

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 21, 2000

The Honorable Henry J. Hyde
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you know, yesterday marked the anniversary of the tragic shootings at Columbine High School -- and the date by which I had called on Congress to enact commonsense gun safety legislation. The passing of this deadline is a deep disappointment. When nearly 12 of our nation's children are killed by gunfire every day, we have an urgent responsibility to do all we can to reduce gun violence. That is why I am grateful for your good-faith efforts to seek agreement, despite tremendous pressure on Congress from the gun lobby. I was also glad to see that you joined Representative Conyers last week in urging Chairman Hatch to promptly convene the juvenile justice conference and to move forward at last on this legislation. And I appreciated receiving your most recent proposal to reach a compromise.

I still have serious concerns about aspects of your latest proposal that I fear would create new loopholes for criminals to buy guns. But I am confident that if we can keep working together in good faith, we can reach agreement on a strong, commonsense bill that I can sign into law.

I was especially encouraged by your recent commitment on "Meet the Press" and in your letter to Mr. Conyers to ensure that persons under felony indictments remain subject to full, three-day background checks. It is critical that we make the same effort to stop criminals from buying guns at gun shows that we already make at gun stores.

In order to prevent fraud, protect privacy, and fully enforce the nation's gun laws -- goals we both share -- I believe we must make National Instant Criminal Background Check System records available for a sufficient period of time rather than immediately destroying them. However, as a gesture of good faith, I am willing to meet you halfway on this important issue,

by requiring records to be destroyed within 90 days, instead of 180 days as provided under current law. With this compromise, we can address your concerns while preserving this significant law enforcement tool. I hope this step will help break the current logjam, and bring your colleagues back to the conference table.

We still have other important issues to resolve. I remain concerned about aspects of your proposal that would: leave open the gun show loophole by letting criminals buy guns at flea markets and by cutting short existing background checks on persons with certain mental health histories or domestic violence restraining orders; undermine the ban on the importation of high-capacity ammunition clips; weaken long-standing controls on interstate firearms sales; and fail to require vital record-keeping provisions needed by law enforcement to trace guns sold at gun shows that later turn up in crimes.

Despite these significant outstanding issues, I believe we can reach an agreement. It is my sincere hope that in the coming weeks, we can work together to address our common goal of closing the gun show loophole and ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced without weakening current gun laws in the process. Neither of us is interested in a compromise that would serve only to jeopardize public safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement. I look forward to working with you to pass this commonsense legislation, and I encourage you to continue urging Chairman Hatch to allow the conferees to meet and consider this legislation. As you have stated, our efforts will come to nothing until that happens. Only by allowing an open and honest debate in conference and by working out our differences can we do right by the American people on this vital issue. We owe it to the families of Littleton, and the thousands more who lose their lives in gunfire each year in America, to get this done now.

Sincerely,

Ben Clinton

52104

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

- need pay DEWIL IN DETAILS
- agreed to Lawrence in 2 room - good

Hyde: → PORTCH ISSUES

- would of kept OK check records?

→ dealers who are bad eggs

→ those guns used in crime

→ informant

Eckman:

→ define gun show

→ 72 hours

Hyde:

- can be delivered? are lists?

- need 7 of 12 - Ken & R's

- haven't heard yet

Eckman:

- cannot say as it is past Carterberg

INDICATORS

current CW?

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

→ POLITICAL ISSUE - ^{anger in deal} LHM + MTS BLOCK

→ RECORDS + CMC CMT. (6 rows.)

· verify dealer in dir checks

· mit abnir system + dir checks on bad people.

→ NO MTG: WHAT AFRAID OF?

April 21, 2000

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Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hyde:

As you know, yesterday marked the anniversary of the tragic shootings at Columbine High School -- and the date by which I had called on Congress to enact common sense gun safety legislation. The passing of this deadline is a deep disappointment. When nearly 12 of our nation's children killed by gunfire every day, we have an urgent responsibility to do all we can to reduce gun violence. That is why I am grateful for your good-faith efforts to seek agreement, despite tremendous pressure on Congress from the gun lobby. I was also glad to see that you joined Representative Conyers last week in urging Chairman Hatch to promptly convene the juvenile justice conference and to move forward at last on this legislation. And I appreciated receiving your most recent proposal to reach a compromise.

Unfortunately, while I share your goal of reaching an agreement on closing the gun show loophole and other common sense measures, I have serious concerns about your latest proposal and the effect it would have on public safety. The proposal purports to close the gun show loophole, but it would actually weaken existing laws and create new loopholes that make it easier for criminals to acquire firearms

Your latest offer, like the proposal you advanced last fall, would let criminals buy guns at flea markets; cut short existing background checks on persons with certain mental health histories and domestic violence restraining orders; effectively nullify the Senate-passed ban on importation of high-capacity ammunition clips; and fail to require vital recordkeeping provisions needed by law enforcement to trace guns sold at gun shows that later turn up in crimes.

In addition, your latest proposal would limit law enforcement's ability to enforce the Brady Law by requiring the immediate destruction of National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) records. The retention of these records for a limited period of time is critical to the ability of federal law enforcement to assure that Brady checks are being run, and to prevent unauthorized uses of the system and violations of privacy by unscrupulous firearms dealers. Your proposal also contains a provision that would significantly weaken controls on interstate firearms sales. These controls are the foundation of the 1968 Gun Control Act.

Despite these significant outstanding issues, I believe we can reach an agreement. I was especially encouraged by your recent commitment to ensure that persons under felony indictments remain subject to full, three-day background checks. As a gesture of good faith, I would like to meet you halfway on the destruction of NICS records, by requiring records to be

destroyed within 90 days, instead of 180 days. With this compromise, we can address your concerns while preserving this significant law enforcement tool. And because we both place a high priority on ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced, I also hope you will work with me to address the concerns of federal law enforcement agencies about the weakened gun show definition, interstate firearms sales, and gun tracing provisions of your proposal.

It is my sincere hope that we can work together to address our common goal of closing the gun show loophole and ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced. Neither of us is interested in a compromise that would serve only to compromise public safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement. I look forward to working with you to pass this common sense legislation, and urge you to continue pushing Chairman Hatch to allow the conferees to meet and consider this legislation. As you have stated, our efforts will come to nothing until that happens. Only by allowing an open and honest debate in conference and by working out our differences can we do right by the American people on this vital issue.

April 21, 2000

The Honorable Henry Hyde
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hyde:

As you are aware, yesterday marked the anniversary of the tragic shootings at Columbine High School -- and the date by which I had called on Congress to enact common sense gun safety legislation. The passing of this deadline is a deep disappointment. With nearly 12 of our nation's children killed by gunfire every day, we have an urgent responsibility to do all we can to reduce gun violence. That is why I appreciate your efforts to work in good faith on this issue, despite tremendous pressure on Congress from the gun lobby. I was also glad to see that you joined Representative Conyers last week in urging Chairman Hatch to promptly convene the juvenile justice conference and to move forward at last on this legislation. And I appreciated receiving your most recent proposal to reach a compromise.

Unfortunately, I have serious concerns about this proposal and the effect it would have on public safety. The proposal purports to close the gun show loophole but would actually weaken existing laws and create new loopholes that make it easier for criminals to acquire firearms.

Your latest offer, like the proposal you advanced last fall, keeps the gun show loophole open by failing to require background checks for gun sales at flea markets and other events where hundreds of guns are sold. It also contains provisions that would weaken the Brady background checks done at the events it does cover, reducing the amount of time law enforcement has to conduct background checks on persons with certain mental health histories and domestic violence restraining orders -- even for the checks run by federally-licensed dealers, who currently have to run full Brady background checks. It fails to include another critical aspect of the bipartisan Senate bill: vital recordkeeping provisions necessary to help law enforcement trace firearms sold through gun shows if those guns later turn up in crimes. And it would undermine the Senate-passed ban on the importation of high-capacity ammunition clips.

In addition, your latest proposal contains new language that would limit law enforcement's ability to enforce the Brady Law by requiring the immediate destruction of National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) records. The retention of these records for at least a limited period of time is critical to the ability of federal law enforcement to assure that Brady checks are being run, and to prevent unauthorized uses of the system and violations of privacy by unscrupulous firearms dealers. Your proposal also contains a provision that would significantly weaken controls on interstate firearms sales. These controls are the foundation of the 1968 Gun Control Act.

hr -

I'd re-written this,
not knowing of your edit -
Turns out we had most of
the same mistakes,

but
the
top is
marked
better
here, I
think -
consider
the
congruents.

hr

While significant issues clearly remain, I still believe that we can reach agreement. I was especially encouraged that you indicated on "Meet the Press" Sunday that you would agree to provide up to 72 hours to conduct background checks on persons under felony indictments. In the spirit of compromise, I would like to meet you halfway on the destruction of NICS records, by requiring records to be destroyed within 90 days, instead of 180 days. With this compromise, we can address the concerns you raised while preserving this significant law enforcement tool.

It is my sincere hope that we can work together to address our common goal of closing the gun show loophole and ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced. Neither of us wants a compromise that would serve only to compromise public safety and the ability of law enforcement officers to do their job. I look forward to working with you to pass this common sense legislation, and urge you to continue pushing Chairman Hatch to allow the conferees to meet and consider this legislation. We can do right by the American people by having an open, honest debate in conference, and by working out the differences between us on this vital issue.

April 21, 2000

The Honorable Henry Hyde
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hyde:

As you ^{know,} ~~are aware~~, yesterday was the anniversary of the tragic shooting at Columbine High School. Yet Congress has still not enacted the common sense gun safety legislation that passed with bipartisan support in the Senate last summer. This delay has been a great disappointment to me and to ^{the American people} ~~many Americans~~, so I ~~appreciate your most recent proposal~~. I also want to thank you for joining Representative Conyers in urging Chairman Hatch to promptly convene the conference so that you may work out your differences and pass this lifesaving legislation.

As we both know, far too many American lose their lives in gun violence every year. ^{And when} ~~And with~~ nearly 12 or our nation's children ^{are} ~~are~~ killed by gunfire every day, ~~it is clear that~~ the fight to reduce gun violence should not be about politics. It should be about assuring public safety. That is why I ^{am grateful} ~~appreciate~~ that you have not abandoned work on this issue, despite tremendous pressure on Congress from the gun lobby. ~~It is my~~ ^{my} desire to assure public safety, however, ~~that~~ leads me to have serious concerns about your most recent proposal. Unfortunately, while I share ^{your} ~~you~~ goal of reaching an agreement on closing the gun show loophole and other common sense measures, ^{your latest} ~~this~~ proposal not only ~~fail~~ ^{fails} to address any of the concerns I shared with you at our meeting at the White House last month, but contains some troubling new provisions as well.

I cannot support, nor can I ask Democratic conferees to support, a compromise that only purports ^{to close} ~~closing~~ the gun show loophole, or that would weaken existing gun laws ^{and} ~~or~~ create new loopholes that make it easier for criminals to acquire firearms. Your latest offer, like the proposal you advanced last fall, ~~includes weakened provisions rendering the Senate-passed ban on the importation of high capacity ammunition clips meaningless~~ ^{CONYERS WANTED US TO ADD THIS PIECE} and perpetuates ^{the gun show loophole} ~~the gun show loophole~~ by failing to ^{require background checks for gun sales} ~~require background checks for gun sales~~ at flea markets; and other events where hundreds of guns are sold. It also contains provisions that would ^{cut short existing} ~~weaken the~~ Brady background checks done at the events it does cover, reducing the amount of time law enforcement has to conduct background checks on persons with certain mental health histories and domestic violence restraining orders; ^{even for the checks run by dealers, who currently have to run full Brady background checks} ~~even for the checks run by dealers, who currently have to run full Brady background checks~~. It also fails to include another critical aspect of the bipartisan Senate bill: ^{needs to} ~~vital recordkeeping~~ provisions ^{that} ~~necessary to help~~ law enforcement trace ^{guns} ~~firearms~~ sold through gun shows if those guns later turn up in crimes.

^{would let criminals buy guns} ~~effectively nullify the Senate-passed ban on the importation of high-capacity ammunition clips; and fail to require~~

In addition, your latest proposal ~~contains new language that~~ would limit law enforcement's ability to enforce the Brady Law by requiring the immediate destruction of National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) records. The retention of these records for ~~at least~~ a limited period of time is critical to the ability of federal law enforcement to assure that Brady checks are being run, and to prevent unauthorized uses of the system and violations of privacy by unscrupulous firearms dealers. Your proposal also contains a provision that would significantly weaken controls on interstate firearms sales. These controls are the foundation of the 1968 Gun Control Act.

Despite these ^{outstanding issues,}

^{make sure that persons under felony indictments receive full, three-day}
~~While significant issues remain,~~ I believe that we can reach an agreement. I was especially encouraged by your recent commitment to work with Representative Conyers to improve new, harmful provisions that would have restricted background checks on persons under ~~felony indictments.~~ I would also be willing to work with you to develop a compromise on the destruction of NICS records by requiring records to be destroyed within 90 days, instead of 180 days. By meeting you halfway on this provision, we can address your concerns while preserving this significant law enforcement tool. **As I know we both place a high priority on ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced, I am also hopeful that you may be interested in working with me to address the concerns of federal law enforcement agencies about the weakened gun show definition, interstate firearms sales and gun tracing provisions of your proposal. THIS SECTION IS BOLDED BECAUSE IT ISN'T NECESSARY, BUT COULD HELP THROW THE ENFORCEMENT ARGUMENT BACK AT THEM.**

As a gesture of good faith,

It is my sincere hope that we can work together to address our common goal of closing the gun show loophole and ensuring that our nation's gun laws are fully enforced. I do not believe that either of us ^{is} ~~are~~ interested in any compromise that would only serve to compromise public safety and the ability of law enforcement to enforce our nation's gun laws. I look forward to working with you to pass this common sense legislation, ^{and agree with} ~~but remind~~ you that our efforts ~~are~~ ^{will} come to ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} ~~meaningless~~ unless Chairman Hatch allows the conferees to meet and consider this legislation. I encourage you to continue working with Representative Conyers to make this happen. ~~It will~~ ^{by} Only be through allowing an open and honest debate in conference ~~that we~~ ^{we} can do right by the American people on this important issue.

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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JULIAN EPSTEIN
 MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL
 AND STAFF DIRECTOR

April 14, 2000

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
 Ranking Minority Member
 Committee on the Judiciary
 Washington, D.C.

Dear John:

In my ongoing effort to negotiate a compromise juvenile justice and gun bill, I noted your most recent objections in the CQ Daily Monitor on April 13, 2000, wherein it is stated that my proposal "would not catch questionable people who do not fall under the 'arrest' category - such as the mentally ill, the dishonorably discharged, and those with domestic violence or stalking misdemeanors." I believe the language in my proposal will catch any disqualified person so long as there is a record of the disqualification. We do not in any way change current law regarding ineligibility to purchase guns. All of the disqualifications under the Brady law (Section 922 of title 18 of the United States Code) will remain in force and any official indication of such disqualifications will trigger the longer, three-day waiting period.

It is argued that "by leaving out unofficial records, a host of questionable buyers would fall through the cracks," under my proposal. Such an argument misunderstands the effect of my proposal, which contemplates that any information of a possible Brady disqualification that is contained in the National Instant Check Systems (NICS) will trigger the three-day review period. The term "unofficial record," by itself, could include a letter from a disgruntled neighbor or the scribbling on a cocktail napkin. It is too vague, but more importantly, any record in the NICS database that suggests the existence of any of the Brady disqualifications would be used under my "official record" language to trigger the three-day review period.

Regarding the three-day waiting period for those under indictment, I believe the "official record" language in my proposal covers persons under indictment. As you know, records of indictments are included in the NICS database. However, I am willing to work with you to ensure that such disqualified purchasers are explicitly covered by my proposal and would receive the three-day review.

You have also questioned the need for immediate destruction of records. It is important to note that the records of any ineligible purchaser can currently be retained in perpetuity and can

be freely used by law enforcement to investigate, charge, and prosecute those who try to buy a gun illegally. In fact, such NICS records are currently kept by the FBI, though, as a practical matter, they have rarely been used to charge or prosecute anyone. Under my proposal, it is only the records of eligible, approved purchasers that could not be retained. As you know, a provision regarding the immediate destruction of records is vital to those who see universal record retention as a back door to a federally maintained national registry, and therefore, necessary to include if we are to actually get the votes to pass a law.

John, do you want a bill? You have to compromise, as I have to compromise. I believe I have presented you a reasonable compromise. I await your acceptance or your counteroffer.

Sincerely,



HENRY J. HYDE

Chairman

House Committee on the Judiciary

Hyde Compromise/Guns Talking Points

April 16, 2000

- **Republican leadership has stalled on common sense gun measures for too long.** For over nine months, gun safety legislation has languished in Congress – in spite of recent bipartisan votes in the House and Senate calling for progress. Just last Tuesday, Chairman Hyde joined Rep. Conyers in a letter urging Chairman Hatch to call the conferees to work out differences.
- **Closing the gun show loophole is key.** Every year, an estimated 5 million people attend over 4,400 gun shows across the nation. But unlicensed sellers – half of all sellers at gun shows – can sell guns at gun shows without conducting background checks or keeping records. In other words, criminals can buy guns cash and carry – no questions asked.
 - A Treasury/Justice report last year found that 46 percent of the gun shows it studied involved the purchase or sale of guns by felons. 34 percent involved the sale of firearms later used in serious crimes, including homicides.
- **Hyde “compromise” is no compromise at all.** Chairman Hyde offered up a new proposal on guns earlier this week. Unfortunately this new offer opens new loopholes and weakens current law, and it is even weaker than a compromise he offered last year. It:
 - Opens the gun show loophole wider, by denying law enforcement the full 3 days to investigate people under indictment for violent felonies;
 - Weakens long-established federal law on interstate shipment of firearms, by making it easier for individuals to acquire firearms from out-of-state sellers;
 - Limits the FBI’s ability to enforce the Brady Law, by requiring the FBI to immediately destroy records from background checks.
 - Fails to cover urban flea markets.
- **We have a compromise that will make Americans safer.** To address the concern that a weekend gun show may end before a background check is completed, the President has offered to allow the guns to be held with the sheriff or local law enforcement until the check is finished. This proposal would ensure that no undue burdens are imposed, and would still close the loophole. We can wrap up the bill today if Republicans accept this compromise.
 - Remember, too: the overwhelming majority of checks are already completed the same day: over 70 percent are completed in seconds, and 95 percent are completed in 2 hours. And the remaining 5 percent are nearly 20 times more likely to be rejected – they’re the felons, fugitives and stalkers we want to stop in the first place.
 - The President is willing to consider any compromise that strengthens our nation gun laws. But he refuses to weaken current gun laws in the name of compromise.

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

**Fourteenth District, Michigan
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 12, 2000**

**CONTACT:
Ted Kalo (202) 225-6906**

Conyers: "Hyde's New Proposal Adds More Loopholes"

In reaction to Chairman Hyde's latest so-called "compromise" proposal publicly released in a letter to President Clinton, Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, released supporting documentation and issued the following statement:

"This latest 'compromise' by Chairman Hyde is a further capitulation by the Republican Leadership to the NRA's political gamesmanship. After positive discussion on the House floor yesterday, I am disappointed that Chairman Hyde has retreated from his November 4 proposal and weakened current law by opening up at least two loopholes that were not in his November 4 letter to the Minority Leader, in addition to leaving in place all of the loopholes that were part of that proposal. It's no wonder that the Republican leadership still refuses to test this proposal in a public meeting of the conference."

First, the bill opens up a new loophole for persons under indictment for violent felonies by not allowing three business days to investigate indictments. Chairman Hyde's November 4 proposal allowed three business days to investigate offenses described in 18 USC section 922(n), which currently prohibits persons under indictment from purchasing firearms. This language has disappeared in the latest draft. This means that law enforcement could find out that a person charged with murder has attempted to buy a gun, but because the only record in the system, the charged person would get the gun anyway.

Second, catering to NRA paranoia about a "national gun registry," the bill opens up a new "bad apple gun dealer" loophole by requiring the immediate destruction of Brady background check records and, thereby, greatly reduces the ability of federal authorities to investigate the two percent of all gun dealers who are responsible for half of the guns traced to crime. This language does not appear anywhere in his November 4 draft.

This bill still contains the same old loopholes in his old draft. Among other loopholes, it opens up a "wife beaters loophole" by not allowing three business days to investigate non-finalized domestic violence restraining orders, phone calls from police, and letter from courts. The bill also so narrowly defines a "gun show" that events where items other than guns are sold

in addition to guns would be completely excluded from background checks by unlicensed dealers.

Yesterday, Chairman Hyde said on the floor that he wanted a compromise that would give law enforcement enough time to finish checks on the 5% of buyers who are 20 times more likely to be prohibited than the average gun buyer. Instead, he has recycled his old November 4 proposal and made it even worse."

§ 44

FIREARMS

18 § 922

(2) to receive any firearm or ammunition which has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

(i) It shall be unlawful for any person to transport or ship in interstate or foreign commerce, any stolen firearm or stolen ammunition, knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the firearm or ammunition was stolen.

(j) It shall be unlawful for any person to receive, possess, conceal, store, barter, sell, or dispose of any stolen firearm or stolen ammunition, or pledge or accept as security for a loan any stolen firearm or stolen ammunition, which is moving as, which is a part of, which constitutes, or which has been shipped or transported in, interstate or foreign commerce, either before or after it was stolen, knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the firearm or ammunition was stolen.

(k) It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to transport, ship, or receive, in interstate or foreign commerce, any firearm which has had the importer's or manufacturer's serial number removed, obliterated, or altered or to possess or receive any firearm which has had the importer's or manufacturer's serial number removed, obliterated, or altered and has, at any time, been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

(l) Except as provided in section 925(d) of this chapter, it shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to import or bring into the United States or any possession thereof any firearm or ammunition; and it shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to receive any firearm or ammunition which has been imported or brought into the United States or any possession thereof in violation of the provisions of this chapter.

(m) It shall be unlawful for any licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, licensed dealer, or licensed collector knowingly to make any false entry in, to fail to make appropriate entry in, or to fail to properly maintain, any record which he is required to keep pursuant to section 923 of this chapter or regulations promulgated thereunder.

(n) It shall be unlawful for any person who is under indictment for a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year to ship or transport in interstate or foreign commerce any firearm or ammunition or receive any firearm or ammunition which has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

(o)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), it shall be unlawful for any person to transfer or possess a machinegun.

(2) This subsection does not apply with respect to—
(A) a transfer to or by, or possession by or under the authority of, the United States or any depart-

ment or agency thereof or a State, or a department, agency, or political subdivision thereof; or

(B) any lawful transfer or lawful possession of a machinegun that was lawfully possessed before the date this subsection takes effect.

(p)(1) It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, import, sell, ship, deliver, possess, transfer, or receive any firearm—

(A) that, after removal of grips, stocks, and magazines, is not as detectable as the Security Exemplar, by walk-through metal detectors calibrated and operated to detect the Security Exemplar; or

(B) any major component of which, when subjected to inspection by the types of x-ray machines commonly used at airports, does not generate an image that accurately depicts the shape of the component. Barium sulfate or other compounds may be used in the fabrication of the component.

(2) For purposes of this subsection—

(A) the term "firearm" does not include the frame or receiver of any such weapon;

(B) the term "major component" means, with respect to a firearm, the barrel, the slide or cylinder, or the frame or receiver of the firearm; and

(C) the term "Security Exemplar" means an object, to be fabricated at the direction of the Secretary, that is—

(i) constructed of, during the 12-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this subsection, 3.7 ounces of material type 17-4 PH stainless steel in a shape resembling a handgun; and

(ii) suitable for testing and calibrating metal detectors;

Provided, however, That at the close of such 12-month period, and at appropriate times thereafter the Secretary shall promulgate regulations to permit the manufacture, importation, sale, shipment, delivery, possession, transfer, or receipt of firearms previously prohibited under this subparagraph that are as detectable as a "Security Exemplar" which contains 3.7 ounces of material type 17-4 PH stainless steel, in a shape resembling a handgun, or such lesser amount as is detectable in view of advances in state-of-the-art developments in weapons detection technology.

(3) Under such rules and regulations as the Secretary shall prescribe, this subsection shall not apply to the manufacture, possession, transfer, receipt, shipment, or delivery of a firearm by a licensed manufacturer or any person acting pursuant to a contract with a licensed manufacturer, for the purpose of examining and testing such firearm to determine whether paragraph (1) applies to such firearm. The Secretary shall ensure that rules and regulations adopted pursuant to this paragraph do not impair the manufacture of

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14

1 “(3) DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF CHECKS
2 REQUESTED FROM GUN SHOWS.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
4 subparagraph (B), the Attorney General shall
5 ensure that each background check conducted
6 through the national instant criminal back-
7 ground check system pursuant to a request
8 made from a gun show is completed within 24
9 hours after an authorized person has contacted
10 the system to request the check.

11 “(B) EXCEPTIONS.—The requirement of
12 subparagraph (A) shall not apply if the system
13 indicates that—

14 “(i) receipt of the firearm by the pro-
15 spective transferee would violate subsection
16 (g) or (n) of section 922; or

17 “(ii) there exists an arrest record, civil
18 commitment complaint, or official record
19 with respect to a matter described in sub-
20 section (g) or (n) of section 922, which in-
21 dicates that receipt of the firearm by the
22 prospective transferee may violate sub-
23 section (g) or (n) of section 922.”.

24 “(c) REGULATION OF FIREARMS TRANSFERS AT GUN
25 SHOWS.—

November
4 =
Indictment
Included

F:\JDG\JD\CONF.006

14

1 —“(3) DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF CHECKS
2 REQUESTED FROM GUN SHOWS.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
4 subparagraph (B), the Attorney General shall
5 ensure that each background check conducted
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8 made from a gun show is completed within 24
9 hours after an authorized person has contacted
10 the system to request the check.

11 “(B) EXCEPTION.—The requirement of
12 subparagraph (A) shall not apply if the system
13 indicates that—

14 “(i) the person being checked has
15 been arrested for an offense described in
16 section 922(g) of title 18, United States
17 Code, and the disposition of the arrest has
18 not been communicated to the Attorney
19 General; or

20 “(ii) there is an official record that
21 the person being checked may be a person
22 described in such section 922(g), and there
23 is no official disposition record to the con-
24 trary.”.

April 4 =
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922(a) =
indictment?

F:\JDG\JD\CONF.006

29

1 (2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMEND-
2 MENTS.—The section analysis for chapter 33 of title
3 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting
4 after the item relating to section 540A the following:

“540B. Prohibition on fee for background check in connection with firearm transfer.”

5 (b) PROTECTION OF GUN OWNER PRIVACY AND
6 OWNERSHIP RIGHTS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 44 of title 18,
8 United States Code, is amended by adding at the
9 end the following:

10 “§ 932. Gun owner privacy and ownership rights

11 “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no de-
12 partment, agency, or instrumentality of the United States
13 or officer, employee, or agent of the United States, includ-
14 ing a State or local officer or employee acting on behalf
15 of the United States—

16 “(1) shall perform any national instant criminal
17 background check through the system established
18 pursuant to section 103 of the Brady Handgun Vio-
19 lence Prevention Act (18 U.S.C. 922 note) (referred
20 to in this section as the “system”) if that system
21 does not require and result in the immediate de-
22 struction of all information, in any form whatsoever
23 or through any medium, about any person who is de-
24 termined, through the use of the system, not to be

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Destruction
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1 prohibited by subsection (g) or (n) of section 922 of
2 title 18, United States Code, or by State law, from
3 receiving a firearm, except that this subsection shall
4 not apply to the retention or transfer of information
5 relating to—

6 “(A) any unique identification number pro-
7 vided by the national instant criminal back-
8 ground check system pursuant to section
9 922(t)(1)(B)(i) of title 18, United States Code;
10 or

11 “(B) the date on which that number is
12 provided; or

13 “(2) shall continue to operate the system (in-
14 cluding requiring a background check before the
15 transfer of a firearm) unless—

16 “(A) the ‘NICS Index’ complies with the
17 requirements of section 552a(e)(5) of title 5,
18 United States Code; and

19 “(B) the agency responsible for the system
20 and the system’s compliance with Federal law
21 does not invoke the exceptions under sub-
22 sections (j)(2), (k)(2), and (k)(3) of section
23 552a of title 5, United States Code, except if
24 specifically identifiable information is compiled

04/12/00 WED 14:47 FAX

04/12/00 WED 14:13 FAX 202 226 0838

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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 ANTHONY D. WINNER, NEW YORK

April 12, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
 President of the United States
 The White House
 Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, I have been working diligently for nearly a year to forge a meaningful gun safety and juvenile justice package that can pass and be signed into law. I have met with you and communicated with leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties in both the House and the Senate. I have drafted and circulated compromise proposals and openly invited a dialogue with any Member willing to make headway rather than headlines.

Unfortunately, I have become increasingly disappointed with what I view to be the strategy of leading House Democrats to avoid any compromise on gun safety legislation. Last November, Ranking Democratic Member John Conyers abruptly backed away from months of encouraging negotiations. I responded by sending a compromise proposal directly to Minority Leader Gephardt and asked for his comments. The Minority Leader has never responded to that letter.

I was encouraged by the meeting you called last month with Senator Hatch, Senator Leahy, Representative Conyers and me. I was especially delighted that Rep. Conyers accepted your request to renew our negotiations. However, my hope quickly faded when Rep. Conyers refused to meet or even allow our staffs to meet unless a conference meeting was called. Any conference would be much more productive if Rep. Conyers and I could present an offer of compromise to the Senate Conference. While I was pleased with Rep. Conyers' comments during our debate on the floor yesterday, it has become clear to me since we met last month that House Democratic Leaders do not want a compromise. They have again rejected meaningful negotiations and chosen soundbites at the expense of sound policies. It is with this background that I appeal directly to you. When we met last month, you repeatedly expressed that you wanted a bill more than you wanted a political issue. I believe you meant what you said.

I have refused to become discouraged by the refusals of House Democratic leaders to act. Rather, I have chosen to rely upon your pledge to work with leaders of your party and focused my efforts on those House Republican conferees whose support is necessary to move a conference report that includes gun safety provisions.

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I am pleased to report that a majority of House Republican conferees on gun-related provisions have signed a conference report to support a package that includes:

- Child safety locks
- Ban on high capacity ammunition clips
- Preventing juvenile possession of assault weapons
- Preventing juveniles who commit serious crimes from owning guns
- Gun show background check system without loopholes

This proposal is similar in many respects to those that I have circulated in the past but with one significant exception. It directly addresses the concern that you expressed in our meeting last month that a three business day waiting period should apply not only to purchasers with unresolved arrest records but include purchasers who have red flags for other disqualifying offenses like unlawful drug use, mental incapacity, dishonorable discharge, domestic violence or stalking.

For this proposal to move forward, it needs only the signatures of three Democratic conferees on the gun safety provisions—only three Democratic Members. As you know, the controversy has always been focused on gun-related provisions. Once we have agreement on the gun safety proposals among the appropriate House conferees, I believe the remaining juvenile justice, education and cultural provisions will be easy to conclude. Respectfully, we need you to weigh in and help secure these three signatures.

Mr. President, I would also urge you to persuade Representative John Dingell, the senior Democratic Member in the House, to support these reasonable gun safety provisions. Last June, Rep. Dingell led an effort to weaken the gun show background check proposal that Rep. McCollum and I advanced on the House floor. With the support of forty-five Democratic Members, Rep. Dingell's provision passed and effectively ended our chance to retain Democratic support for gun safety measures. Ultimately, Democrats in the House voted *against* the final gun safety package, which included child safety locks, by a margin of 196-10. In fact, only eight of the forty-five Democrats who supported the Dingell amendment ultimately supported the final package.

I urge you to support this package as a substantial advancement that can be enacted into law. Please resist those who would reject this compromise as an attempt to hold child safety trigger locks as a political hostage. I believe the fate of truly meaningful gun safety legislation rests with you and your ability to convince three Democratic Members of Congress to accept *this* proposal. I am convinced you have a unique opportunity to persuade those Members to accept this compromise and move forward.

Sincerely,


HENRY J. HYDE
Chairman

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April 11, 2000

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U. S. Senate
SD-224
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch:

We write to request a juvenile justice conference meeting as soon as possible.

As you are aware, in the last two months, we have witnessed a succession of gun violence tragedies. We have been shocked by a six-year-old shooting a six-year-old in Mount Morris Township, Michigan. We have seen a nursing home held hostage and a mass shooting in Pittsburgh. In February, Memphis firefighters responding to a call were shot and killed by a disturbed man. It is clear that the Nation would like Congress to respond.

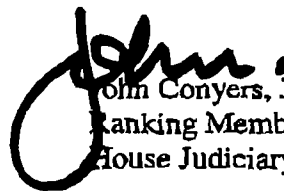
We know that there is not complete agreement on all of the issues before the Conference. We also recognize the need for compromise. We have already agreed in principle to proposed language to reduce the waiting period to 24 hours in most cases, but are still trying to resolve appropriate "safety hatch" exceptions.

We have pledged to each other to begin anew negotiations. We believe, however, that beginning the work of the Conference will play a constructive role in the necessary process of narrowing our differences.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Henry J. Hyde
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee


John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Judiciary Committee

I. Overview of Senate and House Gun Provisions

A. Senate Provisions

As you know, the Senate passed a number of Administration gun provisions as part of its juvenile crime legislation, and we have used these provisions as a benchmark:

Requiring background checks at gun shows. The Lautenberg amendment requires all unlicensed sellers at gun shows to run sales through a federally-licensed firearms dealer (FFL) at the show. Most checks would be completed instantly, but law enforcement would have up to three business days to complete checks if any questions arose regarding a purchaser's prohibited status. Since many guns sold at gun shows are used (and thus difficult for law enforcement to trace), FFLs would be required to submit to Treasury limited gun tracing information on all firearms sold at gun shows. Any event where 50 or more firearms are sold would qualify as a gun show.

Requiring child safety devices for handguns. The Senate passed a Boxer-Kohl amendment to require all FFLs to provide a child safety device, such as a trigger lock, with every handgun sold.

Banning the importation of large capacity ammunition magazines. The Senate passed a Feinstein amendment to ban the import of all large capacity ammunition clips – ending the grandfather clause in the assault weapons ban for imported clips manufactured prior to 1994.

Banning violent juveniles from owning guns. The Senate bill contains a provision to bar juveniles guilty of serious violent offenses from owning guns as adults. This provision is significantly weaker than our proposal because it would apply only when the Attorney General is able to certify that juvenile records are “routinely available” to the NICS, which they are not.

Juvenile assault weapons ban. The Senate bill bars juveniles from owning semiautomatic assault rifles and large capacity ammunition clips. The Administration proposed a stronger version that would raise the age of possession of such firearms, as well as handguns, to 21.

Enforcement. The Senate bill also includes a Project Exile-type provision that requires the establishment of agreements between the Justice Department and state and local law enforcement on the referral of gun offenders for federal prosecution. It also requires that U.S. Attorneys charge referred individuals with the most serious federal firearms offenses possible. Justice has concerns with the proposal, which could federalize all gun violations in federal districts, and would infringe upon the prosecutorial discretion of U.S. Attorneys.

B. House Gun Provisions

As you recall, the House defeated a gun bill that included a flawed gun show provision and several other gun provisions similar to those the Senate passed. The House did, however, adopt a juvenile crime bill containing a number of additional firearms provisions. Those include: requiring background checks for the purchase of explosives; expanding the list of individuals prohibited from possessing explosives; increasing the number of cities participating in the Administration's youth crime gun tracing initiative; and raising penalties for licensed and

unlicensed dealers who illegally sell firearms, illegally traffic over 50 firearms, or illegally transfer firearms to juveniles and for offenses for stolen guns. The bill also establishes new mandatory minimum sentences for youth-related gun crimes – including tough penalties for adults who illegally transfer guns to juveniles that are later used in a school zone or to commit a violent crime. We support these provisions.

II. Overview of Proposed Compromises

To date, the conferees on the juvenile crime bill have met officially only once, and compromise discussions on gun shows have mainly been limited to Hyde and Conyers. Hatch and Leahy had remained quiet until two weeks ago when Hatch reportedly suggested dropping all gun provisions to get a vote on the underlying juvenile crime legislation. This idea was rejected by House and Senate leaders alike.

It is possible that House Republicans could accept many of the proposals outlined above. The key sticking point, however, remains the gun show proposal. The starting point for House GOP leaders has been the Dingell amendment, which would have required all gun show background checks to be completed within 24 hours. Unlike Lautenberg, Dingell did not have any provisions to help law enforcement trace crime guns purchased at gun shows. It also would have weakened current law on interstate shipment of firearms, and would have required FBI to immediately destroy records of NICS transactions. (Currently, the FBI maintains such records for up to 180 days to help ensure that the NICS is not used for unauthorized or illegal purposes). Last fall, Hyde and Conyers traded compromise proposals, but made no progress toward agreement.

There has been considerable focus on the so-called “waiting periods” of the varying proposals: Dingell’s 24 hours versus Lautenberg’s three business days. But it is critical to remember that these are not waiting periods but are in fact time limits for law enforcement to complete checks. In fact, the full three days are rarely needed since 95 percent of checks are completed by the NICS within two hours, and most 73 percent within minutes. More importantly, there is a strong law enforcement rationale for preserving the three business day time limit: individuals whose checks are not completed within 24 hours are almost 20 times more likely to be prohibited from owning a gun than the average buyer.

A. Hyde Compromise Proposal

Between September and November of last year, Hyde floated gun show compromises to Conyers that indicated some movement, but fell short of Lautenberg in a number of ways. This is a summary of the last version of Hyde’s gun show compromise:

Time for background checks. Under Hyde's proposal, background checks at gun shows would be completed within 24 hours unless more time were needed to determine the disposition of arrest records or other "official" records, in which case up to three business days would be permitted. This change has major implications. Under current law, FFLs who sell at gun shows must conduct background checks not only to investigate arrest dispositions but also mental health histories and restraining orders. Under Hyde's proposal, restraining orders not yet finalized or communications between courts and law enforcement about mentally disturbed

individuals – as well as other "non-official" records – could not be used to trigger an extra three business days for review. This essentially creates a new loophole for "non-official" records.

Instant check registrants. The Hyde proposal would create a new bureaucracy of "instant check registrants," non-FFLs with access to the NICS who could run background checks at gun shows but be immunized from liability. Such limited recordkeeping would have no enforcement utility.

Tracing records. The Hyde proposal entirely eliminates the Lautenberg tracing record provisions. Since the Lautenberg provision is the only provision that would assist law enforcement with tracing crime guns sold at gun shows, this would be a critical weakening.

Gun show definition. The proposed compromise limits the definition of gun shows only to events "fostered" for a purpose related to firearms – effectively exempting flea markets, swap meets and other similar events from the background check requirements.

Roving vendors. The proposal would create a loophole by regulating only vendors who sell at a fixed location at a gun show. Roving vendors are a common presence at gun shows.

B. Conyers Counteroffer

Representative Conyers last fall provided a written counteroffer. First, Conyers would accept the Hyde "24 -hour" proposal but would add restraining orders, mental health records, and all other restricted categories to the three business days allowed for law enforcement to complete checks (essentially conforming the provision to current law). Second, he would allow "instant check registrants" to conduct checks, but require them to be former law enforcement officers. With regard to the gun show definition, Conyers would be willing to increase to five the number of gun vendors needed to make an event a gun show (Lautenberg would not require any minimum number), but would keep Lautenberg's requirement that at least 50 firearms be exhibited for sale or transfer. Conyers also considered compromising on tracing records by requiring that the Lautenberg tracing records data to be sent to gun manufacturers, instead of Treasury/ATF. Hyde did not accept Conyers' counteroffer or engage further.

ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH, CHAIRMAN

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

March 21, 2000

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your letter of yesterday regarding the youth violence bill. The letter, together with a similar letter sent to me by Minority Leader Gephardt and other House Democrats earlier this month, leaves me somewhat dismayed.

It has been my impression that you agree with me that the problem of youth violence presents a complicated set of issues requiring a comprehensive response. There also has been an understanding that much of what is contained in the Senate-passed and House-passed youth violence bills provides a prudent and overdue solution. Yet, you continue to hold that solution hostage to controversial gun control legislation. In particular, you insist that a certain gun control provision pertaining to gun shows, which has failed to earn a majority of votes in the Senate or the House, be included in the youth violence bill. In my view, removing gun control-related issues from the package may well enable us to overcome partisanship and pass a bill that contains meaningful responses to the problem of youth violence.

The House and Senate-passed youth violence bills recognize that a variety of factors underlie this national tragedy, including disintegrating nuclear families, child abuse and neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, a lack of constructive values, a revolving-door juvenile justice system, and pervasive media violence. The bills offer a comprehensive approach that targets all of these factors. To understand why such an approach is vital, one need only examine the life of the 6-year-old boy who killed Kayla Rolland. This boy, whose father is in jail and whose mother was homeless at the time of the shooting, was cursed to live in what has been described as a "crackhouse," with drugs and stolen weapons readily available. One can only wonder what harm that environment caused to his mind and soul. Sadly, it appears that this and other similar tragedies are simply symptoms of the breakdown of our families and culture. Thirty years ago, when there was better parenting and fewer gun control laws, there were far fewer children killing people. Few would dispute that the best solution to America's juvenile crime problem can be found in our homes and churches. Congress should do all it can to assist parents and families rather than continuing to undermine their efforts to raise their children.

March 21, 2000

Page 2

We also must not downplay the role played by the media in youth violence. Research shows that media violence constitutes a significant part of the problem. With respect to television violence alone, a report by a University of Washington epidemiologist expressed this startling finding: "[If], hypothetically, television technology had never been developed, there would be 10,000 fewer homicides each year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer injurious assaults. Violent crime would be half what it is." Brandon S. Centerwall, *Our Cultural Perplexities V: Television and Violent Crime*, The Public Interest, March 22, 1993, pp. 56-77.

The problem of youth violence demands a comprehensive response, and both the Senate and the House bills offer just that. They include provisions that would, among other things: (1) establish an antitrust exemption so that the entertainment industry could develop, implement, and enforce voluntary programming guidelines for shielding children from harmful scenes of violence; (2) provide \$25 million to fund a 2-year national media campaign against youth violence; (3) restrict the entertainment industry's use of Federal property, equipment, and personnel if that use would glorify or endorse violence; (4) require Internet service providers to offer filtering technology that parents can use to shield their children from harmful on-line content; (5) establish a National Youth Violence Commission to conduct a comprehensive study to determine the root causes of youth violence; (6) provide more than \$500 million for prevention programs for at-risk youth; (7) provide a \$450 million Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant that states can use to implement graduated sentencing sanctions for juvenile offenders, build juvenile detention facilities, test and treat juvenile offenders for drug use, and require juvenile offenders to complete school or vocational training; (8) provide \$75 million to help states upgrade juvenile records and provide school officials access to such records in appropriate circumstances; (9) provide legal immunity for teachers who take reasonable actions to maintain classroom discipline; and (10) allow Federal education funds to be used for drug testing and locker inspections at schools.

The bill also contains provisions aimed at finding and punishing criminals who use firearms. Our proposal, called Project CUFF, is a proven program that the Bush Administration used with success and that a United States Attorney, several cities, and the State of Virginia currently employ to put hardened criminals who use firearms behind bars. The answer is not simply more legislation; you and your Administration must take responsibility and enforce the extensive laws already on the books.

As you know, your Administration's efforts to find and prosecute firearms violations have been woefully inadequate. Thus, instead of pushing a gun control agenda that simply will not pass in the House of Representatives, your Administration should redouble its efforts to prosecute firearms offenses. News reports suggest that recent killings could have been prevented had the killers been prosecuted earlier for firearms offenses that were brought to the attention of

March 21, 2000

Page 3

Federal authorities. These failures are not isolated instances. According to Attorney General Janet Reno, more than 500,000 felons and other prohibited purchasers have been prevented from buying firearms since the instant check system was enacted. Yet, from 1996-1999, only about 200 of these individuals were referred for Federal prosecution for violating 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6). I find this unacceptable. Unless these individuals are arrested and prosecuted when they illegally attempt to purchase firearms, they ultimately will obtain a firearm from criminal sources, perhaps with dire consequences.

Unfortunately, your letter lends credence to the view of some that the Administration and Congressional Democrats are holding the youth violence bill hostage over the gun control provisions to create an election-year issue. The so-called Lautenberg gun show proposal, in addition to lacking political support, suffers from a substantive flaw. If enacted the proposal would eliminate gun shows, which are legitimate venues for firearms transactions and are particularly important for rural Americans, many of whom live a significant distance from a firearms store. If Congress were to eliminate gun shows, private, lawful firearms transactions would still occur, but in a context where background checks would be nearly impossible. I urge you to reconsider your proposal, which, if adopted, would have the perverse effect of foreclosing a viable forum for conscientious, private firearms sellers to conduct background checks on purchasers. The alternative offered by Democratic Congressman John Dingell would preserve gun shows and still require all purchasers of firearms at such shows to undergo such checks. In this way, we can achieve our common goal: keeping firearms out of the hands of criminals.

After failing to convince Congress to accept your entire gun control agenda and neglecting the Administration's obligation to enforce existing firearms laws, the Administration has turned to the judicial system to advance its agenda. Let us see the Smith and Wesson agreement for what it really is: the directors and officers of a British-owned company, facing potential financial ruin from politically driven lawsuits throughout the United States, have put the financial interests of their shareholders ahead of the Second Amendment rights of American citizens. Perhaps that is their duty. Our fiduciary duty as public officers, as you know, is quite different. As public officials we must embrace a solemn obligation: upholding the Constitution of the United States. And each of the rights, including the enumerated rights in the Second Amendment, enshrined in our founding charter—not just those that are politically fashionable—warrant our diligent care and protection lest they be sacrificed to partisan expediency.

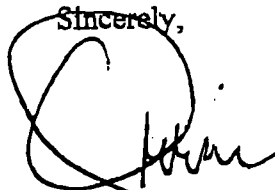
In closing, let me, too, be clear: I will not endorse legislation that fails to deliver a comprehensive response to the problem of youth violence, overlooks the Administration's poor firearms prosecution record, or includes provisions that diminish the Constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans. I urge you to work with me to pass a youth violence bill that satisfies these criteria. Americans are deeply concerned, and they are looking to their elected leaders not for ideological brinkmanship, but for effective, responsible solutions. The lone obstacle blocking

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Page 4

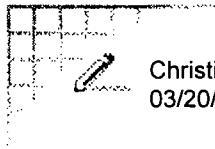
significant reform of our juvenile justice system and practical measures to reduce violence is the insistence on ill-advised gun control provisions that lack the support of many in your own party and have no chance of being passed in the House of Representatives. I encourage you to reconsider your position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orrin", written over a large, loopy circular flourish.

Orrin G. Hatch
Chairman

OGH:jtt



Christine L. Anderson
03/20/2000 04:40:30 PM

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Subject: REVISED (typo in header): Letter from the President: Guns

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(New Delhi, India)

For Immediate Release

March 20, 2000

TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT
TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

New Delhi

March 20, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Since last summer, I have repeatedly urged the Congress to finish its work on juvenile crime legislation and pass a balanced, bipartisan bill with strong gun measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. However, I am troubled by your recent comments that you are considering stripping the Senate-passed commonsense gun provisions out of the final conference report. Legislation intended to address the problem of youth violence simply cannot ignore the most devastating problem facing our youth -- gun violence.

Let me be clear: I will not sign juvenile crime legislation that fails to move forward in our efforts to make guns safer, and to keep them out of the hands of children and criminals.

Last summer, the Senate passed reasonable gun provisions that would help do just this, by closing the gun show loophole, requiring child safety locks for handguns, barring violent juveniles from owning guns as adults, and banning the importation of large capacity ammunition

clips. These measures can help save lives and should be enacted without further delay.

Last week, my Administration, joined by many cities and states, reached a landmark agreement with Smith and Wesson under which the company will change the way it designs, distributes, and markets its products. That pact -- which includes important provisions on gun shows, child safety locks, and large ammunition clips -- is proof that when reasonable people choose to sit down and negotiate, they can find common ground and protect the public interest. I hope Congress can now build on that example.

Nearly a year has passed since the tragedy at Columbine High School, and gunfire continues to take the lives of nearly a dozen young people a day. That is why I urge you once again to finish the job you started last year and send me a comprehensive juvenile crime bill that contains the Senate-passed gun safety measures. No task could be more urgent.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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Message Sent To: _____