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General

PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS
Accomplishments and New Initiatives Proposed by President Clinton

We know the vast majority of our schools are safe, but we can't forget the communities in cities, suburbs and rural areas that have a serious problem with school violence. And we can't forget that even one incident of school violence is one too many.

-President Clinton, September 11, 1999

Goal: Getting Guns Out Of The Hands Of Juveniles And Away From Schools.

Signed into Law the Youth Handgun Safety Act. In 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Youth Handgun Safety Act, which generally banned the possession of handguns or handgun ammunition by juveniles under the age of 18, and made it a Federal offense for adults to transfer handguns to juveniles, with limited exceptions. In 1997, the President directed the Treasury Department to require that signs be posted on the premises of Federal firearms licensees and that written notification be issued with each handgun sold to non-licensees to help ensure compliance with the Youth Handgun Safety Act.

Enforcing Zero Tolerance for Guns and Other Weapons in Schools. In October 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Gun-Free Schools Act, requiring school districts to expel students who bring guns to school. The President issued a Presidential Directive later that month to enforce the "zero tolerance" policy for guns in schools, consistent with the Gun-Free Schools Act. In school year 1997-98, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that, under zero tolerance policies, nearly 4,000 students were expelled from public schools for bringing a firearm to school.

Introduced the Youth Gun Crime Enforcement Act. In April 1999, President Clinton unveiled his omnibus gun legislation to strengthen the Brady Law and the assault weapons ban, restrict access to guns by our youth and crack down on illegal gun traffickers. The President's proposed bill will: (1) raise the age of the youth handgun ban from 18 to 21 years of age; (2) ban youth possession of semi-automatic assault rifles; (3) prohibit violent juveniles from ever owning guns; (4) require child safety locking devices for guns; (5) reduce illegal gun running by limiting the purchase of handguns to no more than one per month per person; (6) halt the importation of large capacity ammunition magazines; (7) require Brady background checks for the purchase of explosives and at gun shows; and (8) help law enforcement trace more crime guns to their source.

Next Steps:

President Clinton Urges Congress to Act on Gun Legislation. In his September 11, 1999 radio address, the President urged Congress to complete work on the juvenile crime legislation and pass a final bill that includes common sense gun provisions proposed in his gun legislation and passed in the Senate, including measures to: closing the gun show loophole; requiring child safety locks for handguns; barring the importation of large capacity ammunition clips; and banning violent juveniles from owning guns for life.

Goal: Providing The Best Information To School Administrators, Teachers, Parents And Students On Preventing Youth Violence And Creating Safe, Disciplined, And Drug-Free Learning Environments.

Responding to the Early Warning Signs of Troubled Youth. President Clinton directed the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General to develop a guide to help teachers and principals identify and respond to the early warning signs of troubled youth that can lead to school violence. In August 1998, the Departments of Justice and Education released *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*. This guide provides schools and communities with information on how to identify the early warning signs and take action steps to prevent and respond to school violence. More than 400,000 copies of the guide have been distributed to every school in the country and to youth organizations throughout, and additional copies may be obtained through the websites of the Departments of Education and Justice.

Helping Students Take a Stand Against Violence. In October 1998, the President kicked-off a partnership between the Federal government and MTV to engage youth in solutions. The MTV year-long media campaign -- "Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Youth Violence" -- is designed to give young adults a voice in the national debate on school and youth violence. In partnership with the Department of Justice and Education, and the National Endowment for the Arts, MTV created and is distributing a Youth Action Guide and CD-Rom that aim to engage youth in mentoring, conflict resolution, and other positive solutions to violence. The guide is available through a 1-800 number at the Justice Department and through MTV.

Goal: Helping Communities Coordinate Their Efforts To Identify Troubled Young People, Prevent Them From Acting Violently And Respond When Violence Does Occur.

Supporting a Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence. To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school safety, last year at the White House Conference on School Safety, the President launched a Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative designed to help communities develop and implement community-wide responses to school and youth violence. It empowers parents, principals, police, and others to collaborate on local solutions. In September 1999, the President announced over \$100 million in Safe Schools/Healthy Student grants for 54 school districts. The grants will support coordinated and comprehensive school safety plans that include anti-truancy initiatives, mentoring, mental health services, conflict resolution programs, school resource officers, and more -- helping to promote healthy development and to prevent youth violence before it occurs.

Providing Safe After-School Opportunities for More than a Million Children a Year. Last year (FY99), the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program was expanded to \$200 million. This funding is already supporting hundreds of school-based after-school programs in rural and urban schools in 44 states and the District of Columbia, including weekend and summer programs. This year, the President proposed to triple this initiative -- to \$600 million -- to provide safe and educational after-school opportunities for up to 1.1 million school-age children in communities across the country. In addition, the Education Department released a report in June 1998, titled *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kid*. This report shows that after-school programs can lower juvenile crime and improve academic performance. *Safe and Smart* was sent to every school district in the country.

Forging School-Based Partnerships Between Schools and Law Enforcement. Under the School-Based Partnerships grant program, the Clinton Administration has provided \$30 million to 275 policing agencies to work with schools and community-based organizations to address crime at and around schools. This initiative emphasizes using principles of community policing and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help forge or strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools to focus on school crime, drug use and discipline problems.

Next Steps:

Creating a New Federal Response for Violent Deaths in Schools. President Clinton has proposed \$12 million in his FY 2000 budget for School Emergency Response to Violence -- or Project SERV -- to help schools and local communities respond to school-related violent deaths, such as those that occurred last school year in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; and Springfield, Oregon. Developed with input from local officials and educators in these and other communities, Project SERV will enable the Federal government to assist local communities in much the same way that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assists in response to natural disasters.

Helping to Make All Schools Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free. In 1994, President Clinton expanded the Drug-Free Schools Act into the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, making violence prevention a key part of this program. Safe and Drug-Free Schools currently provides support for violence and drug prevention programs to 97 percent of the nation's school districts. At the White House Conference on School Safety, President Clinton announced his plan for a significant overhaul of this nearly \$600 million Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program (SDFSC). Under the President's proposal to reauthorize the SDFSC Program, schools will be required to adopt rigorous, comprehensive school safety plans that include: tough, but fair, discipline policies; safe passage to and from schools; effective drug and violence policies and programs; annual school safety and drug use report cards; links to after school programs; efforts to involve parents; and crisis management plans.

Hiring School Resource Officers, Targeting Assistance to Schools with Serious Crime Problems. To help give schools with crime problems the tools they need to put the security of our children first, at the White House Conference on School Safety, the President announced an initiative to put more community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools -- and to train police, educators and other members of the community to help recognize the early warning signs of violence. Under the COPS in Schools initiative, the Justice Department has provided \$145 million for 649 communities to hire 1,350 officers to work in schools.

Goal: Creating A National Dialogue Around Preventing Youth Violence.

President Hosted a White House Conference on School Safety. In October 1998, President and Mrs. Clinton hosted the first-ever conference on school safety to provide an opportunity for Americans to learn more about how they can make their own schools and communities safer. Students, parents, teachers, principals, law enforcement, ministers, and other experts from across the country participated in the Conference, and hundreds of communities and schools were linked by satellite. At the conference, the President presented information from the First Annual Report on School Safety -- a report intended to give parents, principals and policy makers an accurate, yearly snapshot of school crime, as well as to provide information on what practical steps they can take to make their schools safer. The President also announced a number of new resources and partnerships to give communities new tools to prevent school and youth violence.

President and Mrs. Clinton Held a White House Strategy Session on Youth Violence after the Littleton Tragedy. In May 1999, President Clinton and the First Lady held a strategy meeting to discuss the problem of youth violence and develop a strategy for a national campaign to address this problem. The meeting included a broad cross section of Americans, including parents and children, teachers and religious leaders, law enforcement and government officials, gun manufacturers and sportsmen, and representatives of the entertainment industry. The President unveiled several initiatives to address the problem of youth violence, including a Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence, gun industry support for gun legislation in five important areas, and public and private commitments to ensure the effective implementation of the V-Chip.

Next Steps:

Establishing a National Campaign Against Youth Violence. The President called for a National Campaign Against Youth Violence and recently announced its formation. The campaign will be an independent, national, non-partisan campaign that will address the problem of youth violence by: (1) serving as an information clearinghouse to share what programs work in one community with communities all over the country; (2) securing commitments from all sectors of society to do their part to help reduce violence; and (3) helping give parents more tools to protect their children from violence.

Network Anti-Violence Roadblock. At the White House Strategy Session on Youth Violence in May 1999, the President challenged the entertainment industry to do its part to combat youth violence. In August, the President announced that an extensive coalition of broadcast and cable networks have joined together in an unprecedented effort to air simultaneously the prime time debut of public service ads on the theme of "Talking with Kids About Violence." The ads, which feature children and the President talking about the need for parents to talk to their kids about violence, will air between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. on August 18. This first-ever Ad Council television "roadblock" will include ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, UPN, WB, A&E, Animal Planet, BET, CNN, CNN Airport, Comedy Central, Country Music Television, Discovery Channel, Discovery Digital Networks, FOX Family Channel, Headline News, the History Channel, the Learning Channel, Lifetime, MTV, the Nashville Network, Nickelodeon, TBS, TNT, Travel Channel, TV Land, Univision, VH-1, and FasTV.com, a website with video streaming capability, which will provide the spot online. The public service ads were sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Advertising Council, and Children Now. A free booklet has been developed for parents on how to talk about violence and is available at www.talkingwithkids.org, or by calling 1-800-CHILD44.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 3, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

SUBJECT: White House Council on Youth Violence

Recently, I announced the formation of the White House Council on Youth Violence, to be chaired by the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and to include the Attorney General and the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education. The purpose of this Council is to provide policy coordination on issues central to the prevention of youth violence, to provide flexible and timely responses to the challenge of youth violence, and to ensure that our Nation's citizens are able to benefit from the Federal Government's many anti-violence initiatives.

Due to the central role the Department of the Treasury plays in matters related to firearms control, I am adding the Secretary of the Treasury to the Council as one of its regular program members. Through this memorandum, I ask for your participation on the Council, to help in the Federal Government's important effort to help prevent youth violence.

William J. Clinton

cc: Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy