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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THE SECRETARY OF LABOR
THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
DOMESTIC POLICY

SUBJECT: White House Council on Youth Violence

Violence by youth and against youth is an issue that deeply concerns us all. Youth violence can be thought of as a juvenile crime issue, as a public health issue, and as a school safety issue. It affects every region and demographic group. As many recent incidents have made us aware, it is a problem that can strike with unexpected force -- and that now demands uncommonly unified responses. That is why I announced, on August 17, 1999, that a nonprofit, nonpartisan "National Campaign Against Youth Violence" had been established to bring together all segments of society to help prevent youth violence.

The Federal Government already addresses many aspects of youth violence through its programs. I am particularly proud of the joint efforts of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Education in developing the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative. These agencies also worked well together to help us respond quickly to the Columbine High School incident. I have read with interest the report of the Attorney General's Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. I look forward to the report that the Surgeon General in response to my May request is preparing on the causes of youth violence. The Secretary of Labor's efforts to address the needs of youth are also about to bear fruit, as high-poverty communities implement our new Youth Opportunity Grants, and as the Secretary and the Attorney General finalize their agreement for cooperative work on those grants and on Labor's Youth Offender grant program.

With so many agencies and programs involved, and with the need for my Administration to work closely with different elements of State and local governments, tribes, schools, community groups, and families, it has become increasingly clear to me that the Federal Government needs a more effective policy coordination strategy for youth violence issues.

Therefore, today I direct the Assistant for Domestic Policy to form a White House Council on Youth Violence to provide this policy coordination, 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 antiviolence initiatives.

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Structure of the Council

The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy will chair the Council. The Office of the Vice President and the Office of Management and Budget will be regular participants. Four agency heads will be the regular program members of the Council:

- The Attorney General, responding to the juvenile crime aspects;
- The Secretary of Health and Human Services, responding to the public health aspects, including mental health aspects, and to family issues;
- The Secretary of Education, responding to the school safety issues; and
- The Secretary of Labor, responding to youth employment and out-of-school youth issues.

The Chair of the Council may add such other officials as he deems appropriate to further the purposes of this overall effort or to participate in specific aspects of it. For example, matters relating to public health aspects would involve the Surgeon General. Matters relating to firearms control or drug abuse would involve the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of National Drug Control Policy, respectively. Implications for economic development policies would call for involvement of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of Commerce. Comparable policies for Indian country would engage the Secretary of the Interior. Issues relating to community service opportunities for youth would involve the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Chair, after consultation with Council members, will appoint staff members to coordinate the Council's efforts. The Chair may call upon the participating agencies for logistical support to the Council, as necessary.

Duties of the Council

1. Develop a citizen's information hub. The Council will develop and maintain a coordinated inventory of relevant agency programs and provide analyses of their effectiveness. It will make this inventory widely available in summary form -- and upon request in more detail -- through the services of the appropriate Council member, to elected officials, community groups, police organizations, school systems, parents, and others working on local solutions to these issues. The inventory and full texts of program reports and evaluations should be available on an easily accessible website. The availability of this compilation will be widely publicized.
2. Produce reports on youth violence. The Council will prepare or have prepared reports on various aspects of the problem of youth violence, describing, for instance, best practices in combating the problem. In doing so, the Council should consult with nonprofits, foundations, and other organizations that have conducted research and/or developed resources on the prevention of youth violence. In addition, the Surgeon General is now carrying out a broad study of the potential causes of youth violence. I ask that the Surgeon General consult closely with the Council in the development of the study so that I may have the benefit of participation of all the involved agencies in its analysis and findings.

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3. Expand the Safe Schools/Healthy Students model of collaboration. This initiative of the Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services has evolved into a highly effective collaboration among the agencies. The Council will oversee this effort and examine options for improving its operations and applying the model to other governmental efforts. The Secretary of Labor will begin participation in the initiative through establishing linkages to Youth Opportunities and Youth Offender grants.

4. Provide tools for parents to deal with the issue. Many Federal programs address issues relating to strengthening the family and helping parents raise children. The Council will explore the possibility of devising a cross-program strategy to help parents address youth violence. It will also report on new tools emerging in both the private and public sectors to assist parents.

5. Coordinate the Federal research agenda. The Council will oversee coordination of agency research agendas and the development of needed cross-agency research collaborations. I ask the Council to seek to have this structure in place to support the planning for FY 2001 research funds, and where feasible, to improve the planned use of funds available from prior years.

6. Develop further policy responses. The Council will meet at the call of the Chair to discuss new findings from analyses of the youth violence issue and to consider new or modified Administration responses to it, especially those that involve more than one agency. Recommendations for initiatives will be discussed in the Council for consistency with overall coordinated policy before being presented for formal decision in the budget process. From time to time, the Council will report to me directly on the results of its efforts.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

cc: The Vice President
 The Secretary of the Treasury
 The Secretary of the Interior
 The Secretary of Agriculture
 The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
 The Director of the Office of Management and Budget
 The Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

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