

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

GUN SAFETY FORUM WITH GOOD MORNING AMERICA

May 12, 2000

Smart Guns

Q: What can you tell us about the smart gun funding being announced today?

A: Today, the Justice Department is announcing that they will make grants to two gun manufacturers for the research and development of "smart gun" technologies. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) will provide Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing, Inc. \$300,000 each to expand their research efforts into smart guns. Smart gun technology, when fully developed, has the potential to limit a gun's use to its proper adult owner – and could prevent accidental shooting deaths of children, deter gun theft, and stop criminals from seizing and using the guns of police officers against them. Today's grants will support the design and testing of smart gun prototypes as well as additional research into specific technologies including fingerprint identification and embedded microelectronics to prevent firing by unauthorized users. I have proposed another \$10 million in my FY 01 budget to fund the expansion of smart gun technologies.

Q: Are you giving this award to Smith & Wesson because of the settlement agreement they recently reached with the Administration and other cities on the gun lawsuits?

A: No. The National Institute of Justice, the research arm of the Justice Department, is issuing the grants to Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing based on a review of their proposals by an independent peer panel. That process was underway well before the settlement deal was struck.

NRA Challenge

Q: Do you support the NRA's recent \$1 million initiative to raise funding for gun safety education programs for children across America?

A: Without question, we must do everything that we can to protect our nation's children from gun violence, and increased education is an important component of that goal. However, the NRA's approach to gun safety education is entirely too limited because it puts the burden on the child to protect themselves from gun violence. The truth is that many of these shootings would not take place if adults were more responsible about how they handle and store their firearms. If we are truly serious about preventing gun violence, we should support measures to reduce children's deadly access to guns in the first place – like requiring child safety locks, and ensuring that all handgun owners complete training in safe handling and storage of guns. We should also remember that child safety is just part of our agenda of prevention. We also need to do all we can to keep guns out of the hands of criminals – and to overcome the NRA's opposition to common-sense measures like closing the gun show loophole.

First Lady/Million Mom March and Handgun Registration

Q: This week, the First Lady endorsed a proposal to require the licensing of all new handgun owners and the registration of all new handguns -- measures that are also advocated by the Million Mom March. These measures go a step further than your proposal, which only includes licensing. Why haven't you proposed registration for all new handguns?

A: As I have stated many times before, I believe that gun registration is a good idea. Cars and guns are the two most deadly products in America, and it makes sense that we would require gun owners to be registered like car owners and gun users to be licensed like drivers. I support the efforts of the First Lady and other gun safety supporters, such as the Million Mom March, to promote public support for this issue. However, the current Congress has allowed even more modest gun safety measures, such as requiring background checks at gun shows or child safety locks for every handgun sold, to languish for over ten months. I am focused on getting the Congress to pass these measures, and then take what I believe is the best and logical next step to strengthen our gun laws, which is licensing new handgun owners. My proposal would create a state-based licensing system to ensure that handgun purchasers may legally possess firearms and can safely handle and store them. This will help law enforcement efforts to keep guns out of hands of criminals, and it can help prevent accidental shootings.

Gun Statistics

Q: The Second Amendment Sisters, who are holding a counter march to the Million Mom March, have accused you of misleading the public by stating that "nearly 12 children die every day in gunfire." They say that the vast majority of these deaths represent murders of teenagers 15 to 19, and are mostly drug-and gang-related shootings. What is your response?

A: These kinds of comments are deeply troubling because they show that far too many Americans have come to accept the tragic level of gun violence that plagues our society and the devastating impact it has had on our youth. The bottom line is that mothers and fathers are losing their children – whether they are six or sixteen – in gunfire far too often in America. And, I'm sorry to say that many of the women here today know this all too well. Let's not distract ourselves from the real debate at hand: guns are far too accessible to children and young people in our society – and it is just as tragic if this access facilitates an accidental shooting death, murder or even suicide.

Guns and Self-Defense

Q: Many women in America own firearms for self-protection, and believe your proposals would impede their ability to protect themselves. Do you support an individual's right to own a firearm for self-defense?

A: Having hunted since the age of 12 and grown up in a state with a lot of sport shooting, I am sensitive to the needs of hunters, sportsmen and other law-abiding gun owners. My gun safety agenda is not about prohibiting lawful ownership and use of guns. It is about passing stronger gun laws designed to keep guns out of the wrong hands and preventing the countless accidental shootings that claim the lives of too many children every year in this nation. Stronger gun laws, such as the Brady Act, are working to achieve this goal without restricting countless women or other law-abiding Americans from firearms ownership in any way. Instead, the Brady Law has kept guns out of the hands of over 500,000 felons, fugitives, stalkers and others whom people might need to defend themselves against. In fact, about 15 percent of the people stopped by Brady background checks are domestic abusers.

I want to build on our success by doing more to keep guns out of the wrong hands which is why I will continue to urge Congress to pass common-sense gun safety legislation to require background checks for firearm purchases at gun shows, and mandate child safety locks with every handgun sold.

Stronger Gun Laws/Enforcement

Q: You often refer to the tragic shooting at Columbine High School when making a case for stricter gun laws. However, the gun lobby claims that numerous existing laws were broken at the school that day, and therefore, no new gun law would have prevented the tragedy that took place there. How do you respond to this claim?

A: The tragic shooting at Columbine High School shook our nation's conscience, and left many of us searching for answers. While we may never have all of the answers, that does not mean that we shouldn't do all that we can to prevent any child from losing their life in gun violence ever again. While no single law can prevent all instances of gun violence from occurring, we know that stronger gun laws can make a difference in preventing gun crime and accidents. The Brady Law alone has stopped over half a million gun sales to felons, fugitives, and others who are prohibited by law from owning guns. As a result of our efforts, stronger state gun laws and local efforts to curb gun violence, gun crime is down 35 percent since 1993 and the homicide rate is at its lowest point in 31 years.

But no one thinks gun violence is at an acceptable level. We could build on our success immediately if the Congress would pass the common-sense gun legislation that has been languishing for over ten months. We know these measures will save lives and there is simply no excuse for sitting on our hands.

But of course, we can do more to address violence beyond passage of laws. We can do more to enforce existing laws, which is why I have proposed a \$280 million gun enforcement initiative with more ATF agents and prosecutors to crack down on gun criminals. Responsible members of the gun industry can do their part by working with us to make meaningful changes in the way they do business. The media and entertainment industries can help change a culture that too often glorifies violence. Schools and community groups can reach troubled youth before their troubles simmer over. And most fundamentally, parents can talk to their children, teach them to resolve their conflicts peacefully, and raise them with the right values.

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

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

I do believe that we should do all we can to enforce the law, which is why I proposed the largest ever increase for gun enforcement – to fund 500 more ATF agents and inspectors, over 1,000 federal, State and local gun prosecutors, more resources to trace more crime guns, and to expand ballistics testing so we can catch even more gun criminals. For all their talk about enforcement, the gun lobby and their allies have been uncommonly silent when it comes to supporting real resources to crack down on gun criminals. We've been doing the job on enforcement, and we're putting our money where our mouth is. I hope the NRA will come around and support my enforcement proposals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
9:00 A.M. SATURDAY, MAY 13

NIJ
202/307-0703

**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO FUND ADDITIONAL SMART GUN
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Washington, D.C. – President Clinton announced today that the Justice Department will make grants to two gun manufacturers – Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing, Inc. – for the research and development into “smart gun” technologies. Smart guns, which are firearms that can distinguish an authorized user from someone who is not supposed to fire the weapon, show tremendous promise in reducing the cost to human life when weapons are taken intentionally or accidentally from their proper owner. The President made the announcement during his weekly radio address Saturday morning.

“We are pleased to announce that these two leaders in the gun industry, FN Manufacturing, Inc. and Smith & Wesson, are working with us to expand what we know about smart gun technologies,” said President Clinton. “With this additional investment into smart gun research and development, we will be closer to having more tools to keep guns out of the wrong hands and keep our children safe. This new partnership with the gun industry is one of the greatest gifts we can give the moms of America for Mother’s Day.”

Smart gun research and development is being supported by the Justice Department’s National Institute of Justice (NIJ), in response to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data that shows that over the past 10 years, 57 police officers were slain with their own weapons. An additional 113 weapons were stolen from law enforcement officers during this same time period. “Developing smart gun technologies is crucial in preventing needless law enforcement deaths,”

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said Attorney General Janet Reno. "We have a responsibility to do whatever we can to protect the men and women who put their lives on the line each day to protect our communities. I am so pleased that we have the opportunity to further research these promising approaches so that once these technologies are fully developed, law enforcement officers' weapons will be more safely and reliably secured."

NIJ, with assistance from scientists at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has evaluated a variety of technologies that may be adaptable in creating effective "smart guns", such as radio frequency, voice recognition, biometrics, and touch memory technologies. The Smith & Wesson project will support the test the feasibility and functionality of an electronic fire handgun with code based combination lock; a separate fingerprint module that communicates with an electric fire handgun; and an analysis of existing Smith & Wesson technologies and design of the next generation prototype. FN Manufacturing, Inc. will use its NIJ grant award to further the research, development, and testing of its smart gun prototype, which uses embedded microelectronics to disable the firearm from use by an unauthorized user.

To augment and expand smart gun research and development, the Administration has requested \$10 million in FY 2001 to expand development, testing, and replication of smart gun technologies. With these funds, NIJ plans to:

- provide continuation funding to Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing;
- develop standards for smart gun technology use;
- undertake vulnerability studies and evaluation of technologies that could be adapted for use in a smart gun;
- develop a standard for gun locks; and
- issue a solicitation to other gun manufacturers for additional smart gun research and

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development.

NIJ, the Justice Department's research and evaluation arm, supports research, evaluation, and demonstration programs, the development of technology, and both national and international information dissemination. For additional information about NIJ and its programs visit its site on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>. Information about other Office of Justice Programs (OJP) bureaus and program offices is available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov. Media should contact OJP's Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at 202/307-0703.

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For additional information contact Liz Pearson at pager # tbd.

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**OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
GRANT AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Development of an Authorized User-Only Handgun

AWARDED TO: Smith & Wesson Company
2100 Roosevelt Avenue
Springfield, Massachusetts 01102

AMOUNT: \$300,000*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Prior to receipt of this award, Smith & Wesson designed and built electronically fired prototype pistols that include both pin code and fingerprint user access control. Since the size of the circuit board with current fingerprint identification technology is too large to fit inside a handgun, the fingerprint system is contained in a separate module. The grant award from NIJ will allow Smith & Wesson to test the feasibility and functionality of the following technologies:

- an electronic fire handgun with code based combination lock;
- a separate fingerprint module that communicates with an electric fire handgun; and
- an analysis of the existing Smith & Wesson technology and design of the next generation prototype.

The results of this testing would contribute to the design an of integrated electronic firing, biometrically secure smart gun prototype. Additional funding would allow Smith & Wesson to build and test several iterations of the hardware and to fund the research efforts required to miniaturize the electronics so that a completely integrated biometric system fits inside the handgun.

LOCAL CONTACT: Kevin Foley
413/747-3321

OJP CONTACT: Liz Pearson
202/307-0703

*This award amount may change slightly after final financial review.

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**OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE
GRANT AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT**

Safe Gun Technology

AWARDED TO: FN Manufacturing, Inc.
797 Clemson Road
Columbia, SC 29229

AMOUNT: \$300,000*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This project will provide for further advances in the research and development of FN's Safe Gun prototype, which uses embedded microelectronics to disable the firearm from use by an unauthorized user. Through appropriately programmed weapons to suit differing law enforcement agency requirements, ultrasonics and computer chip devices will limit the use of the weapon to approved persons, thereby eliminating firing of such weapons by persons having stolen or otherwise removed the weapon from authorized law enforcement personnel.

Initial funding will support a feasibility analysis report, which will include a general survey of existing technologies and an evaluation of these concepts and their implications on the gun's future design; the assembly of a prototype for functional requirements analysis; and a failure mode and effects report. An additional \$1.2 million will be needed to produce a fully functional law enforcement weapon for evaluation.

LOCAL CONTACT: Jeffrey R. Rankin
803/736-0533

OJP CONTACT: Liz Pearson
202/307-0703

*This award amount may change slightly after final financial review.

May 2000

Smart Gun Q and A

What is "smart gun?"

Smart guns are a seamless, transparent technology solution that will allow a weapon to only be fired by a recognized and authorized user. This technology is being developed to reduce the number of law enforcement officers killed annually with their own firearm: FBI data show that over the past 10 years one in eight officers killed in the line of duty was disarmed and killed with their own gun. In that same time period, an additional 113 officer's weapons were stolen.

The need for and applicability of this technology is described in an NIJ-funded research document issued by Sandia National Laboratories in 1996. The report, *Smart Gun Technology Project Final Report*, studied the problem of police firearm take-aways, identified the law enforcement requirements for smart gun technology, and investigated, evaluated, prioritized, and demonstrated the most promising "off-the-shelf" technologies available. Examples of these technologies, which could be adapted for smart gun use include radio frequency, voice recognition, biometrics, and touch memory technologies. Many firearms manufacturers and other technology industries are conducting their own research and development in these areas, independent of the availability of NIJ funds.

How does smart gun differ from other gun safety devices, such as triggerlock?

Typically, trigger locks are an external locking mechanisms that are attached to an unloaded weapon and are intended to prevent the loading and firing of the weapon. Most trigger locks warn users that they should not be placed on a loaded firearm, as there is the potential of accidental discharge during installation or removal. Trigger locks also require increased time to remove the lock and render the weapon operational. This poses a grave danger for law enforcement officers who typically, except during practice and qualifications, do not know when they will need their firearm to defend their life or that of a citizen.

When will smart gun be ready for the commercial market?

NIJ's work in the smart gun area has focused on developing smart gun technology for law enforcement use. The Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing projects will help advance the baseline for smart gun technology. Once operational prototypes are developed, the guns will undergo extensive testing to satisfy the performance expectations and needs of the law enforcement community. The evaluations will include a vulnerability assessment, environmental testing, performance testing (repetitive firing, drop safety, functional requirements, and drop function) and take-away scenarios to determine if the weapons will function in the field environment as intended.

NIJ also expects to develop a voluntary performance standard for smart gun use, similar to those it has developed for other law enforcement equipment such as personal body armor, weapons, protective gloves, and communications equipment. This standard will provide manufacturers

and law enforcement agencies with guidance about minimal acceptable levels of the technology's performance. NIJ expects this research, development, pilot testing, and standards development process to take approximately three to five years.

What is the Justice Department's role in developing this sort of technology? What is the history of NIJ's work in this area?

The smart gun is being developed by the NIJ's Office of Science and Technology (OS&T), which has as its charter to provide federal, state, and local law enforcement and corrections agencies access to the best technologies available and help them develop capabilities essential to improving efficiency and effectiveness. One of the six primary focal points of OS&T's work is to develop technologies to prevent crime and protect law enforcement officers.

In 1994, NIJ sponsored research by the Sandia National Laboratories to determine the viability of a suitable smart gun for law enforcement applications. In 1996, a \$500,000 award was made to Colt's Manufacturing, to further refine its prototype smart gun. The smart gun Colt's developed focuses on radio frequency identification technology. When energized, the Colt's prototype emits a radio signal. A small, wrist transponder is worn by the user. The wrist transmitter receives the signal and returns back to the gun a coded radio signal. The return signal prompts the removal of a blocking pin within the gun's firing mechanism, enabling the gun to fire. If an individual were to take the gun away from the individual wearing the wristband, the gun would not fire for that user.

Why isn't NIJ providing continuation funds to Colt?

Colt's Manufacturing elected not to request additional funds to support its smart gun project because it felt that the amount of funding available from NIJ in the near term would not support significant improvements in the current weapons speed and reliability.

Where did the funds come to make grants to Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing?

NIJ issued awards to Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing after their proposals, which were submitted in response to NIJ's 1999 Science and Technology Solicitation, were reviewed by an independent peer panel.

How many other gun companies submitted applications to NIJ?

NIJ has been contacted by a number of firearms manufacturers and technology developers interested in working on the development of smart gun technologies. A total of 4 Smart Gun proposals were received in 1999 in response to NIJ's solicitation.

Will NIJ fund other smart gun research and development grants in the near future?

The Administration has requested \$10 million in FY 2001 to expand development, testing, and replication of smart gun technologies. The program will reduce the cost to human life resulting from the use of weapons being taken from their proper owners. Once fully developed and tested, smart gun technologies will allow law enforcement officers' weapons to be more safely and reliably secured, and will help prevent accidental deaths to children who have access to a firearm. NIJ proposes to use the funding to:

- issue a solicitation for additional smart gun research and development.
- provide continuation funding to Smith & Wesson and FN Manufacturing;
- develop standards for smart gun technology use;
- undertake vulnerability studies and evaluation of technologies that could be adapted for use in a smart gun; and
- develop a standard for gun locks;

For more information about NIJ's work on smart gun, please contact Liz Pearson at the Office of Justice Programs', Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at 202/307-0703.

'Smart' Guns Trigger a Debate

Clinton Proposes New Grants For Gun Makers, While Threatening to Sue Them

By PAUL M. BARRETT
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

PRESIDENT CLINTON enthusiastically backs the current wave of municipal lawsuits against the gun industry. He's even threatened to organize a separate federal suit seeking hundreds of millions of dollars from firearm companies.

But at the same time, Mr. Clinton wants to give some of those manufacturers \$10 million in federal grants to develop "smart guns," which are electronically wired so that only authorized users can fire a round.

The president is expected to feature the proposed smart-gun grant during his State of the Union address tonight as part of his fiscal 2001 budget request, promoting the subsidy as a way to protect curious children and deter thieves.

But some gun-control advocates think there's something strange about giving millions to companies from which the government says it wants to extract millions in damages. "It makes the lawsuits seem like a charade," says Kristen Rand of the Violence Policy Center, an advocacy group in Washington.

The president's plan is also stirring concern inside the gun industry. Gun maker Sturm, Ruger & Co., of Southport, Conn., worries that gun-locking technology may lull adults into leaving weapons loaded and more accessible to children. Or the electronics might fail, rendering a gun useless in an emergency.

The country's largest handgun manufacturer, Smith & Wesson Corp., of Springfield, Mass., is eager for the government's smart-gun money. It has hired grant-sniffing Washington lobbyists and recruited congressional supporters, such as Massachusetts Democrat Sen. Edward Kennedy, a liberal who doesn't usually consort with gun companies.

Smith & Wesson thinks it can sell smart guns to wealthy suburbanites who haven't owned firearms before — prompting Ms. Rand to wonder why the White House wants "to encourage people who are now reluctant to arm themselves to go out and buy guns."

Another question is: Does the Clinton administration know how to pick the most promising manufacturers to support?

In 1997, the Justice Department awarded \$500,000 to Colt's Manufacturing Co. to stimulate the development of smart guns. White House budget documents issued this month refer approvingly to Colt's prototype pistol, which relies on a transponder worn on the user's wrist to signal a microprocessor in the gun handle to unlock the weapon. But late last year, Colt's folded its infant smart-gun spin-off, iColt, suspending its efforts on the technology.

The company's controlling owner, New York investment group Zilkha & Co., attributed iColt's demise to the very municipal litigation encouraged by the White House. Potential punitive damages scared away needed outside investors, says John Rigas, a Zilkha partner. "There is a contradiction," he adds, "in that the Clinton administration and the cities that are suing us say they want safer technology, but the litigation discourages investors."

The debate echoes a similar quandary about the cigarette industry, which has periodically worked on developing safer products. While some health advocates applaud any effort to reduce damage to smokers' lungs, others have argued that labeling a cigarette "safer" will diminish smokers' resolve to quit.

Bruce Reed, the president's senior domestic

policy adviser, acknowledges a certain tension inherent in the White House carrot-and-stick strategy on the smart-gun issue. But he says, "we want to promote the technology, one way or the other."

The antigun suits filed by 29 cities and counties cite the industry's past failure to produce smart guns as one basis for seeking multimillion-dollar damages. Mr. Reed points out that President Clinton and most of the local officials who have sued say that rather than money awards, they would prefer an out-of-court settlement that changes gun-company practices.

There have been some highly tentative settlement discussions, but little substantive progress. Significantly, most of the suits are being handled by private plaintiffs' lawyers who would be paid only if some money is squeezed out of the industry.

The White House itself has threatened to organize a separate suit seeking to recover the huge costs of security at thousands of federally subsidized public housing projects where gun violence is a particular problem.

Still another question about the proposed smart-gun grants is why federal money is needed at all. At the gun industry's main annual trade show last week in Las Vegas, several manufacturers—including SIG Swiss Industrial Co. Holding Ltd. and Mossberg Group LLC—promoted smart-gun models developed without a dime of federal money. The new technology will add several hundred dollars to the retail price tag, bringing the cost of a SIG pistol with an electromagnetic push-button lock, for example, to about \$950. Both SIG and Mossberg Group promise to ship smart guns later this year.

Mossberg Group chief executive Jonathan Mossberg says his iGun—a shotgun electronically unlocked by a signal from a ring worn by the user—has been extensively tested for use as a home-defense weapon. But the newly formed company nevertheless would try to grab a share of any federal money that is made available.

"We were the first to have a truly personalized gun," Mr. Mossberg claims, and a government subsidy would allow him to make refinements.

Still, like Colt's, the other front-running smart gun makers could stumble. Mossberg Group has a scant track record. Swiss-owned SIG is trying to sell its entire gun business, casting doubt on the future of its smart handgun.

Many people in gun circles are looking to Smith & Wesson to see whether the smart-gun idea will work on a large scale. With roughly 25% of the handgun market, the company has a strong reputation among retail dealers who help shape consumer preferences. Smith & Wesson,

owned by the British conglomerate Tomkins PLC, says it has spent \$5 million of its own money over the past four years to develop what it claims is the most ambitious smart-gun prototype in existence. It is still two years away from retail sale, says Kevin Foley, the company's vice president for engineering.

Without government support, Mr. Foley warns, the project may die. Asked why, since the company anticipates that there would be a high-end market for smart guns, Mr. Foley says, "There are limits on how much a company is going to spend on a product that 'may or may not work in the end.'"

Justice Department officials who would administer the smart-gun grants say they are excited by their preliminary look at Smith & Wesson's approach. Other companies are incorporating electronic locks into guns that still fire mechanically—meaning that pulling the trigger causes a firing pin to hit the back of the ammunition cartridge, causing the explosion that propels the bullet. If the electronic wiring is pulled out—by a mischievous or suicidal teenager, for example—these guns might still function.

The Smith & Wesson version is entirely electronic. The gun is equipped with a digital fingerprint scanner of the sort used on some computers, which must confirm that the user has been preauthorized. Pulling

the trigger completes a circuit and causes the electronic ignition of the powder. If someone tampers with the electronics, the gun won't fire.

Mr. Foley estimates that the company needs at least another \$3 million to further miniaturize the fingerprint scanning device and do more testing. Toward that end, the company has hired the Washington lobbying firm Capitol Partners to marshal congressional support. The firm arranged a Jan. 14 letter from Sen. Kennedy and three other Democrats, urging President Clinton to favor the precise approach chosen by Smith & Wesson.

Ironically, this type of politicking could doom smart-gun grants by linking the idea primarily to gun-control advocates, such as Messrs. Clinton and Kennedy. That's what happened last year, when a \$4 million White House request for smart-gun funds died amid a broader campaign by the National Rifle Association and conservative Republicans to block any gun-control legislation backed by the White House.

NRA President Charlton Heston maintains in the January issue of American Rifleman magazine that "for all practical purposes [smart gun] technology doesn't currently exist" and that the idea could actually be a first step toward a ban on traditional guns.

Chad —
J. Edgar Hoover
Smart Guns

White House Doesn't Leave Much Room For Tax Cut in Its Surplus Estimate

By BOB DAVIS and GLENN BURKINS

Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MANCHESTER, N.H.—The White House is about to give Vice President Al Gore a boost in his campaign for the presidency by producing a budget-surplus estimate that leaves scant room for the big tax cuts and spending plans Mr. Gore's rivals advocate.

President Clinton also will lend a helping hand to Mr. Gore in his State of the Union address tonight, by proposing more than \$2 billion in funding for education programs that dovetail with the vice president's campaign priorities. The money would enhance existing programs such as Head Start, and aid states that substantially improve failing schools.

The scrapping for surpluses intensified this week, with the Republican presidential front-runner, George W. Bush, and Mr. Gore's Democratic challenger, Bill Bradley, both seizing on a Congressional Budget Office estimate, released Tuesday, that projects a surplus of as much as \$1.9 trillion over 10 years, apart from Social Security revenue. That estimate is nearly double the CBO's estimate of last year.

"Here's the facts," Mr. Bush said yesterday in Concord, N.H. The CBO estimate showed that the nation could afford his plan to trim income taxes by \$1.3 trillion over 10 years, Mr. Bush said, and still have enough money to fund social programs. Mr. Bush also used the new CBO estimate in last night's Republican debate to justify his tax cut.

Similarly, Mr. Bradley's spokesman Eric Hauser said the swelling surplus projection "bolsters the case" that the government should spend more than \$650 billion over 10 years to widen access to health care and eliminate child poverty. Yale University economist James Tobin, a Nobel Prize winner, endorsed Mr. Bradley yesterday and praised him for proposing "big projects and reforms."

But early next month, as part of its budget proposals, the White House will estimate that the anticipated surplus is far less substantial than the CBO's best-case estimate. The administration didn't release the precise number, but several officials said it is in the neighborhood of \$750 billion over 10 years. That is a smaller number than the administration estimated in its midsession review last June, which was

\$1.4 trillion, demonstrating the volatility of such projections.

The administration's new estimates will cause problems for all the candidates, whose economic plans assume a surplus of about \$1 trillion over 10 years, apart from Social Security. That includes Mr. Gore, who has prepared a chart on how he would divvy up that amount.

But, overall, it stands to help Mr. Gore politically because it would bolster his argument that it is unwise to count on the surplus to fund big tax cuts or spending plans. His economic plan would be easier to scale back than Mr. Bradley's or Mr. Bush's.

The CBO released three different projections, with the \$1.9 trillion figure as its most optimistic scenario—and the one that received the most attention. That projection assumes that spending will remain capped. The least optimistic CBO projection, \$838 billion over 10 years, assumes spending remains constant, but is adjusted for inflation.

Martin Baily, who heads Mr. Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers, confirmed that the White House's estimate of the 10-year surplus would be "slightly lower" than the CBO's most conservative estimate. "While there are specific differences, by and large we have a broadly similar view of the economic situation," Mr. Baily said of the CBO's most conservative estimate.

Alan Blinder, a former Clinton White House economist who is advising Mr. Gore, has said the vice president is considering proposals for tax cuts targeted at social-policy objectives. But other Gore advisers said any new tax proposal wouldn't be announced until the late spring or early summer, after the administration does yet another forecast of the size of the anticipated budget surplus.

On the education front, the president will propose spending an additional \$1 billion to provide Head Start to about 950,000 children. It would be the largest increase ever proposed for the program and would bring total funding to about \$6.3 billion. The president also will call on Congress to spend an additional \$550 million, for a total of \$1 billion, to expand after-school and summer-school programs. He also will propose \$50 million in grants to high-poverty school districts to help them attract and retain high-quality teachers.

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COMMENTS: This is what I sent to Bruce

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Gun Safety/Smart Gun Technology
FY 2001 Budget = \$10 million

\$10 million for the development of smart gun technology. The President's FY 2001 budget request will include \$10 million for the Justice Department's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to fund the expansion, testing, and replication of "smart gun" technologies. Smart gun technologies limit a gun's use to the proper owner, thereby preventing accidental gun death, theft, and other unintentional gun usage.

How smart gun technology works. Several handgun manufacturers have started to experiment with smart gun or personalized gun technologies. Some technologies use a confirmation system, such as a ring that broadcasts a security code to the gun, activation of a personal ID number, or a fingerprint recognition system to activate the gun to fire. The President's budget request will support the development of these types of technologies.

Example of smart gun technology : Colt's Manufacturing. In a partnership with NIJ, Colt's Manufacturing has been working to develop radio frequency smart gun technology. This works by an energized firearm emitting a radio signal, which is received by a small transponder worn by the authorized user. The transponder returns a coded radio signal to the firearm. When the weapon hears the signal, the trigger is unlocked and the gun can be fired. Through the partnership, a prototype of this smart gun technology has been developed.

Benefits of smart gun technology. Smart gun technology was originally intended for law enforcement to keep criminals from seizing and using police officers' guns. However, once these smart gun technologies are fully developed and tested, they will not only allow law enforcement officers' weapons to be more safely secured, but they also can help to prevent the accidental deaths of children who might have access to a firearm. The accidental gun death rate of children in the U.S. is nine times higher than 25 other industrialized nations combined.

National Institute of Justice. The NIJ technology mission is to identify and provide access to promising technologies for use by law enforcement to enable them to perform their jobs more efficiently and effectively, and to provide the necessary tools to help protect the public

and law enforcement officers.

Budget background: The FY 2001 budget request will include \$10 million for NIJ child proof gun and gun prevention technology. The FY 2000 budget request included \$4 million for this purpose, none of which received funding in the final appropriation.