

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 17, 1999

Dear Mr. Leader:

I write to urge you to allow the Senate to complete its work on juvenile crime legislation this week. The Senate has already spent a considerable amount of time debating this bill, and approved several important amendments. Although I recognize that there are many other important issues pending before the Senate, none is more timely or important than preventing youth violence. The Senate should complete its consideration of this important legislation, and it should specifically reconsider the Lautenberg amendment to require Brady background checks for all guns sold at gun shows.

In the wake of the Littleton shooting, there is broad national consensus that we must all accept responsibility and take action to help prevent youth violence. We in government have a special responsibility to enact and enforce common sense legislation that will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. So I was pleased last week when the Senate voted to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition magazines, as well as the juvenile possession of all assault rifles and large capacity clips. Passing these proposals was a step in the right direction.

I remain deeply disappointed, however, that the Senate has failed to take meaningful action to prevent criminals from getting firearms at gun shows. The Senate-passed amendments on gun shows have not only failed to close the loophole in current law that allows criminals and young people to buy firearms at gun shows without a Brady background check, but also will open up yet additional loopholes. This should not stand. We must make it harder for criminals to get guns, not easier. The Senate should therefore reconsider Senator Lautenberg's amendment, with all members present, and close the gun show loophole once and for all.

Over the past few years, we have made steady progress against crime by working together. Our efforts, and those carried out in communities across the nation, are showing

The Honorable Thomas A. Daschle
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impressive results. This weekend the FBI released preliminary data for 1998 showing that crime is down for the seventh year in a row, the longest period of decline since the 1950's. I hope that the Senate will build on this progress by working together to debate and pass a tough, balanced juvenile crime bill that includes comprehensive measures to combat and prevent crime and gun violence -- and keep crime coming down in the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Clinton".

The Honorable Thomas A. Daschle
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

JACK REED
RHODE ISLAND

COMMITTEES

ARMED SERVICES
BANKING
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

April 27, 1999

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500-0005

Dear Mr. President:

Every day in America, too many children go to school in fear. Gangs and guns are all too common in our places of learning, and, in response, metal detectors and armed security guards greet students upon arrival at school each morning. The tragic deaths of 15 people last week at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, are a stark illustration of how we are failing our children. Americans are searching for answers, and for ways to prevent terrible incidents like this from occurring in the future.

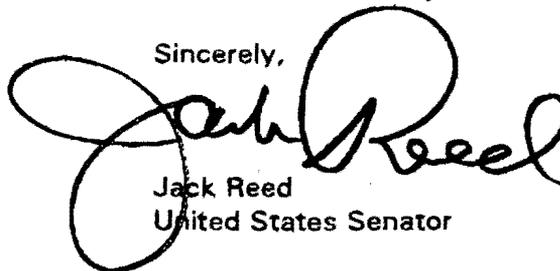
I believe the time has come for a more thorough examination of the roots of the violence that plagues our nation's youth. To that end, I respectfully urge you to establish a commission to specifically explore the Littleton tragedy and the overall issue of youth violence in the United States. A "Columbine Commission"--composed of members appointed by the Administration and the leadership of the House and Senate--would provide an opportunity for lawmakers, law enforcement officials, educators, and other experts to more fully scrutinize the problem of youth violence and make recommendations to you within a defined period of time by taking an in-depth look at this particular tragedy.

Perhaps most importantly, such a commission would keep the national spotlight focused on the issue of youth violence for the duration of the commission's work, as members hear not only from witnesses to the Columbine incident but experts in a wide variety of disciplines and with diverse points of view. Too often, after major occurrences of violence in our schools, politicians and the media turn their attention to other matters within a few days or weeks, and the debate is set aside until the next tragic incident.

Everyone agrees that something is terribly wrong with the circumstance our young people find themselves in today. It is my hope that a close review of the Littleton tragedy and a search for concrete solutions to this national problem will move us beyond tired rhetoric into the realm of national consensus on an issue of vital importance to our country. As you noted last week, "by taking actions to prevent future acts of violence in our schools, we can best honor the memories of those who lost their lives."

I look forward to working with you to address this critical issue, and I urge you to give serious consideration to the creation of a commission on youth violence.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

September 17, 1997

Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for meeting with me on Monday to discuss the issues of assault weapons, the continued circulation of high-capacity ammunition clips, and the ability of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to enforce our nation's Federal firearms laws. In addition, I appreciate your willingness to try to look into the issue of California and other states facing the possible loss of billions of dollars in Federal funds due to a delay in development of a child support enforcement system as required under the 1988 Family Support Act and Welfare Reform.

As a follow up to our meeting, let me reiterate what it is I am hoping we can each do to further our common goals.

Legislative on high-capacity ammunition magazines (HCMs) or imported HCMs.

I intend to introduce legislation that replaces the grandfather clause on high-capacity ammunition magazines in the 1994 Crime Bill with a prohibition on the commercial sale of HCMs manufactured prior to the ban. If passed by Congress, this will have the added effect of prohibiting the importation of high capacity clips as well. I am asking that you and your Administration support this effort and commit to use the power of your office to help bring this issue to the American people, in addition to helping me weigh in with key legislators for passage of this amendment. The legislation was drafted by Wilke Green of my staff, and he is prepared to brief your staff on the details of the legislation and the strategy for introduction.

Administrative Action on Imported HCMs

As we move forward on legislation addressing the issue of pre-ban large-capacity clips, I believe there is action you can take to suspend the importation pre-ban clips. I urge you to issue a directive to the BATF to determine the manufacture date of imported clips prior to approval of any applications for import permits. If BATF is unable to determine with certainty the date of manufacture, the import permit should be denied.

Jose EK/CR

By Crime Letters

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Understanding that this directive will likely be challenged in court, I will help build the case in the Senate that the continued importation of these large-capacity clips violates both the spirit of the law and the intent of Congress, and will encourage my counterparts in the House of Representatives to do the same as I work toward passage of legislation to address this issue permanently.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms - Enforcement and Staffing

It is clear to me that however committed the BATF is to carry out our nation's gun laws, their enforcement ability has been hampered by inadequate staffing, statutory limits on their inspection authority, and internal policies that discourage inspections not relative to an on-going criminal investigation.

I am asking you to consider, in your FY 1999 Budget to Congress, an increase in funding for the BATF for the purpose of adding additional field inspectors. I am also requesting that you issue a directive to the BATF to change current internal policies prohibiting field inspectors from attending gun shows without their attendance being relative to a criminal investigation. Further, in your order, direct the BATF to proactively send field inspectors to gun shows for the purpose of enforcing Federal firearms laws and to serve as a deterrent to those who would violate the law. I pledge to work in the Senate to build support for your efforts to address both of these issues.

Yes

Importation of Israeli Galils and Uzis

As we discussed, I sent a letter to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu urging him to intervene in the planned export to the United States tens of thousands of modified Uzis and Galils by a government-owned munitions manufacturer, Israel Military Industries, Ltd. I am asking that you issue a directive to the Department of Treasury to suspend pending permits of these weapons until such time as a clarification can be made as to the suitability of these weapons for sporting purposes. This order would be modeled after a similar directive issued by the Treasury Department and supported by President Bush in 1989. In that order, President Bush suspended the pending import permits of 24 types of assault weapons in order to determine whether or not the weapons were suitable for sporting purposes under 18 USC 925(d)3. I believe you have an opportunity to take the same action in this case.

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Further, I am requesting that you use diplomatic channels to persuade Israel, in the interest of public safety, not to export these weapons to the United States.

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Child Support Enforcement System Automation

Finally, as we discussed, I am heartened by your willingness to do what you can to prevent California and other states from losing billions of dollars in federal funds, which include all of the states' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and the Child Support Enforcement System funds because these states will not meet the October 1, 1997 deadline as required under welfare reform.

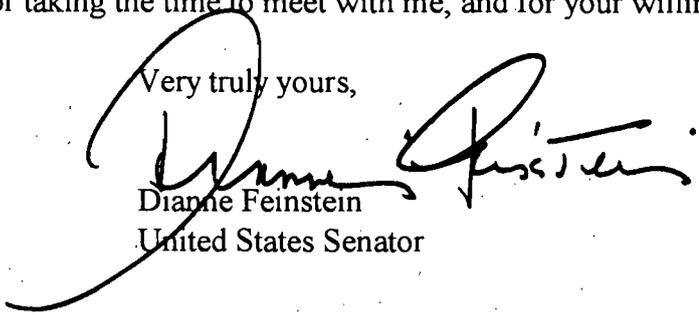
Without your intervention, California could lose \$3.7 billion in TANF funds and \$300 million in child support system funding. I am asking you to impose a temporary 6 month moratorium on the penalties for failure to meet the October 1st deadline in order to give California and other States the ability to implement their TANF programs and to improve their child support systems. California's state and local officials are making every effort to comply with the law as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. President, I know these issues are as important to you as they are to me. I understand the difficulty in addressing some of these firearms issues in a Republican Congress, but I am willing to do everything in my power to try, and I hope you will do the same.

I stand ready to assist you in every way, and I look forward to working with you, the Vice President, and others in your Administration to get the job done. The public stands behind you on this issue; of that I have no doubt. The rest is up to us.

If you would like to discuss this further, or if there are any questions you have, please do not hesitate to call me or have your staff contact Wilke Green of my staff at (202) 224-1227. Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me, and for your willingness to help.

Very truly yours,


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

cc: Vice President Al Gore
Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty, Counselor to the President
Erskine Bowles, White House Chief of Staff
Bruce Reed, Assistant to the President for Policy Development
Kay Casstevens, Office of the Vice President
Tracey Thornton, Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs