have traced the origins of the gun.

I spoke yesterday with Ira Rutherford, the Superintendent of Schools, and he has asked for assistance from the Department of Education. We have staff at the Department who, sadly, have some experience with such tragedies and they will work with the Superintendent to respond to his questions and to connect him with his counterparts in other communities that have been through school shootings.

Pennsylvania: Justice and Treasury have offered investigative support to the community of Wilkinsburg. ATF is tracing the weapon involved in this incident as well.

Q: There have been attempts in Congress to strike a compromise on the gun legislation that passed as part of the Senate Juvenile Crime bill. Since the gun show provision is the most contentious issue, would you be willing to compromise and sign a bill that includes some, but not all, of your gun proposals?

A: Congress should send me the common sense measures passed by the Senate. We should do everything in our power to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. As I have said before, passing common sense gun legislation is not about politics – it is about public safety.

I am not going to speculate on the particulars of a compromise bill that I haven't seen yet. But let me say this: there were press reports recently that Republicans in Congress were considering dropping all the gun safety provisions from the Juvenile Crime bill. You can be certain I will not sign a bill that fails to address the most pressing crime problem facing our youth today – gun violence. Each day, another dozen children are killed by gunfire. The tragic shooting deaths in the last two days are a painful reminder that we must do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands. This is no time for inaction. There is no reason why this Congress shouldn't pass meaningful gun safety legislation that can keep our families safer and save lives.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Miami, Florida)

For Immediate Release

February 29, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON SHOOTING DEATH AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MICHIGAN

Private Residence
West Palm Beach, Florida

2:48 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: I would just like to say how very sorry I am about the shooting death of the first grade student at Buell Elementary School in the Mt. Morris community near Flint, Michigan. I know the prayers of America are with the child's family and fellow classmates and all the people of that small community.

I think it is important that today our thoughts be with them. And I don't know, obviously, all the facts -- I may not even have as many as you do -- but I think this is once again a call to us to do whatever we can to protect our children from this sort of violence and this tragedy. And I'm just very, very sorry, and I wanted to say that.

Q Mr. President, is there anything that can be done to stop tragedies like this?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what I'd like to do, Mark, is make sure I have all the facts before I say that -- you know, if we had had one of the laws that we're proposing, it would make a difference -- I don't want to -- I think today is a day for grieving and regret, sympathy and support for the family and the community and the other kids and the people in that school. This must be an agony for all of them.

But I think that -- I do think just generally that we should be really pushing for the child safety locks and even more for the investment in safe gun technology so we can complete this research and see if we can't develop guns that can only be fired by their adult owners.

MORE

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I think that I'm very troubled. I don't want to comment too much on the facts of this case, but if you get away from this case, as I said when I was inside, just the accidental death rate of our young people from guns is so much higher than any other country that it's clear that we need to keep working on this, and I hope that we will.

Q You said inside it has been a year since Columbine. Is there anything you can do, a stick you can use to get Congress to move? Are you willing to say, for example, that you would veto Commerce-Justice if it doesn't have the protections you're looking for?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I believe that we will get some action this year, and I wouldn't rule anything in or out. But I don't want to get into the tactics now, except to say that -- keep in mind there is a budget -- there is a bill in conference and one of them is pretty good and one of them is not. We've got to try to get the best bill we can out of conference. And I just hope that everyone will weigh in and try to get this done. It's very important to the future.

Q You did seem to indicate in your speech inside that this should be an election issue.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I do believe that. I think the issue of not this terrible tragedy, but the issue of gun safety, I think definitely should be. We ought to make a decision as a people. That's why we have these elections. And we can do that, you see, without any name-calling or anything. People can just state what their positions are, and why, and the American people can make their judgments. But I do think, to me, it ought to be one of the big goals of our country to make America the safest big country in the world. And, therefore, is a proper subject of debate in this election. It's nothing but an issue, so there's no need for name-calling or anger or anything else. People should just state what they feel should be done and the American people can make up their mind who is right.

Thank you.

END

2:52 P.M. EST

Gun Litigation
Joint Talking Points
December 14, 1999

We met today because we believe that all who care about gun violence – the cities and counties that have filed suit against the gun industry, along with the NAACP, the states, and the federal government – will be most effective if we work together. The federal government will provide additional leadership on this issue, and we will build on the significant work already done by the cities, counties, states, and other parties in order to successfully address this important problem. Today's discussions have been a productive first step in this effort.

As our negotiations go forward, our side will be united in making sure that the gun industry changes the way it does business. The gun industry must take responsibility for its share of the problem of gun violence by making a safer product, reasonably monitoring its distribution, and refusing to advertise to criminals and kids.

Oklahoma School Shooting
Q&A
December 6, 1999

Q: What more can you tell us about the shooting at the Tulsa, Oklahoma middle school this morning?

A: The news of today's shooting at Fort Gibson Middle School in Oklahoma has been deeply troubling to us all. This morning, at least four students were shot outside of their school as they waited for classes to begin. No one was killed in the incident, and all of the children are currently being cared for at area hospitals. Our prayers are with these young victims and their families. The local authorities have a suspect in custody who has been identified as a student at the school, and have recovered a .9 mm handgun that ATF is currently tracing. ATF agents and FBI agents have also been deployed to assist in the investigation. *(Cabinet Affairs may be able to provide more information on Federal assistance.)*

While motives for the shooting are still unclear and we don't know what could have been done to prevent this specific incident, it is clear that we must do all we can to work with schools and law enforcement to make sure that they have the assistance and resources they need to help ensure the safety of all of our students. This Administration has already accomplished much in this area including zero tolerance for guns in schools, funding more school resource officers, dramatically increasing after school programs, and securing funding the new Project SERV, an initiative to provide a federal assistance to help schools respond to crises.

The President believes we can do even more to keep our children safe at school and in their communities. That is why he will continue to take the lead to push Congress to adopt his proposals to keep guns out of the hands of children and enact his revamped Safe and Drug-Free Schools initiative to give schools needed resources to combat and prevent school violence and drug abuse.