

Crime—Gun Safety

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Gunmakers Aim to Develop High-Tech Pistols

By Daniel LeDuc

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, February 28, 2000; Page A1

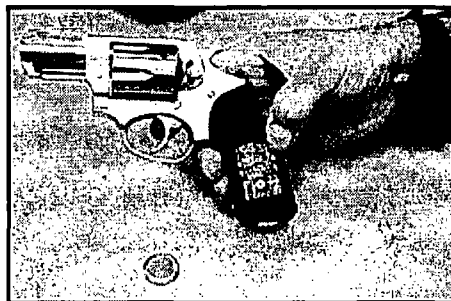
SAN JOSE – Before picking up the gun, slip on the special black wristband. Then, draw a bead on the paper target hanging 30 feet downrange, squeeze the trigger and feel the .40-caliber pistol buck with a satisfying jolt. A round hole is punched in the target, and the silver pistol is ready for firing again.

But take off the black wristband, a radio transmitter that looks like a digital watch without numerals, pick up the pistol again, aim and squeeze the trigger: Nothing happens. Without the transmitter held inches from the gun, the pistol is an inoperable lump of metal.

The weapon is just one of an array of so-called smart guns designed to be fired only by authorized users. Still in prototype, they are meant to prevent accidental shootings of children who find an unsecured handgun, to foil burglars who steal guns and to stop criminals from disarming and killing police officers with their own service weapons. Other versions of smart handguns employ fingerprint scanners, voice recognition receivers and a host of new computer-based circuitry that appears straight out of Dick Tracy.

Engineers in Silicon Valley and elsewhere are hard at work developing the new technology, leading gun manufacturers and gun control advocates to grapple with how the advances might change their age-old animosity.

Is the introduction of smart guns just one more step toward a gun ban? Or will they make gun ownership more acceptable because the new weapons are deemed safer? Underlying such questions is debate about whether the technology is feasible for a product that users expect to work flawlessly – especially when they need it for personal protection.



This gun works only when the person using it is wearing a wristband with a radio transmitter.
(Steve Castillo For The Washington Post)



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work flawlessly – especially when they need it for personal protection.

Gun manufacturers and policy makers have found it difficult to ignore the innovations at a time when concerns about gun violence abound and firearms companies are the target of a growing number of lawsuits accusing them of making an unsafe product.

President Clinton has proposed spending \$10 million on additional research into the new technology, and Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) has gone even further: To force gunmakers to move faster on smart guns, he wants to mandate that the only handguns that can be sold in Maryland after June 1, 2003, be what he calls "personalized" guns.

Glendening's legislation, however, does not define what a personalized gun is and would leave that job up to a task force he would form. Such uncertainty leaves gun manufacturers wary of what might be mandated in the future.

"There are things in here that could be converted to a ban on handgun sales," Jeffrey K. Reh, general counsel for Maryland-based Beretta USA, said of Glendening's proposal.

No gunmaker is willing to embrace the sort of mandate that Glendening proposes. But some are optimistic about the technology.

"A few years ago, I didn't think it possible," said Smith & Wesson Vice President Kevin Foley. "But now, I'm convinced it can happen."

One of the nation's leading handgun manufacturers, Springfield, Mass.-based Smith & Wesson has developed a prototype pistol that has a fingerprint scanner lock. The authorized shooter's thumbprint is read by the device, and the shooter removes the lock to insert a magazine with bullets.

The gun also includes a new electronic firing mechanism Foley said will make the lock difficult to disable. A burglar might steal the locked gun, but any effort to remove the computer board within the pistol would ruin it.

"There are probably a few MIT PhDs who could do it," he said. "But beyond that, if you mess with the board you destroy it."

Another version is the .40-caliber pistol developed by the San Jose-based SmartLinks Corp. A prototype has been developed, and the company is seeking a manufacturing partner, said Chief Executive William Phillips.

But a final design has not undergone the rigorous testing required before it goes to market. A reporter who recently fired the pistol initially could not get it to work because he was not holding the gun properly to trigger a switch in the handle signaling the radio transponder on the wrist. Once his grip was corrected, however, the gun fired when it was supposed to and didn't fire when it wasn't.

One flaw in the design: A thief could remove the electronics and make a usable gun. Another concern, according to gunmakers who've looked at



the pistol, is that criminals could use radio jamming devices to disable police versions of the weapons.

Still another pistol, scheduled to be available in gun shops later this year, is made by the German manufacturer SIG Arms and has a built-in lock with a numeric keypad. A shooter must know the combination to operate the gun. It can be programmed to shut off after an hour or after eight hours. Advocates of smart guns say that gun's biggest drawback is that it also can be left unlocked all the time.

Fulton Arms, of Houston, which has trademarked the name "Smart Gun," uses a simple magnet worn on the shooter's finger to match up with another magnet inside the pistol to unlock the weapon. The company's chief executive, Kenneth Pugh, said he is working with several gun manufacturers to market his design.

The various models would increase the price of a handgun by \$150 to \$300.

Glendening also wants to require beginning next year that new handguns have built-in mechanical locks, as an interim step toward mandating smart guns. They are less sophisticated than electronic-based locks and cheaper, costing as little as \$70.

Advocates on both sides of the debate can point to flaws and drawbacks in each of the smart-gun designs. What is most clear is that no one prototype is the perfect solution.

What nearly all the prototypes closest to being ready for market have in common is that they are, in essence, sophisticated gun locks. Once the pistols are unlocked, anyone can fire them. In that way they are not much different from the standard mechanical lock that any gun owner can purchase and that companies such as Beretta provide with every handgun they sell.

The Smart:Links pistol, whose prototype is built on a Czech-made CZ handgun, requires a radio transmitter that essentially is a key. Anyone who has access to the wristband can fire the gun. The Smith & Wesson, once unlocked by fingerprint scanner, can be fired by whoever is holding it.

No one has yet developed a flawless design for a pistol that is truly personalized: That would be a gun that includes the technology to somehow read a person's unique characteristics, such as fingerprints or other features, so only that person could fire it.

The goal of those trying to develop truly personalized guns, especially for police officers, is that the new pistols not require authorized shooters to wear any special device or do anything more than pick up the weapon and fire as they now do.

Nearly every expert, including those at the National Institute of Justice, which develops and tests equipment for police officers, believes that such a gun, if possible, is many years away.

Maryland isn't the first state that has tried to mandate the move to smart guns. New Jersey's legislature grappled with the issue last year and, in

the end, passed a law that required only that handguns be sold with standard trigger locks.

New Jersey lawmakers did appropriate \$1 million for research at the state's Institute of Technology. Those researchers are still conducting their study and hope to complete a report by the end of the year.

Already, they say that a truly personalized gun would require a combination of scanners capable of recognizing a person's unique characteristics. Those might include fingerprint readers, voice recognition devices and even more elaborate scanners that could read a person's bone structure and the pattern of the arteries and veins in the gun hand.

"The science is there for that, but the technology is not," said Donald Sebastian, the institute's vice president for research and development.

He predicted that no one device would become a standard but that different technologies would be needed for different gun owners. A target shooter might want one sort, the homeowner seeking a gun for protection another and a police officer still another.

But, Sebastian said, the current prototypes by Smart:Links, Smith & Wesson and others are the logical first steps toward the ultimate goal of a personalized gun.

On the national level, the Clinton administration hasn't gone as far as Glendening in trying to mandate the technology, but it is interested in spurring the industry along.

"I think that this [technology] is not some distant possibility," said the president's top domestic adviser, Bruce N. Reed. "This is something well within the industry's reach. And considering recent market trends, it may be a necessity for the industry. Handgun sales have dropped sharply. And the long-term trends for this industry are not promising. So smart guns make sense for all kinds of reasons."

For his part, Glendening insists that a mandate for the new technology would force gun manufacturers to develop a workable design, just as carmakers made air bags standard only after the government intervened. His rhetoric about gunmakers has been stern, insisting it is time to force the manufacturers "to stop killing our children."

The National Institute of Justice is considering four proposals from gunmakers and other technology developers for smart-gun research grants. The agency is focused only on development of personalized guns for police officers, not the civilian market.

Glendening's proposal would exempt police officers from having to use personalized guns in Maryland, which the National Institute of Justice's director of science and technology, David Boyd, said is backward.

He said the best way to integrate smart guns into society is for them to be tested until they reach the exacting standards police require. Once officers carry and rely on them, it will be easier to convince civilians the guns work.

"They're jumping on too soon, trying to make political hay," Boyd said of the legislative efforts to mandate the new technology. "Failure [now] would so tarnish efforts that we would never get one introduced properly."

While the possibility that smart guns might someday be a reality has heartened many safety advocates, some anti-gun activists, such as the Violence Policy Center, are dismayed by the new technology. They fear that working smart guns might prompt people to buy more guns.

ý The notion of a personalized gun began to get official scientific study in 1993 when Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque decided to try to find a way to prevent police officers from having their own guns turned on them.

Between 1988 and 1998, 57 police officers in the United States were slain with their service weapons. An additional 113 had their guns taken from them.

With a \$620,000 grant from the National Institute of Justice, Sandia researchers determined that some sort of radio transmitter worn by an officer would be the best approach with existing technology. Colt's Manufacturing Co. received a \$500,000 grant to develop a prototype pistol and worked with Smart:Links to develop the computer technology.

Since then, Smart:Links also has developed a prototype for Smith & Wesson. Now it is working with neither company.

At the same time that research was underway, Stephen Teret, who directs the Center for Gun Policy and Research at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, decided he wanted to prove that a smart gun was possible. He gave \$2,000 to a group of university engineering students, who developed a rudimentary prototype on a .38-caliber revolver.

It wasn't pretty: Wires dangled from it, and a large computer board had to be attached. But it convinced Teret that the technology is possible.

"If three students who knew nothing about guns could do that with off-the-shelf equipment, then certainly it seemed to me gun manufacturers should be able to do that," said Teret, who went on to serve on a task force Glendening formed last year to recommend legislation on childproofing guns.

But some gunmakers have been a harder sell.

For one thing, the development of personalized guns has required a blending of two distinct business cultures. Gun manufacturers still work essentially the same way they have for a hundred years, with a machine shop in a traditional factory setting. The new circuitry is being developed in the glass-walled, climate-controlled environs of modern computer labs. It has not always made for an easy match.

At Colt's, leadership has changed since the company won the federal grant. The new chief executive is retired Marine Corps Lt. Gen. William Keys, who "is not making smart-gun comments right now," said

company spokeswoman Catherine Reade. A spinoff company formed last year to develop smart guns, called iColt, is "no longer in existence," she added.

SIG Arms is not marketing its lockable pistol as a smart gun that is personalized for only one shooter. Instead, it is hoping that consumers who want the equivalent of the automobile's Club lock for their gun would be interested, said company spokesman Wesley Lange.

Smith & Wesson appears to be leading the way among gunmakers embracing the new technology, spending \$5 million on research over the last several years. The company has hired Washington lobbyists Capitol Partners to try to help it snare some of the federal research money for smart guns.

Smith & Wesson's new .40-caliber prototype is based on the frame of its existing Sigma model and still requires "major testing," said Foley, the company's vice president for engineering. But he said it could be ready for sale in two years.

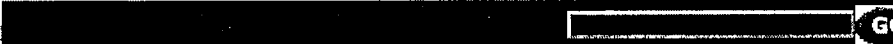
Staff writer Charles Babington contributed to this report.

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Questions and Answers
on
HUD's Community Gun Safety and Violence Reduction Initiative

Why is HUD concerned with gun violence?

Reducing gun violence is an absolutely vital part of our mission here. Gun violence is a direct threat to HUD's core responsibility to help to reach the goal set by Congress in the Housing Act of 1949 of "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family." Also, Congress has declared as national housing policy a "commitment to decent, safe, and sanitary housing for every American by strengthening a nationwide partnership of public and private institutions able . . . to help make neighborhoods safe and livable."

Every year in America guns are used to kill more than 30,000 people and injure about 100,000 people. 670,500 crimes, including 70% of all murders, are committed with guns each year. In one recent year alone [1994], 18,000 suicides were committed with guns and 1,300 accidental deaths caused by guns.

Crimes, murders, suicides, accidents – all avoidable gun-related tragedies. In America's 100 largest public housing authorities alone an average of one murder each day is committed with a gun. But gun violence is a public health problem, not a public housing problem. Indeed, gun violence threatens the health of neighborhoods throughout America and undermines the billions of dollars that HUD has invested in community and economic development in these communities.

HUD has responded creatively to gun violence through a number of programs as part of the Department's overall strategy to combat crime and violence in the communities the Department serves, and it is clear from the fact that the Nation's crime has dropped now for seven years in a row, including homicides and gun crimes, that we are making progress on the gun violence front.

More, however, must and can be done to respond this problem in our Nation's communities and the time is right for HUD to target resources at focusing on preventing gun violence and promoting gun safety across America's neighborhoods. Successful gun violence reduction efforts have begun to spring up in public housing communities and other neighborhoods across America, in many instances supported by the Department through more general program funds, like the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, and such local efforts deserve to be nurtured by HUD and have their hard-earned lessons replicated and applied specifically to the unique dimensions of the problem of gun violence.

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NO. 400 007**DRAFT****1/31/00 9:14 AM****What is the scope and scale of gun violence in the communities HUD serves?**

Large enough to make it absolutely clear that action must be taken. Gun violence is undoubtedly an urban problem and a community problem, and it reaches into far too many neighborhoods throughout the country. Every year in America guns are used to kill more than 30,000 people and injure about 100,000 people. 670,500 crimes, including 70% of all murders, are committed with guns each year. In one recent year alone [1994], 18,000 suicides were committed with guns and 1,300 accidental deaths caused by guns.

Gun violence is a nationwide problem, and as such the residents of public housing are not exempt from its reach. From 1994 to 1997 alone there were 500 murders in just the 100 largest public housing authorities, many involving guns.

But this is about more than statistics. It's about the climate of fear that prevails in too many of our communities throughout the Nation, and it's about giving those communities the tools to fight back.

What is the purpose of the Community Gun Safety and Violence Reduction Initiative?

We are proposing the Community Gun Safety and Violence Reduction Initiative to respond in a more focused manner to the unique dimensions of the problems of gun violence – violence that pervades too many of the communities HUD serves, reaching neighborhoods throughout America.

This Initiative is not just about reducing the incidence of criminal gun violence – although our Initiative, like the President's recently announced enforcement initiative, is designed to do that – it is also about reducing accidental deaths and injuries from firearms in our Nation's communities and about reducing the awful toll of suicides that all too often succeed because of the availability of firearms.

We know from so many of the issues that HUD focuses on – like fair housing, economic development, and community development – that getting local communities involved in national priorities is the most powerful way to make change happen on the ground. HUD believes strongly in empowering communities to solve problems, not dictating solutions from Washington, and this Initiative is about giving our communities the tools they need to prevent gun violence and promote gun safety in proactive and performance-driven ways.

What are the eligible activities under the Community Gun Safety and Violence Reduction Initiative?

The Initiative has three basic elements:

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First, the Initiative will fund community-based public education programs using a variety of media to instruct residents of public and assisted housing, Indian housing, landlords and owners, housing managers, and participants in other HUD-funded housing and community and economic development programs about responsible gun ownership and to galvanize those communities to take action to reduce gun violence.

Second, and central to our efforts, the Initiative will provide technical assistance and direct funding for community gun safety and violence reduction efforts, building upon and complementing existing community safety programs where they exist and replicating best practices that have begun in communities throughout the country.

Finally, the Initiative will fund state-of-the-art computerized geographic information systems (GIS), that will fill the knowledge gap about gun violence in our communities and provide those communities with a powerful tool to guide their response.

These three program elements are designed to work in conjunction towards the single goal of reducing gun violence in the communities HUD serves – education and outreach to inform communities and to build support for community action, state-of-the-art information tools to guide their response, and funds to support the effective, innovative, and performance-driven actions that communities can take to respond to gun violence.

One thing that we at HUD have learned in a variety of programs is that the best potential for long-term sustained action comes from broad participation by all community stakeholders and we know that communities are organized around the country, waiting for new tools to fight gun violence. HUD has relationships with communities throughout the Nation and these partnerships create a unique platform for this Department to promote gun safety and reduce gun violence.

Do potential grantees have to apply for all three elements?

No. Potential grantees may choose which program elements will be most effective in combating gun violence in their communities. We anticipate, however, that many communities will choose to use more than one – or in fact all – of the tools that this Initiative gives them to respond in a coordinated, comprehensive way to gun violence.

What is the message of the public education and outreach component?

Our message is a simple one: there are practical, effective ways for individuals and communities to work to reduce gun violence and promote gun safety. We know that in many communities the evidence of the hazards of gun violence is as close as the front door, and we're not suggesting that the communities we serve are numb to this crisis. But we know that targeted outreach can galvanize communities to act and that's what this Initiative will support.

It is important to emphasize that this has nothing to do with gun control – we are simply promoting responsible gun ownership and gun safety and community action. Did you

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know that one study – published in the Journal of the American Medical Association – has shown that only 30% of homes with guns kept all of the guns unloaded and locked; a recent survey showed that 34.8% of adults either think that a gun cannot shoot when the magazine is removed or do not know if it can be; guns kept in the home are 22 times more likely to kill someone you know than to kill in self-defense. We need to get this information out.

Should Congress fund this Initiative and we reach the implementation stage, we will have the opportunity to review proposals from organizations that have successfully performed outreach and education on a community level on the issue of gun violence and gun safety and we will make a more detailed assessment at that time of the most effective way to communicate the message that communities can and should take action on this issue.

Didn't the President announce on January 18th that the Justice Department was going to be funding a media campaign on gun violence? Isn't what you're proposing redundant?

Not at all – we're coming at this from a different angle. The President's proposed \$280 million enforcement initiative will be a critical effort to reduce gun violence by cracking down with unprecedented resources on gun criminals, and as part of that campaign, the Justice Department will be funding a national media campaign primarily to publicize gun penalties and to maximize deterrence, but also to promote safe ownership. Our education and outreach activities will parallel this latter message – that there is a responsible way to own guns – but we are contemplating a much more local, community-driven effort, one that will empower communities to respond to the plague of gun violence by taking action in a variety of ways, appropriate to each community and tailored to local conditions. I applaud the President's effort to send the strong message that if you commit crimes with guns, or violate gun laws, you will pay a heavy price, and we also need to send the message that law-abiding citizens can own guns in a responsible way and communities can come together to reduce gun violence.

Do you really think people in public housing have to be told that gun violence is a serious problem?

First of all, gun violence is a public health not a public housing problem, and reaches communities throughout the country. But it certainly strikes residents of public housing and we can't ignore the impact of gun violence in our public housing communities. Do people caught in the cross-fire need the Federal government to tell them that this is a problem they should be taking seriously? Of course not. Quite the opposite – we are hearing from the communities we serve that we should be doing more about this and that is what why we're proposing this Initiative. But the point is that education and outreach can be an important way to inform communities about responsible gun ownership, to give communities the tools they need to act, and to galvanize communities to come together to fight this plague.

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What types of programs do you have in mind for the community activities component of the Initiative?

Our experience has taught us that some of the best ideas for responding to problems in the communities we serve come right from those communities, and we are applying that lesson to the Community Gun Safety and Violence Reduction Initiative. Of course, we have looked out at communities across the nation beginning to respond successfully to gun violence and we have outlined broad categories of activities that have promise to respond to this epidemic, such as:

- safe ownership and safe storage programs – which might include providing discounts or vouchers for gun owners to purchase lock-boxes or child-safety locks residents of public and assisted housing or other communities HUD serves;
- gun violence hot-lines – to allow community members a constructive way to help local law enforcement agencies rid our neighborhoods of illegal guns;
- gun tracing training and support – helping local law enforcement agencies and public housing police work with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to stop the flow of guns that are used illegally in our communities;
- mentorship and youth diversion programs that offer alternatives to crime and violence – targeting individuals in the community most prone to gun violence in order to take a proactive stance to stopping gun violence from the outset;
- domestic violence counseling programs – because all too often gun violence correlates to domestic violence; and
- gun buyback programs – which take unwanted guns out of the community once and for all.

This list is in no way meant to exhaust the possibilities under the Initiative; one of the most exciting things about this Initiative is that there are creative, innovative, and successful programs beginning to sprout up all over the country that deserve HUD's support and that can be replicated in many more of the communities HUD serves.

Right here in D.C., for example, HUD has been working with the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) on a program called the Grassroots Youth Intervention Program, a unique and innovative effort to keep kids in public housing away from gang-, drug-, and crime-related activity. In January, 1997, reacting to a rash of homicides among warring factions of youths in D.C.'s Benning Terrace, a public housing community in Southwest Washington – a gang war that had taken the lives of an ice cream vendor, a taxi driver, several residents and nine youths, the last a 12-year-old named Darryl Hall – members of a faith-based group called the Alliance of Concerned Men – men who had themselves been involved in gang warfare, drugs and violence in their youth – stepped in and negotiated a truce. As the echoes of gunshots faded, the

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Alliance used this truce to bring kids who had once been at murderous war with each other to work together cleaning up graffiti and landscaping the neighborhood. An area where there were eight killings in 1996 saw none just two years later.

And at the trauma center at Highland Hospital at the Alameda County Medical Center in Oakland, California when kids have come in with gunshot wounds, counselors who have themselves been gun victims are sent to their bedside to start intensive counseling over a period of several months. These counselors work with the victim and the victim's family to stop the cycle of retaliation in which one act of violence all too often leads to another. And through the Drug Elimination Grant program, HUD has funded the Housing Authority of Frederick, Maryland's partnership with the Frederick Police Department on a program called "Gun Stoppers." Gun Stoppers provides a reward for people who report illegal firearm possessions and has already begun to show results – in one case, a group of kids saw an adult burying a gun in some mulch; the kids told the police about their discovery and the gun was confiscated, and as a reward the officers arranged a party the kids.

And in Seattle, Washington, the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center has developed a Safe Gun Storage Campaign, reacting to a rash of firearm-related suicides, homicides, and accidental shooting deaths in King County, Washington. The Center worked with doctors, local law enforcement, and schools to reduce unintentional shootings by promoting the use of handgun lockboxes to keep guns out of the hands of children. Harborview worked with a local retailer to offer discounts on a special lockbox for handguns and publicized the program through PSAs and with a hotline. In the first six months of the campaign alone [January through June, 1998] more than 1,700 lockboxes were sold and Harborview has done much to educate gun owners about the importance of safe storage in reducing accidental and suicidal gun deaths and as a deterrent to gun thefts.

And in Los Angeles, HUD has funded an effort with the Housing Authority County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) to partner with local law enforcement, local community-based organizations, and community members to implement a comprehensive, community-driven response to concerns about public safety – a model that will work when focused on the specific problem of gun violence. This comprehensive approach includes a community policing program, narcotics and gang investigations, a violence prevention program that includes education, Family Resource Centers and Family Learning Centers, counseling and case management, recreational and youth leadership programs, Drug and Gang Task Forces, a truancy prevention program, an on-site alternative high school, tutoring, recreation and employment programs, all within an overall crime and safety strategy that includes management practices like crime tracking, criminal history screenings, implementation of the One Strike policy, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. In the public housing developments in which this strategy and its earlier incarnations have been tried, crime dropped significantly from 1995 figures, and we have little doubt that a similar approach to the most concentrated pockets of gun violence will have a similar impact in other communities.

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I could go on -- but the point is that communities are taking action but they need more resources. We are at a crossroads now, and we have a chance to support these types of local efforts and to build on the successes HUD has experienced in fighting crime and violence in the past.

Why don't you just take one approach, like requiring all public housing police to do gun traces, and implement that nationwide?

That's not how we operate at HUD -- we don't impose cookie-cutter solutions on the neighborhoods we serve; we listen, we empower, and we work collaboratively by giving local communities the flexible tools they need to fight this and so many other problems in the ways best suited to each community.

Is it important to identify and replicate best practices in promoting gun safety and fighting gun violence? Of course and an important part of this Initiative is a rigorous evaluation component and an effort to spread the word about best practices. But that does not mean we should pick out one tool from the whole toolbox of possible solutions and say to communities, here's the answer.

What is GIS?

Geographic information systems (GIS) allow people to map data in ways that can reveal hidden patterns and trends, giving a unique and powerful tool to guide action. As The New York Times recently reported [January 20, 2000, page E1], GIS have been used by corporations, private groups, and government agencies to do everything from planning store locations to tracking discrimination to fighting crime.

How do geographic information systems work? GIS work by plotting data on a map in layers, adding in a variety of data points to bring to light what The New York Times called "hidden truths." The Times gave a great example: police investigators in Brooklyn were responding to a series of slashings several years ago, incidents that seemed to have little to do with each other. The police, however, plotted the sites of the incidents and overlaid other data, like where gang members gathered, and were able to make connections that they just couldn't otherwise make. A local gang had been using slashing attacks as part of their initiations and the police were able to solve the mystery.

Why do GIS?

Two reasons: first, many communities simply have no data on the incidence of gun-related violence and we need to close that knowledge gap; second, and much more important, GIS can guide community action. HUD-sponsored research has shown that GIS, used in the context of data-sharing partnerships between police departments and public housing authorities, can be a powerful tool for mapping crime in and around public housing communities and that such mapping, in turn, can guide a community's response

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to crime. This simple, but important, lesson can be applied to a variety of gun-related incidents (e.g., crimes, suicides, accidents, weapons recoveries, etc.) and applied in a variety of urban settings and communities HUD serves and we believe that GIS will be an integral weapon in the fight against gun violence.

How much of the \$30 million will go to each program element?

The bulk of the funds proposed under this Initiative will go to direct community activities to reduce gun violence and promote gun safety, with the education and outreach and information tools components funded at relatively modest levels, with the expectation that many communities will choose to use all of the tools that this Initiative gives them to craft a comprehensive, performance-driven, community-wide response. The evaluation component of the initiative is also an important way for us to garner hard data about which elements or combination of elements work best.

Who may apply for funds under this initiative?

Grants under the education and outreach component will be made to organizations with proven track records in public education campaigns and gun violence and gun safety education.

Grants under the gun safety and violence reduction activities will be open to a wide variety of groups in the community, including local governments, public housing authorities, Indian Housing Agencies and Tribally Designated Housing Entities, law enforcement agencies (for above baseline services), public and private profit and nonprofit organizations, and other organizations. We know that the best response to violence is a community-wide response, and we are going to encourage all of our local partners to work together to respond.

Given the nature of the technology and the types of information that will be gathered, grants under the information tools component to support geographic information systems will go to partnerships linking law enforcement agencies with a variety of public and private entities such as municipal planning agencies, housing authorities, public health departments, emergency medical services, neighborhood/civic associations and social service agencies.

What hard data exists to demonstrate that the programs HUD intends to fund actually work?

In a general sense, we have no doubt that education and outreach, a cornerstone of the public health approach to violence prevention, is an important component of any campaign to reduce violence, that GIS has been used to great effect in a number of other contexts and can be applied to the specific problem of gun violence, and that promising strategies for reducing gun violence have begun to emerge on the community level that deserve HUD's support and merit replicating in more of our nation's communities. As

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this is a competitive grant program, it will be incumbent upon potential grantees to demonstrate that the approach that they are proposing and the specific activities they are contemplating have succeeded or have great potential to succeed in reducing gun violence.

What is HUD's statutory authority for this Initiative?

The funds HUD intends to devote to the Community Gun Safety and Violence Reduction Initiative are a set-aside within the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, but the Administration will submit language for the FY2001 Appropriations Bill that will clarify the scope of intended activities under the new Initiative. The Initiative is not a new program, but is a new initiative to focus specifically on gun violence in all of the communities HUD serves, building upon the lessons of the Drug Elimination Program and other successful HUD anti-crime, anti-violence efforts.

How does this differ from HUD's Gun Buyback initiative announced last fall?

The pilot Gun Buyback and Violence Reduction Initiative is an important first step in focusing our efforts at HUD in a concentrated way on the problem of gun violence, but the new Initiative is open to a much broader range of activities and gives more tools to communities, in and around public housing but also in other areas HUD serves, to respond to gun violence. The new Initiative is intended to reach as far as the plague of gun violence does – a national problem requires a national solution, and we are applying the lessons learned not just in the gun buyback initiative but in a host of other anti-crime and anti-violence efforts supported by the Department.

Where will the Initiative be housed in the Department?

The Community Safety and Conservation Division in the Office of Public and Indian Housing will be responsible for overseeing this Initiative.

Does HUD have the capacity to run this Initiative?

Yes. HUD has the capacity to run this Initiative through existing staff resources. The transition in the Drug Elimination Program from a competitive grant program to a formula program, internal resources have been freed up that the Department plans to redirect to oversee this Initiative.

Does HUD have the experience to manage this Initiative?

For years now, HUD has successfully funded a number of anti-crime and violence reduction efforts through the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, the Public Housing Drug Elimination Technical Assistance Program, the Public Housing Police Technical Assistance Program, and we will build on these successes when it comes time to implement this new Initiative.

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How does HUD plan to run this initiative?

If the Initiative is funded, HUD will develop and implement a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to award competitive grants in all three elements of the Initiative. In preparing that NOFA, as we have done with other new initiatives in the past, we will consult closely with our traditional partners in the arenas of public and assisted housing, as well as the folks we've worked closely with in our community development and economic development efforts, and we will build upon the experience we've gained overseeing the variety of anti-crime and anti-violence efforts supported by the Department. We expect to hear from all those interested in this initiative and work to delineate the details of the program in an open and collaborative way.

What else is HUD doing to respond to the problem of gun violence?

This new Initiative is only one part of a comprehensive effort we have implemented to respond to violence and crime in all of the communities HUD serves. Preventing crime and reducing violence in these communities is one of HUD's highest priorities, and HUD has implemented a creative, comprehensive approach that is making a difference.

Our work with public housing authorities on a possible law suit that those authorities might file against gun manufacturers to reduce the acquisition of guns by criminals and promote reasonable safety devices is an integral element of HUD's strategy to fight the plague of gun violence. The possible lawsuit, however, is just one part of our strategy.

HUD's *Public Housing Drug Elimination Program* (PHDEP) has helped to turn the tide against drugs and drug-related crime, including gun crime, in public and Indian housing communities, supporting supplemental law enforcement, private security guards and investigators, resident patrols, crime and drug prevention programs, and other activities.

The *Public Housing Drug Elimination Technical Assistance Program* supports these efforts by providing training and similar assistance in conducting needs assessments, developing response strategies, working with local law enforcement, developing community responses to drugs and crime, and other similar activities.

The *Public Housing Police Department Technical Assistance Program* supports improved communications and dispatch, community policing, crime prevention, and other efforts by public housing police departments.

Some specific efforts that we've supported through these programs include:

- the pilot *Gun Buyback and Violence Reduction Initiative*, the largest effort of its kind, which will allow Public Housing Authorities, working with local police departments, to take unwanted guns off the streets;

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- the *New Approach Anti-Drug Program*, which supports augmented security, the investigation and/or prosecution of drug-related criminal activity, as well as security-related capital improvements;
- the *Enforcement and Prevention Strategy to Fight Crime and Drugs in Public Housing*, a joint effort with the Department of Justice to target a group of the "worst of the worst" public housing authorities with aggressive enforcement and comprehensive crime prevention and maintenance activities;
- the *Youth Violence Prevention Program*, a joint effort with the Centers for Disease Control to assist public housing authorities respond to youth violence;
- a *Grassroots Youth Intervention Program*, an initiative to keep young public housing residents away from gang-, drug-, and crime-related activity;
- *Peacemaker Corps*, a demonstration conflict resolution, youth violence prevention, and tolerance education initiative; and
- *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)*, which allows communities to use physical design and redesign to make their communities safer.

The Department has initiated a number of other important anti-crime, anti-violence for America's communities, including:

- *One Strike and You're Out*, a policy that allows housing authorities to deny occupancy to or to evict families on the basis of alcohol abuse, illegal drug-related activities, and firearm-related violent acts;
- *The Officer Next Door* program, which offers HUD-owned single family homes to law enforcement officers at 50 percent discount, encouraging law enforcement officers to become homeowners and residents in designated "revitalization" communities; and
- *Operation Safe Home*, a combined HUD, Department of Justice and Department of Treasury effort to address violent and drug-related crime in publicly funded housing.

I could go on. The point is that the Department has made impressive strides towards the reduction of drug use, drug-related crime, including crime involving the use of a gun, and violence. More, however, can and must be done about the presence of guns and gun-related violence in and around the communities that HUD serves. Efforts focused in a concentrated way on reducing gun violence and promoting gun safety have begun to emerge in neighborhoods around the country, and HUD can play an important role in fostering these efforts and in helping communities replicate the hard-fought lessons they have learned in combating this problem:

Are guns specifically covered under HUD's "One Strike and You're Out" policy?

No. But the One Strike and You're Out policy does allow local Housing Authorities to restrict eligibility for occupancy to applicants who do not have criminal histories.

Weapons violations are among the offenses that can be used as the basis for restricting

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eligibility. Similarly, weapons offenses can be the basis for terminating the lease under the One Strike provisions and the Lease and Grievance Regulations in 24 CFR 960-966.

What's the cost to HUD of gun violence? What percentage of HUD funds is used on crime prevention?

The direct costs to HUD derive from two sources, running into the billions of dollars – and that does not include the more diffuse costs that come from crime and violence undermining our community and economic development efforts.

In the arena of public housing, HUD each year awards about \$3 billion in grants to public housing. Many Housing Authorities are forced to spend huge portions of these funds on security, much of it gun related – funds that would otherwise go for badly needed maintenance or repairs. Chicago, for example, spent 38% of its Comprehensive Grant funds -- \$43 million -- on security. That's not unusual for the larger housing authorities around the country.

A concentrated source of funding to combat violence in public housing is the Drug Elimination Grant program. We spend about \$250 million a year, nearly \$2 billion since 1990. Almost half of these funds are being used for security, law enforcement, investigators and tenant patrols – again, much of it gun related.

The funds spent on security reduce the funds available to carry out other functions. For example, there is a backlog of \$20 billion in unmet modernization needs in public housing. Removing the more immediate need for heavy security would allow housing authorities to direct more funds to these unmet needs.

We have 20,000 gun control laws already on the books – isn't the right answer to solving the problems of guns simply to enforce the laws we already have?

Strong enforcement of our gun laws is a critical component of addressing the problem of gun violence and this Administration has worked hard to punish those who break existing laws. For example, the President fought for and got 100,000 new police officers to protect our streets and the President's recently announced enforcement initiative will bring unprecedented resources to bear in enforcing gun laws and keeping guns out of the hands of criminals.

These efforts are working. The FBI's latest Uniform Crime Report shows a 7% drop in homicides in 1998, accounted for almost entirely by a decrease in killings by guns. Experts suggest that this drop is due to our efforts to place reasonable controls on the availability of guns, increased efforts to trace guns used in crime by ATF, and tighter federal restrictions on gun purchases by the Brady law.

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The problem of gun violence is so difficult, however, that everyone must do their part before we will be able to master it. The gun industry has not yet met its responsibilities and that is why we need to sit down with them at the negotiation table.

[Note: the number of gun control laws bandied about by pro-gun activists is apocryphal.]

Wouldn't these funds be better put to increasing PHDEP formula grants?

Let's not play a game of either/or – the Drug Elimination Grant program is a critical weapon in the fight to make public housing communities as safe as possible, but this new Initiative will reach as far as the plague of gun violence has – to neighborhoods across the Nation. We remain deeply committed to the success of the Drug Elimination program and the funds proposed for this Initiative in no way displace the funds the Administration is proposing for PHDEP.

Isn't the Department of Justice already doing enough to reduce gun violence?

Do you think we've reached a point where we can throw up our hands and say, "job done"? I applaud the whole range of efforts undertaken by the Department of Justice to enforce gun laws and to work with local communities to improve law enforcement and I strongly urge Congress to approve the President's proposed record \$280 million Gun Enforcement Initiative, announced on January 18th. But as the President said last week in announcing the enforcement initiative, "no one who knows anything believes that all of our kids are as safe in their childhood as they ought to be," and HUD has an important role to play in empowering communities to take proactive steps to reach that goal. We have entered into constructive and very fruitful partnerships with the Department of Justice in the past to combat crime and violence in our nation's communities, and I look forward to continuing that cooperation in the future.

Shouldn't this kind of a program be run through the Department of Justice?

Not at all. The Department of Justice has sponsored some creative efforts in recent years to address the flow of illegal weapons to our nation's communities and has taken impressive strides in enforcing gun laws, but HUD has an important role to play in this effort as well, just as HUD has taken the lead in recent years in supporting local efforts to fight crime and reduce violence in the communities we serve.

What does HUD do best? Give communities around the country the tools – funding, training, best practices – to solve problems from the ground up. We have strong relationships with communities around the country and those relationships give us a unique edge in attacking the problem of gun violence from a community-wide, public health, pro-active and preventative perspective. HUD is charged by law with helping to ensure "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family," and

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this new Initiative, as with other anti-crime and anti-violence efforts HUD has embarked upon in the past, is driven by a singular devotion to that goal.

How do you think the gun industry will react to this proposal?

There is no reason why the gun industry will not support pro-active, community based gun violence reduction. Many in the alcohol industry, for instance, have supported responsible drinking efforts and we hope that the gun industry will take an equally constructive approach to this Initiative.

Would you fund the NRA under your safety education program?

We are not ruling out, nor would we even contemplate ruling out, any individual organization from eligibility, provided that they meet the requirements of the program. We hope and expect that we will receive support from everyone interested in gun safety, recognizing HUD's unique strengths in promoting community-based efforts.

May local government entities use CGSVRI funds to match other Federal programs, such as the Department of Justice's COPS program?

While HUD cannot speak to any restrictions that may exist in programs housed in other agencies, we do not plan to impose any restrictions on the use of other federal funds through this initiative, save that we will ensure that any funds spent to support local law enforcement activities are above the baseline of services those departments already provide.

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LEVEL 1 - 2 OF 2 DOCUMENTS

Public Papers of the Presidents

March 5, 1997

Crime -

GUN SAFETY

CITE: 33 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 287

LENGTH: 440 words

HEADLINE: Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns

HIGHLIGHT:

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

BODY:

Subject: Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns

Every day, firearms claim the lives of too many children. Firearms cause 12 percent of fatalities among American children and teens, and one of every four deaths of teenagers ages 15 to 19. These numbers represent not only violent crimes, but also tragic gun accidents. Firearms are now the fourth leading cause of accidental deaths among children ages 5 to 14. Moreover, firearms have become the primary method by which young people commit suicide.

According to a Centers for Disease Control study released earlier this month, the rate of firearm deaths among children up to 14 years old is nearly 12 times higher in the United States than in 25 other industrialized countries combined. The Center also estimates that nearly 1.2 million unsupervised children return from school to a home that has a loaded or unlocked firearm.

Recently, my Administration sent to the Congress our "Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Act of 1997," draft legislation that includes a provision requiring all Federal Firearms Licensed dealers to provide a safety lock device with every firearm sold. Safety lock devices will help to reduce the unauthorized use of handguns by a child at play or a teen who wants to commit a crime. Just as important, safety lock devices can also help deter gun theft.

I have urged the Congress to move this legislation quickly. In the meantime, the Federal Government can serve as an example of gun safety for the Nation by taking an important step to reduce handgun accidents and protect our children from injury and death.

Every year, the Federal Government issues thousands of handguns to our law enforcement agents. While some agencies have already adopted a policy of distributing safety locks for these handguns, this policy should be universally adopted across the Federal Government. That is why I direct you to develop and implement a policy requiring that a safety lock device -- as defined in our draft legislation -- be provided with any and every handgun issued by your agency to law enforcement officers. You should ensure that all Federal law enforcement officers are informed of this policy and that all issued safety lock devices are accompanied by instructions for their proper use.

All Americans have a responsibility to ensure that guns do not fall into the

hands of our children. Your response to this directive will help ensure that this does not happen. Taking this simple step can have a dramatic impact on saving the lives of our children. You should proceed as quickly as possible to carry out this directive.

William J. Clinton

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 03, 1997

LEVEL 1 - 1 OF 2 DOCUMENTS

Public Papers of the Presidents

August 14, 1997

CITE: 33 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1248

LENGTH: 197 words

HEADLINE: Statement on Child Safety Locks for Handguns

BODY:

This week, Smith and Wesson, the world's largest manufacturer of handguns, announced that it is forging a partnership with the Master Lock Co. to provide a child safety lock with every handgun sold for commercial use. I applaud both of these companies for their efforts to promote gun safety.

I particularly want to commend Smith and Wesson for taking an important and responsible step for children's safety. Child safety locks are the right thing to do. In 1994, 185 children were killed by accidental gunshot wounds. That is why my anti-gang and youth violence legislation would require that all federally licensed gun dealers provide such safety devices with every handgun sold. And that is why on March 3d I ordered all Federal agencies to provide child safety locks with the thousands of handguns they issue to Federal law enforcement officers.

Child safety locks have garnered the wide support of law enforcement, the medical community, many local governments, and now a part of the firearms manufacturing industry. This fall the full Senate considers the anti-juvenile crime legislation. I hope they will include the child safety lock as part of the legislation.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 11, 1997