

PRESIDENT CLINTON: URGING CONGRESS TO FULLY FUND HIS GUN ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE

June 14, 2000

Today, the President will urge Congress to fully fund his FY 2001 Gun Enforcement Initiative to take dangerous gun offenders off our streets. Last night, President Clinton sent a letter to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Young (R-FL) urging the Committee to provide full funding for his initiative – the largest budget ever proposed to strengthen enforcement of our nation's firearms laws. The Committee will vote today on a bill that guts key components of the President's initiative, by failing to include: 1) \$150 million for state and local gun prosecutors; 2) \$10 million for local anti-gun violence media campaigns; and 3) \$10 million to expand research into "smart gun" technology that can limit a gun's use to its proper adult owner.

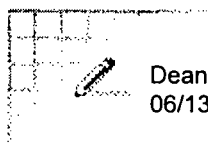
HOUSE BILL FAILS TO FUND KEY INVESTMENTS IN GUN ENFORCEMENT. The Republican-led House has stalled passage of common sense gun safety legislation for a year, and instead called for stronger enforcement of existing gun laws. The House Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Subcommittee passed a bill, which fails to provide the significant gun enforcement resources proposed by the President, and even fails to provide the minimal funding for "Project Exile" efforts the House recently authorized in a bill sponsored by Representative Bill McCollum (R-FL). While the House appropriations bill includes the President's \$15 million request for new federal gun prosecutors, the bill falls short by failing to include critical components of the President's initiative, including:

- **1,000 state and local gun prosecutors.** The bill fails to provide \$150 million to hire 1,000 more state and local gun prosecutors. The new prosecutors will work closely with the community, law enforcement, and federal prosecutors on gun-related crimes to help put more dangerous gun criminals where they belong: behind bars. These new prosecutors represent the front line in the fight against gun violence, and Congress should give states and communities the resources they need to fight gun crime.
- **Local Anti-Gun Violence Media Campaigns.** The bill eliminates \$10 million in Justice Department matching grants to support local media campaigns on gun violence and gun safety. Targeted media campaigns have been used successfully in programs such as Richmond's "Project Exile" to emphasize tough federal sentences and Boston's "Operation Ceasefire" to make clear the consequences of breaking gun laws.
- **Innovative "Smart" Gun Technologies.** The Administration asked for \$10 million – more than double last year's request – for the expansion, testing, and replication of "smart" gun technologies. These state-of-the-art safety innovations could limit a gun's use to its proper owner or other authorized users – and could therefore prevent accidental shooting deaths of children, deter gun theft, and stop criminals from seizing and using the guns of police officers against them. The House bill provides no funding for smart gun research.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S \$280 MILLION GUN ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE. In addition to the proposals under consideration today, the President's Gun Enforcement Initiative includes other elements totaling \$94 million that will be taken up by Congress in the coming weeks. These measures include funding for the Treasury Department to: 1) hire 500 new ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on violent gun criminals, and illegal gun traffickers and unscrupulous dealers that supply firearms to criminals and juveniles; 2) implement comprehensive crime gun tracing programs; and 3) build the first-ever national ballistics testing network to help police catch more gun criminals.

COMMON-SENSE GUN MEASURES ARE STILL NEEDED AND LONG OVERDUE. In addition to pursuing an aggressive enforcement budget, the President will continue to call for much-needed reforms to our nation's gun laws to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Despite the continuing occurrence of numerous gun-related tragedies across America – including the National Zoo, schools, places of worship, day care centers and retirement homes – Congress has allowed Senate-passed common sense gun safety legislation to languish for an entire year. The President will urge Congress to put the interests of American families above those of the gun lobby and pass this legislation to require background checks at gun shows; mandate child safety locks for handguns; ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips; and bar violent juveniles from owning guns for life.

A RECORD OF STRONG GUN ENFORCEMENT. Since 1992, the number of federal firearms cases has increased 16 percent, and as a result of this Administration's unprecedented partnership with states and localities, overall gun prosecutions – federal, state, and local combined – are also up 22 percent. Also since 1992, federal gun offenders are serving sentences that are about two years longer and the number of serious gun offenders sent to federal prison for more than 5 years is up more than 41 percent. Due to our efforts to focus on tough prosecutions, strategic efforts to deter and prevent gun crime, and the passage of strong new gun laws such as the Brady Act, gun-related crime has dropped 35 percent since 1992.



Deanne E. Benos
06/13/2000 06:04:46 PM

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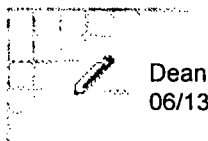
To: Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP, Anna Richter/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: guns topper

FYI -- Our edits on the gun statement.

----- Forwarded by Deanne E. Benos/OPD/EOP on 06/13/2000 06:04 PM -----



Deanne E. Benos
06/13/2000 05:59:33 PM

Record Type: Record

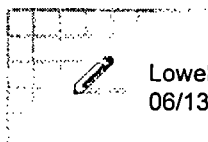
To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP, Joel Johnson/WHO/EOP@EOP, Leanne A. Shimabukuro/OPD/EOP@EOP, Lowell A. Weiss/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: guns topper

Lowell -- Looks great. Just a few changes. Please let us know if you have any questions. Deanne

Lowell A. Weiss



Lowell A. Weiss
06/13/2000 04:21:57 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Joel Johnson/WHO/EOP@EOP, Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP, Deanne E. Benos/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: guns topper

is this what you have in mind?

Good afternoon. Sen. Daschle and Rep. Gephardt and I have just met with the leaders of organizations representing America's seniors, community pharmacists, nurses, and health care providers. We spoke about the great need for Congress to give all seniors the option of an affordable prescription drug benefit. And we spoke about the merits and shortfalls of new legislative proposals on prescription drugs now emerging in the House.

But before I go into the details of our discussions, I want to briefly touch on another pressing priority before the House this week – funding for enforcement of America’s gun laws. For years, the Republican leadership has emphasized the importance of enforcing our gun laws. And yet, they have now failed to put their money where their mouth is.

~~Just last night, a House subcommittee~~ **This morning, the House Appropriations Committee will vote on a bill that currently guts ~~voted to gut~~ our Administration’s proposal for the largest gun enforcement initiative in history. They failed to provide any funding at all to hire 1,000 new state and local gun prosecutors to help take gun criminals out of our communities and put them where they belong: behind bars. And They undermined our efforts to replicate the success of Richmond’s “Project Exile,” by refusing to fund local efforts to deter gun violence by advertising the penalties for breaking gun laws. And they failed to provide funding to expand the research and development of smart gun technology.**

No society can prevent every tragedy, every outrage. But there is no question we can save lives with a combination of new, common-sense gun safety legislation and stronger enforcement of laws already on the books. I believe we can achieve both priorities this year. But it’s going to require Republicans to join with us – to recognize that the American people want strong enforcement, strong prevention, and strong Congressional leadership. They want Congress to stand up to the gun lobby. They want all of us to do what it takes to make America the safest big nation on earth. **And they can start when the Appropriations Committee meets today by fully funding my National Gun Enforcement Initiative.**

CJS

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Media camp

Smart Gun

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