

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

November 9, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED
ERIC LIU

RE: CRIME STATISTICS

Crime
Stats

This is a brief memo to clarify recently released crime statistics by the Justice Department. On October 17, 1999, the FBI released final 1998 crime data from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR). The UCR contains nationwide data on violent and property crime reported by state and local police departments. In 1998, serious crime rates (violent and property crime rates combined) fell for the seventh straight year, the longest continuous decline ever recorded. Other key points include:

- **The serious crime rate fell to its lowest point since 1973 – a 25-year low.** Nationally, the overall crime rate fell 6 percent between 1998 and 1997. The 5- and 10-year trends show that in 1998, the overall crime rate was 14 percent lower than in 1994 and 20 percent lower than in 1989.
- **The homicide rate declined to its lowest point since 1967 – a 31-year low.** Between 1998 and 1997, the homicide rate fell 7 percent. The total number of homicides in 1998 was 16,914 – and six of every ten murders were committed with firearms. The 1998 murder rate was 30 percent lower than in 1994 and 28 percent lower than in 1989.
- **The violent crime rate fell to its lowest point since 1985 – a 13 year-low.** Between 1998 and 1997, the violent crime rate fell 7 percent. The 5- and 10-year trends show that the 1998 violent crime rate was 21 percent lower than the 1994 rate and 15 percent lower than the 1989 rate.
- **The property crime rate fell to its lowest point since 1973 – a 25-year low.** Between 1998 and 1997, the property crime rate fell 6 percent. The 1998 rate is 13 percent lower than the 1994 rate and 20 percent below the 1989 rate. The total value of property stolen in connection with property crimes in 1998 was estimated at over \$15.4 billion.

On Sunday, November 21, the FBI will release preliminary UCR data from the first six months of 1999. The other nationwide crime data released by the Justice Department is from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS determines crime rates based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of households in the U.S., and includes incidents reported, and not reported to the police. The NCVS data is generally consistent with the UCR. The 1998 NCVS released this summer indicates that both property and violent crime rates fell to their lowest levels since the survey's inception in 1973.