

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 18, 1999

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE YOUTH CONFERENCE

DATE: October 19, 1999
LOCATION: Cannon Caucus Room
U.S. Capitol
BRIEFING TIME: 9:30 am - 9:45am
EVENT TIME: 10:10 am - 10:55am
FROM: Bruce Reed, Larry Stein

*Bleich
Riley*

I. PURPOSE

To address youth attending "Voices Against Violence: A Congressional Teen Conference"; to release the second Annual Report on School Safety and announce the Justice Department distribution of toolkits to prevent youth violence; and to call on Congress to enact common-sense gun laws and hate crimes legislation. You will also call on Congress to pass a budget that invests in youth and makes education our first priority.

II. BACKGROUND

You will address an audience of approximately 350 teens attending the "Voices Against Violence" conference sponsored by Rep. Gephardt and the Democratic Caucus. In Rep. Gephardt's "Dear Colleague" letter announcing the event, he writes that "the Congressional debate on (juvenile justice legislation) is missing a powerful voice -- the voice of our youth." The aim of this event is to bring the perspective of young people to the nation's leaders in Washington, and to encourage student leaders to return to their communities to work on anti-violence initiatives in their communities.

127 Democrats and 3 Republican Members of the House (Jennifer Dunn, Connie Morella, and Sue Kelly) have selected students from his or her district to attend the event. These students have shown interest in youth violence issues in their communities.

In your remarks you will:

Demand a Budget that Invests in America's Future

- Today, you will call on Congress to pass a budget that makes education America's number one priority. You will demand a budget that reduces class sizes and funds other critical education initiatives, puts up to 50,000 more community police on the

streets and protects the environment, and saves Social Security while paying down the debt. You will call on Congress to make the tough choices to accomplish all of this while maintaining our fiscal discipline, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and paying down the debt.

Unveil New Tools to Prevent School Violence

- **Second Annual Report on School Safety.** On Sunday, the FBI released new statistics showing that in 1998 serious crime dropped for the seventh year in a row, the longest continuous decline in nearly 40 years, and that the murder rate reached its lowest point in 31 years. Building on that good news, today you will release the findings of the second Annual Report on School Safety – a report that gives parents, principals, youth, and policymakers a snapshot of school crime, as well as information on practical steps they can take to make schools safer. Key findings on school crime include:

— *While homicides in school remain extremely rare, multiple victim school homicides have increased.* Less than one percent of the total number of children nationwide who were murdered or committed suicide were killed at school. And the number of school-associated violent death incidents decreased from 55 in the 1992-93 school year to 46 in the 1997-98 school year. However, the number of multiple victim homicide events has steadily increased from zero in 1993-94 school year to five in the 1997-98 school year.

— *Overall crime rates are down at school and away from school.* The overall school crime rate declined from 155 school-related crimes for every 1,000 students ages 12 to 18 in 1993, to about 102 crimes in 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, crime victimization rates outside of school declined from 139 crimes for every 1,000 students to 117 crimes.

— *Most school crime is not serious violent crime.* Serious violent crime at schools comprises about ten percent of all school crime, and has continued to decline. About 90 percent of all injuries at school were not the result of violence, but were unintentional (e.g., through falls, sports). Property crimes constitute the majority of school crime: in 1997, thefts accounted for 61 percent of all crime committed against students

— *Fewer students are carrying weapons to school and getting into fights.* Between 1993 and 1997, there was a decrease in the percentage of high school students – across sex, grade, and ethnic subgroups – who carried a weapon on school property, as well as a decline in the percentage of students who got in physical fights on school property. The number of students expelled for bringing a gun to school decreased from 5,724 in the 1996-97 school year to 3,930 in the 1997-98 school year.

– Minority students and younger students feel less safe at school than others.

Black and Hispanic 4th-grade students were more likely to report feeling "very unsafe" at school than white students (9 percent and 6 percent, respectively, compared to 2 percent of white students). Notably, 12th grade students of any race were less likely than 4th or 8th grade students to report feeling "very unsafe" at school.

- **Providing resources and solutions for young people in partnership with MTV.**

Today you will also announce that the Justice Department – in partnership with MTV and the Department of Education -- will send out 200,000 copies of an enhanced CD with an interactive conflict resolution program, and a Youth Action Guide focused on mentoring and other steps young people can take to prevent youth violence. The guides and CDs will be sent to youth-serving organizations such as after school programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, juvenile justice and law enforcement agencies as part of MTV's year-long anti-violence campaign. First kicked off by you at the White House School Safety Conference last year, the MTV campaign has been educating young people on youth violence issues and linking them to national anti-violence resources.

Call on Congress to Finish the Job on Guns and Hate Crimes

- **Enacting common sense gun legislation.** Six months after the tragedy at Columbine High School, you will call on the Republican leadership now do its part to reduce youth violence by passing common sense gun legislation. You will challenge the Congress to finish its work and quickly pass a balanced, bipartisan juvenile crime bill that includes strong gun measures that would: close the gun show loophole; require child safety locks for handguns; ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips; and bar violent juveniles from owning guns for life.
- **Passing an expanded Federal hate crimes law.** You will also urge Congress to pass the bipartisan Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999. This legislation, if enacted, would strengthen current law by making it easier to prosecute crimes based on race, color, religion and national origin and by expanding coverage to include crimes based on sexual orientation, gender and disability.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing Participants:

Bruce Reed

Loretta Ucelli

Eric Liu

Charles Brain

Broderick Johnson

Sam Afridi

Greeters:

Representative Richard Gephardt
Steve Elemendorf, Chief of Staff to Rep. Gephardt
Ananda Lewis, MTV video jockey

Program Participants:

YOU

Representative Richard Gephardt
Rebecca Hunter, Student and Youth Conference Participant

Rebecca Hunter is a 17-year-old, senior at Hillsboro Comprehensive High School in Nashville, TN. Following the Columbine High School shooting incident, Rebecca conceived of and launched a school-wide initiative urging her fellow students to pledge to become part of the solution to the problem of youth violence. By the end of the first week of the initiative 1,100 students at Hillsboro had signed up, and after two weeks 40 other schools had launched her initiative. To date, over 500 schools nationwide have adopted Rebecca's pledge. Rebecca is also involved in her school's peer mediation, Navy ROTC, and community service programs, and hopes to attend George Washington University in the fall.

Members of Congress in Attendance:

Rep. David Bonior (D-MI)
Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)
Rep. Martin Frost (D-TX)
Rep. Bob Clement (D-TN)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- **YOU** will be announced onto the stage, accompanied by Rep. Richard Gephardt and Rebecca Hunter.
- Rep. Richard Gephardt will make remarks and introduce Rebecca Hunter.
- Rebecca Hunter will make remarks and introduce **YOU**.
- **YOU** will make remarks, work a ropeline, and depart.

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by speechwriting.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO COMBAT YOUTH VIOLENCE

October 19, 1999

At a youth violence conference at the Capitol today, President Clinton will speak with over 350 teen leaders from around the country about the key priorities for the nation's future. First, President Clinton will urge Congress to pass a budget that invests in young people and makes education our first priority. Second, the President will release the second Annual Report on School Safety and announce that the Justice Department, in partnership with MTV, will distribute multimedia toolkits to prevent youth violence. Finally, President Clinton will call on Congress to enact common-sense gun laws and long-overdue hate crimes legislation.

DEMANDING A BUDGET THAT INVESTS IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

- Today, President Clinton will call on Congress to pass a budget that makes education America's number one priority. He will demand a budget that reduces class sizes and funds other critical education initiatives, puts up to 50,000 more community police on the streets and protects the environment, and saves Social Security while paying down the debt. He will call on Congress to make the tough choices to accomplish all of this while maintaining our fiscal discipline, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and paying down the debt.

UNVEILING NEW TOOLS TO PREVENT SCHOOL VIOLENCE

- **Second Annual Report on School Safety.** On Sunday, the FBI released new statistics showing that in 1998 serious crime dropped for the seventh year in a row, the longest continuous decline in nearly 40 years, and that the murder rate reached its lowest point in 31 years. Building on that good news, the President today will release the findings of the second Annual Report on School Safety – a report that gives parents, principals, youth, and policymakers a snapshot of school crime, as well as information on practical steps they can take to make schools safer. Key findings on school crime include:

— *While homicides in school remain extremely rare, multiple victim school homicides have increased.* Less than one percent of the total number of children nationwide who were murdered or committed suicide were killed at school. And the number of school-associated violent death incidents decreased from 55 in the 1992-93 school year to 46 in the 1997-98 school year. However, the number of multiple victim homicide events has steadily increased from zero in 1993-94 school year to five in the 1997-98 school year.

— *Overall crime rates are down at school and away from school.* The overall school crime rate declined from 155 school-related crimes for every 1,000 students ages 12 to 18 in 1993, to about 102 crimes in 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, crime victimization rates outside of school declined from 139 crimes for every 1,000 students to 117 crimes.

— *Most school crime is not serious violent crime.* Serious violent crime at schools comprises about ten percent of all school crime, and has continued to decline. About 90 percent of all injuries at school were not the result of violence, but were unintentional (e.g.,

through falls, sports). Property crimes constitute the majority of school crime: in 1997, thefts accounted for 61 percent of all crime committed against students

– ***Fewer students are carrying weapons to school and getting into fights.*** Between 1993 and 1997, there was a decrease in the percentage of high school students – across sex, grade, and ethnic subgroups -- who carried a weapon on school property, as well as a decline in the percentage of students who got in physical fights on school property. The number of students expelled for bringing a gun to school decreased from 5,724 in the 1996-97 school year to 3,930 in the 1997-98 school year.

– ***Minority students and younger students feel less safe at school than others.*** Black and Hispanic 4th-grade students were more likely to report feeling "very unsafe" at school than white students (9 percent and 6 percent, respectively, compared to 2 percent of white students). Notably, 12th grade students of any race were less likely than 4th or 8th grade students to report feeling "very unsafe" at school.

- **Providing resources and solutions for young people in partnership with MTV.** Today the President will also announce that the Justice Department – in partnership with MTV and the Department of Education -- will send out 200,000 copies of an enhanced CD with an interactive conflict resolution program, and a Youth Action Guide focused on mentoring and other steps young people can take to prevent youth violence. The guides and CDs will be sent to youth-serving organizations such as after school programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, juvenile justice and law enforcement agencies as part of MTV's year-long anti-violence campaign. First kicked off by the President at the White House School Safety Conference last year, the MTV campaign has been educating young people on youth violence issues and linking them to national anti-violence resources.

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO FINISH THE JOB ON GUNS AND HATE CRIMES

- **Enacting common sense gun legislation.** Six months after the tragedy at Columbine High School, the President will call on the Republican leadership now do its part to reduce youth violence by passing common sense gun legislation. The President will challenge the Congress to finish its work and quickly pass a balanced, bipartisan juvenile crime bill that includes strong gun measures that would: close the gun show loophole; require child safety locks for handguns; ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips; and bar violent juveniles from owning guns for life.
- **Passing an expanded Federal hate crimes law.** The President will also urge Congress to pass the bipartisan Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999. This legislation, if enacted, would strengthen current law by making it easier to prosecute crimes based on race, color, religion and national origin and by expanding coverage to include crimes based on sexual orientation, gender and disability.

Revised Final 10/19/99 8:30 am
Sam Afridi

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

REMARKS AT VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

WASHINGTON, DC

October 19, 1999

Acknowledge: Rebecca Hunter (student),
Congressman Gephardt, Congressman Frost, (Bonior,
DeLauro), 130 Members of Congress who were involved;
Secretary Riley; Jeff Bleich; dozens of organizations;
MTV; parents, teachers, chaperones. And I want to thank
all of you for taking responsibility, taking a stand and
raising your voices against violence.

I can't think of a better time for you to be here on
Capitol Hill. Later today, I will be meeting with
Republican and Democratic congressional leaders to try
and resolve our differences and work out a budget
framework.

I'm glad that we have so many young experts in conflict resolution here in Washington right now. If we can't get this budget deal settled, I might ask you to stay a couple extra days.

As you may know, in just a few days the resolution that funds our government programs will run out. Today, I will sign legislation that makes good on our commitment to veterans, housing, science and technology programs and also funds part of my New Markets proposal to help ensure all Americans share in our prosperity.

That's an important start. But now we need to use that same spirit of bipartisanship and common sense to finish the job and pass a budget that honors the values that brought all of you here to Washington. We need to put progress over partisanship. Most of all, we need a budget that makes education our number one priority.

I want to make sure that you have smaller class sizes—that we increase quality by fulfilling our commitment to put 100,000 teachers in the classroom. We need to invest in after school and summer school programs, in accountability to turn around failing schools, and in mentoring to give all young people a path to college success.

We're also working for a budget that adds up to 50,000 more community police and protects our environment. We must make the tough choices to accomplish all of this while maintaining our fiscal discipline, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and bringing down the debt. I have a plan that pays for every penny of it. We need to make this a season of progress and make America a better, safer place in the 21st century.

And, of course, that's why all of you are here.

You know, it was six months ago tomorrow that our whole country was rocked by the tragedy at Columbine High School. I'll never forget visiting with students and families in Littleton.

It was one of the most difficult things I've done as President--but it was also one of the most uplifting experiences.

Because from that unspeakable loss, we saw students and families rallying together as one community and reclaiming their lives. It was the best of the American spirit—and it's that same spirit that brought you here to Washington this week.

I know you have a lot of work to do over the next two days. You are dealing with big questions. How do we make sure our schools are sanctuaries of safety? How do we recognize the early warning signs of violence? How do we teach others to resolve differences peacefully? How can we share good ideas from one community to another?

I want to make a few points this morning as you begin that work.

First, there are no simple, quick-fix solutions to this challenge. But one thing is certain: we won't solve it without you.

The fact is, in many ways, you may have more influence in making a difference in a young person's life than I have as President or Congressman Gephardt has as leader or any other person in Washington. So don't underestimate the power of your voice. And keep using it.

Second, this conference is about more than youth violence. It's really about what kind of nation we're going to be as we move into the 21st century. You are a part of the largest, most diverse student body in the history of the United States. That ought to be our greatest strength going into the future.

But that can only happen if we do all we can to make sure that every student is in a school that is safe—where they can learn—and grow together--where we don't let prejudice and intolerance divide us or tear us apart. We have to teach all of our young people to resist the urge to make themselves feel special by looking down on others if they're of a different race, a different religion, if they're gay.

We have to build on the pledge and the work of people like Rebecca Hunter.

The third point I want to make is that ideas matter—and the kinds of ideas and initiatives you're focusing on will make a real difference in people's lives. More than six years ago when I took office, we had an idea about the right way to fight crime.

We said let's take a balanced approach—by putting 100,000 more community police officers on the street, passing the Brady Bill, supporting common sense prevention that give our kids something to say yes to.

Many said it wouldn't work. But the evidence is in. This weekend, the FBI reported that we now have the lowest murder rate in 31 years.

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate is the lowest in ten years. And overall crime has fallen for the seventh year in a row—the longest rate of decline in nearly 40 years.

And we're putting our common sense ideas to work in fighting school violence. With the help of leaders like Dick Gephardt and the other Members of Congress here, we established a zero tolerance policy for guns. We're putting new community police officers in schools where they're needed.

We're supporting more after school programs, more mentoring, more conflict resolution and peer mediation.

We held the first-ever White House School Safety Conference. We invested more than \$100 million in new safe schools/healthy students grants—putting needed resources into the best community solutions to fight youth violence.

In August, we launched a national campaign against youth violence. And last Friday, I established a new White House Youth Violence Council to coordinate our work throughout government agencies so that we can learn from each other.

All of that is making a difference. Today, I am issuing our Second Annual Report on School Safety.

And it shows once again that the vast majority of our schools are safe—and they're getting safer. Homicides in schools remain rare—crime rates are down both in and out of school—and fewer students are carrying weapons to school.

That's good news—but it's not good enough. One school crime is one too many. The mass shootings in Columbine; in Jonesboro, in Springfield, Oregon sent chills through us all. Too many students feel unsafe—and that has an impact on how they grow and learn and relate to fellow students.

We need to do more together—by engaging all sectors of our society to join you and be a part of the solution. That’s why I’m proud that our Justice Department and Education Department worked with MTV to develop a Youth Action Guide and CD focusing on steps to reduce youth violence—such as mentoring, conflict resolution and youth advocacy. I want to thank the Recording Industry Association of America for their help in putting this CD together. We’ve already distributed over 250,000.

Today, I’m announcing that the Justice Department will send out 200,000 more of these CDs to organizations around the country—after school programs, law enforcement agencies, foundations, and civic groups.

This CD sounds the call for action—and it's another common sense tool and information resource that can make a big difference.

So we're working hard to do our part. You're doing your part. But there are some things only Congress can do and we need to make sure it does its part. One way Congress can take responsibility is by passing common sense gun safety legislation. Because we're fooling ourselves if we think we can end youth violence without addressing one of the undeniable catalysts: the appalling ease with which young people gain access to guns.

We need to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks, ban the import of large ammunition clips and help keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. Six months after Columbine is long enough. Now is the time to get it done.

Congress also needs to declare that no one should be killed or injured because of who they are. But last night Republicans removed important hate crimes protection from a bill previously passed by the Senate. They tried to kill this legislation when they thought no one was watching. But we can't let them get away with it--we need to pass a strong Hate Crimes bill.

I want you to know that the Members of Congress here and I are going to keep fighting to take responsibility and finish the job. Thank you for your commitment.

Thank you for raising your voices against violence. Keep it up and I'll make you this pledge: Make your voice heard on Capitol Hill—and you will make a difference around our nation.

Thank you and God bless you.

###

October 14, 1999

ANTI-YOUTH VIOLENCE NBC PSA CAMPAIGN ROLLOUT EVENT

DATE: October 15, 1999
LOCATION: Presidential Hall
BRIEFING TIME: 12:50pm – 1:00pm
EVENT TIME: 1:10pm – 1:55pm
FROM: Bruce Reed

I. PURPOSE

To unveil a NBC's new anti-violence public service advertising campaign; to announce the creation of a new White House Council on Youth Violence; and to call on the Congress to pass common-sense gun control measures.

II. BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the tragedy in Littleton, you and the First Lady called on Americans from all sectors to help prevent youth violence. Today, you will announce two new initiatives in this effort. First, you will unveil a new anti-violence public service advertising campaign on NBC. Second, you will announce the creation of a new White House Council on Youth Violence to ensure that the federal government's many efforts in this area are well-coordinated and serve the public as effectively as possible. Finally, you will urge that Congress pass common-sense gun control measures.

SPURRING ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY TO HELP PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

You will announce that on Monday, October 18, 1999, NBC will begin airing public service advertisements that focus on the interconnected issues of youth violence and intolerance. The advertisements, part of NBC's "More You Know" public service campaign, will send messages to parents and students about the importance of resolving conflicts without resorting to violence and that prejudice and hate are harmful and can lead to tragic ends. In this effort, NBC is partnering with national organizations including the Anti-Defamation League, the National Urban League, the National Council of La Raza, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Leadership Conference Education Fund. The campaign includes an Internet site, and 1-800 numbers to link the public to more information and tools to combat youth violence.

In August, you announced the formation of a non-profit, non-partisan National Campaign Against Youth Violence. Today, you will highlight the National Campaign's initial work to help communities across the nation stop youth violence

DIRECTING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO ITS PART

Noting that the federal government must do its part, you will also announce today that you are issuing an executive memorandum to create a White House Council on Youth Violence. The Council will work to coordinate programs throughout the federal government that address issues of youth violence. The Council will seek to make these programs more accessible to American families and examine best practices in addressing the problem. Members of the Council will include the Attorney General and the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor, as well as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

DEMANDING THAT CONGRESS ENACT COMMON SENSE GUN CONTROL LAWS

Finally, you will demand that Congress meet its responsibility to help reduce violence and improve public safety by passing common sense gun legislation. You will reiterate your call on the Congress to pass a balanced, bipartisan juvenile crime bill that includes the Senate-passed gun measures that would: 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. Six months after the tragedy in Littleton, these life-saving measures are long overdue.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing Participants:

Attorney General Janet Reno
Secretary Donna Shalala
Loretta Ucelli
Eric Liu
Lowell Weiss

Stage Participants:

Students from Eastern High School, Washington, D.C.

Program Participants:

YOU
Attorney General Janet Reno
Secretary Donna Shalala
S. Epatha Merkerson, NBC's *Law & Order*

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- You will be announced onto the stage, accompanied by Attorney General Reno, Secretary Shalala, and Epatha Merkeson.
- Attorney General Janet Reno will make brief remarks and introduce Secretary Donna Shalala.
- Secretary Donna Shalala will make brief remarks and introduce Epatha Merkeson.
- Epatha Merkeson will make brief remarks and introduce YOU.
- YOU will make remarks, unveil the NBC public service announcement, work a ropeline, and depart.

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by speechwriting.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 14, 1999

ANTI-YOUTH VIOLENCE NBC PSA CAMPAIGN ROLLOUT EVENT

DATE: October 15, 1999
LOCATION: Presidential Hall
BRIEFING TIME: 12:50pm – 1:00pm
EVENT TIME: 1:10pm – 1:55pm
FROM: Bruce Reed

I. PURPOSE

To unveil a NBC's new anti-violence public service advertising campaign; to announce the creation of a new White House Council on Youth Violence; and to call on the Congress to pass common-sense gun control measures.

II. BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the tragedy in Littleton, you and the First Lady called on Americans from all sectors to help prevent youth violence. Today, you will announce two new initiatives in this effort. First, you will unveil a new anti-violence public service advertising campaign on NBC. Second, you will announce the creation of a new White House Council on Youth Violence to ensure that the federal government's many efforts in this area are well-coordinated and serve the public as effectively as possible. Finally, you will urge that Congress pass common-sense gun control measures.

SPURRING ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY TO HELP PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

You will announce that on Monday, October 18, 1999, NBC will begin airing public service advertisements that focus on the interconnected issues of youth violence and intolerance. The advertisements, part of NBC's "More You Know" public service campaign, will send messages to parents and students about the importance of resolving conflicts without resorting to violence and that prejudice and hate are harmful and can lead to tragic ends. In this effort, NBC is partnering with national organizations including the Anti-Defamation League, the National Urban League, the National Council of La Raza, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Leadership Conference Education Fund. The campaign includes an Internet site, and 1-800 numbers to link the public to more information and tools to combat youth violence.

In August, you announced the formation of a non-profit, non-partisan National Campaign Against Youth Violence. Today, you will highlight the National Campaign's initial work to help communities across the nation stop youth violence

DIRECTING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO ITS PART

Noting that the federal government must do its part, you will also announce today that you are issuing an executive memorandum to create a White House Council on Youth Violence. The Council will work to coordinate programs throughout the federal government that address issues of youth violence. The Council will seek to make these programs more accessible to American families and examine best practices in addressing the problem. Members of the Council will include the Attorney General and the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor, as well as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

DEMANDING THAT CONGRESS ENACT COMMON SENSE GUN CONTROL LAWS

Finally, you will demand that Congress meet its responsibility to help reduce violence and improve public safety by passing common sense gun legislation. You will reiterate your call on the Congress to pass a balanced, bipartisan juvenile crime bill that includes the Senate-passed gun measures that would: 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. Six months after the tragedy in Littleton, these life-saving measures are long overdue.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing Participants:

Attorney General Janet Reno
Secretary Donna Shalala
Loretta Ucelli
Eric Liu
Lowell Weiss

Stage Participants:

Students from Eastern High School, Washington, D.C.

Program Participants:

YOU

Attorney General Janet Reno
Secretary Donna Shalala
S. Epatha Merkerson, NBC's *Law & Order*

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- You will be announced onto the stage, accompanied by Attorney General Reno, Secretary Shalala, and Epatha Merkeson.
- Attorney General Janet Reno will make brief remarks and introduce Secretary Donna Shalala.
- Secretary Donna Shalala will make brief remarks and introduce Epatha Merkeson.
- Epatha Merkeson will make brief remarks and introduce YOU.
- YOU will make remarks, unveil the NBC public service announcement, work a ropeline, and depart.

VI. REMARKS

To be provided by speechwriting.

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES INITIATIVES TO PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

October 15, 1999

In the aftermath of the tragedy in Littleton, the President and the First Lady called on Americans from all sectors to help prevent youth violence. Today, President Clinton will announce two new initiatives in this effort. First, he will unveil a new anti-violence public service advertising campaign on NBC. Second, the President will announce that he is creating a new White House Council on Youth Violence to ensure that the federal government's many efforts in this area are well-coordinated and serve the public as effectively as possible. Finally, the President will demand that Congress pass common-sense gun control measures, noting that Congress has let six months pass since Littleton and that the American people should not have to wait another day for such protections.

SPURRING ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY TO HELP PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

- The President will announce that on Monday, October 18, 1999, NBC will begin airing public service advertisements that focus on the interconnected issues of youth violence and intolerance. The advertisements, part of NBC's "More You Know" public service campaign, will send messages to parents and students about the importance of resolving conflicts without resorting to violence, as well as the message that prejudice and hate are harmful and can lead to tragic ends. In this effort, NBC is partnering with national organizations including the Anti-Defamation League, the National Urban League, the National Council of La Raza, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Leadership Conference Education Fund. The campaign includes an Internet site, and 1-800 numbers to link the public to more information and tools to combat youth violence.
- In August, the President announced the formation of a non-profit, non-partisan National Campaign Against Youth Violence. Today the President will highlight the National Campaign's initial work to help communities across the nation stop youth violence.

DIRECTING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO ITS PART

- Noting that the federal government must do its part, President Clinton will also announce today that he is issuing an executive memorandum to create a White House Council on Youth Violence. The Council will work to coordinate programs throughout the federal government that address issues of youth violence. The Council will seek to make these programs more accessible to American families and examine best practices in addressing the problem. Members of the Council will include the Attorney General and the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor, as well as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

DEMANDING THAT CONGRESS ENACT COMMON SENSE GUN CONTROL LAWS

- Finally, the President will demand that Congress meet its responsibility to help reduce violence and improve public safety by passing common sense gun legislation. The President will reiterate his call on the Congress to pass a balanced, bipartisan juvenile crime bill that

includes the Senate-passed gun measures that would: 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. Six months after the tragedy in Littleton, these life-saving measures are long overdue.



Lowell A. Weiss
10/15/99 12:10:40 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: youth violence psa speech -- 12am draft

Draft 10/15/99 12 am

Lowell Weiss

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS ON YOUTH VIOLENCE PSA CAMPAIGN
THE WHITE HOUSE
October 15, 1999**

Acknowledge: Epatha [eh-PAY-tha] Merkerson. Welcome back to the White House. Epatha joined us here back in February, when we unveiled a PSA to help get our children the health care they need. Epatha plays a great no-nonsense cop on TV; she's a great friend of America's children in real life. Atty. Gen. Reno; Sec. Shalala; ADL National Dir. Abraham Foxman; HRC Exec. Dir. Elizabeth Birch; NBC Executive Producer Dr. Rosalyn Weinman.

Six months ago next week, in a quiet suburb of Denver, two angry, troubled teenagers burst into their school with automatic weapons, intent on killing as many of their teachers and fellow students as they could. The sheer magnitude of the tragedy was unprecedented. It shook our entire nation. Six months later, our memories of that day have not even begun to fade.

But as we all know, Littleton was not an isolated incident. It was one in a string of horrific school shootings and hate crimes that have visited upon too many communities and taken too many lives. America should not – and cannot – tolerate this kind of violence. Our children should never, ever have to worry that they will be the target of violence because of the color of their skin, whom they worship, or whom they love. They should never have to go to bed at night worried about whether it's safe to get on the school bus in the morning.

That is why we have called upon every sector of our society to get involved in the search for solutions to youth violence and youth hate. At home and at school, in Hollywood and in the heartland, in our state capitals and the nation's capital, each and every one of us has a role to play and a responsibility to meet.

In August, we helped to launch the National Campaign to Prevent Youth Violence, to pull together commitments from people and organizations from all different fields and walks of life. Although this new campaign is not even two months old, it has already made a

remarkable start. Over the coming months, it will roll out a major new media campaign; begin supporting in-school and afterschool programs, anti-violence concerts and town halls; and sponsor a city-by-city effort to shine a spotlight on the local initiatives that are producing the most promising results. Its executive director, Jeff Bleich, is here with us today. Jeff, thank you for all your tireless work.

Today, we are very pleased to see that NBC is making its own commitment to protect children from youth violence. As part of its "The More You Know" campaign, NBC has created a series of ads that speak to parents and children, through some of America's most admired stars, about how families can help to stop violence and hate before it starts. And now I want to show one of these ads...

This ad and others like it will be seen by millions of viewers every day. In clear and powerful terms, they convey the message that stopping violence and intolerance begins at home. They say if you're a parent, you owe it to your children to sit down with them – to draw them out, to give them a comfortable opportunity to express their fears, to give you early warning when there's a problem you need to address. I think this is a wonderful example of what we can accomplish when we use the power of your medium to send out positive messages to children and parents alike. I salute NBC and all the fine actors who appear in this campaign.

Today, I would also like to announce another important way we in the Federal government are going to do our part. Because youth violence has so many origins and so many facets, not just one but many of our Cabinet agencies are working to provide solutions. After all, stopping youth violence involves responses ranging from community policing to mental health, after-school programs to job opportunities. So I am creating a new Youth Violence Council to coordinate, accelerate, and amplify the many anti-violence efforts coming out of our Cabinet agencies. We know that youth violence is a problem that demands an uncommonly unified response.

Frankly, it requires Congress to do its part as well. In the six months since Littleton, Congress has had more than ample time to address one of the undeniable catalysts of this crisis – the appalling ease with which young people can gain access to guns. And yet, after a very encouraging vote in the Senate this summer, the Republican leadership has done nothing but delay. So, once again, I say to the Republican leadership: Let's work together to restore reason to America's gun laws – by closing the gun-show loophole, requiring child-safety locks, strengthening the Brady Law, raising the legal age for handgun purchases to 21. Don't wait until the next senseless tragedy to pass the sensible gun-safety measures our children need today.

A month ago to this day, the fire marshal of Fort Worth was asked if he was shocked that gun violence had stolen the lives of teenagers singing and praying in a Baptist church. His answer: "Nothing shocks me anymore." I'm sure the marshal didn't mean it this way, but we simply cannot become inured to violence and hate. We cannot accept as inevitable that children will get shot when they're studying in class or praying in church. If all Americans

recognize their moral obligation to speak up, to reach out, to send positive messages, we can change the culture of violence in America. Together, we can give our children back their childhood. Thank you and God bless you.

###

Message Sent To:

Loretta M. Ucelli/WHO/EOP@EOP
Stephanie A. Cutter/WHO/EOP@EOP
Joshua S. Gottheimer/WHO/EOP@EOP
Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP
Leanne A. Shimabukuro/OPD/EOP@EOP
Ann O'Leary/OPD/EOP@EOP
Terry Edmonds/WHO/EOP@EOP
aedmonds1@home.com @ inet
Jeffrey A. Shesol/WHO/EOP@EOP
Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP
Cathy R. Mays/OPD/EOP@EOP
Sarah E. Gegenheimer/WHO/EOP@EOP
Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 15, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT YOUTH VIOLENCE NBC PSA CAMPAIGN ROLLOUT EVENT

Presidential Hall

1:45 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much Epatha; welcome back to the White House. She was here back in February, again trying to help children, when we unveiled the PSA to help our children get the health care they need. So she is becoming the federal government's number one volunteer for America's children and we're grateful for her. (Applause.)

I think she knows that if she and the rest of us could do enough for our children in a preventive and preparatory way, we'd put a lot of police officers and actors playing police officers out of work -- (laughter) -- because we wouldn't have nearly as much trouble. I thank you so much.

Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala, thank you both for your commitment to helping our children and to unifying our government's resources -- not having a lot of little, indistinct programs that are separate, one from another.

I want to thank all of those who are here supporting this campaign. Thank you, Dr. Roz Weinman, from NBC. Thank you for everything you've done. I want to thank the ADL National Director, Abraham Foxman, the Human Rights Committee's Executive Director, Elizabeth Birch; the people from LaRasa and all the other groups that have supported this endeavor.

I'd also like to acknowledge the young people behind me. They're from Eastern High School in Washington, D.C., and they are actively and personally working to prevent youth violence. They are the symbols of the people we are trying to empower with this public service campaign and we ought to give them a hand. (Applause.)

Six months ago next week we will observe the half-year

-MORE-

anniversary of the tragedy at Littleton, Colorado. As awful as it was, we all know it was not an isolated event. We have seen since, and we saw before -- in a string of violent incidents at school, and in the fact that 13 young people lose their lives every single day to gunshots, in ones and twos -- that our children, notwithstanding the fact that we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years and a dramatic drop in the murder rate, are still subject to a nation that is too dangerous, and can be made safer.

That is why we have asked every sector of our society to get involved in the search for solutions to youth violence, to hatred, to the absence of the control, to environmental and cultural factors that need to be dealt with. We've asked people to help at home and school, in Hollywood and in the heartland, in our state capitals and in the nation's capital.

In August, we helped launch the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, to pull together commitments from people and organizations from all different walks of life. Although this new campaign is not even two months old, it has already made a remarkable start. Over the coming months, it will roll out a major media campaign, begin supporting anti-violence concerts and town hall meetings, in-school and after-school programs and sponsor a city-by-city effort to shine a spotlight on the local initiatives that are producing the most promising results.

The Executive Director of this national campaign, Jeff Bleich is here with us today. I introduced him when we named him but, I want to thank you again for your great work. (Applause.)

Today we are pleased and grateful that NBC is making its own commitment to protect our children from youth violence. As part of it's "The More You Know" campaign, NBC has created a series of ads that speak to parents and children about how families can help to stop violence and hate before they start. I would like to now stop and show one of these ads, which features Epatha and here "Law and Order" colleague, Angie Harmon. So could we show the ad.

(The PSA was shown.) (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, thank you, and thank you.
(Laughter.)

This ad, and others like it, will be seen by millions of viewers every day. In clear and powerful terms, they will convey the message that stopping violence and intolerance begins at home. They say if you're a parent, you owe it to your children to sit down with them, to draw them out, to give them a

-MORE-

comfortable opportunity to express their fears, to give you early warning if there's a problem you need to address.

The thing I like best about it is the message I think every parent ought to try to give every child: if you've done something wrong, tell me. It's okay. It's not the end of the world. Before it gets too bad, tell me.

As you saw, these ads also provide an 800 number and a web address, so viewers can immediately get the best advice from national organizations which deal with these issues every day.

I look forward to continuing to build on the progress that NBC, its national partners, and the fine actors who appear in this campaign have started. It's a wonderful example of what you can accomplish, with the power of television, to send out positive messages to parents and children alike.

I also want to emphasize that we are going to change the way we in the federal government do our part, along the lines that the two Cabinet members here have long advocated. Youth violence has many origins, and so many facets. Not just one, but many of our Cabinet agencies are working to provide solutions. And they should be. They get contacted by people all over the country. Today, I had this year and last year's winner of the Points of Light Award in the White House for pictures. And an enormous percentage of these national winners were people who were involved in trying to keep our kids out of trouble, and give them good things to do.

So we see responses ranging from community policing to mental health to after-school programs to job opportunities. To respond to what Donna and Janet have talked to me about for years -- Janet sent me another memo just a couple of weeks ago about how we've got to get the government to work together on this -- we are creating a new Youth Violence Council. The job of the Council will be to coordinate, accelerate and amplify all the anti-violence efforts now coming out of our Cabinet agencies, so that they will work together, not at cross purposes; they will waste less money and make the money they have go further; and they will touch more children's lives.

So I want to thank you, Madame Attorney General and you, Secretary Shalala for your suggestion, and we will do this.

I also want to say again that it is my strong conviction that preventing youth violence requires Congress to do more. It has been six months since Littleton now. Congress has had more than ample time to analyze and act on the elements of this problem. They have had more than enough time to recognize that

-MORE-

one of the biggest problems of intentional and accidental violence against our children is the appalling ease with which young people can gain access to guns.

And, yet, after a very encouraging vote in the Senate last May -- when the Vice President was able to break a tie and pass legislation that makes a lot of sense, among other things closing the Brady background check loophole that didn't apply to gun shows and flea market gun sales -- there has been no action, because the leadership has done nothing but delay.

So, again, I say to the Republican leadership, I know this is a tough issue for you; I know that nobody likes to make the NRA mad looking towards the next election. But we -- when I went to the American people in 1992 and I said, let's adopt the Brady Bill and let's ban assault weapons, and I told all the hunters in my home state -- which is about half the people that breathe down there, me among them -- (laughter) -- I said, look, I'm telling you this will not affect hunting, this will not affect sporting events, it will make our country a safer place. It was an argument no one knew. It's not an argument anymore, we have the results.

The Brady Bill has kept 400,000 people who had criminal records or otherwise should not have had handguns from getting them, and we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. This is not an argument anymore, there is evidence. And we now know that a lot of people who shouldn't get these guns know they can go get them at a gun show or an urban flea market because there is no background check. There are loopholes in the assault weapons ban in terms of the importation of inappropriately sized magazines, of ammunition clips and other problems that we ought to address. So I would say again, the time to act is now. The country overwhelmingly supports this.

I want to give the House a pat on the back, again, for passing a decent patients' bill of rights last week. They had to break the strangle-hold of an interest group that had the allegiance of their leadership. They have to do it again. But if they do it, they'll feel real good about it, just like they did last week. (Laughter.) You know, this is another one of those issues, it's not a particularly partisan issue, except in Washington, D.C. And we need to get free of all that and think about these kids.

I feel the same way about the hate crimes legislation. Since I first proposed the hate crimes bill -- believe it or not, hundreds of Americans, like young Matthew Shepard in Wyoming or James Byrd in Texas, have been killed or injured simply because of who they are -- because of their race, their faith, because

-MORE-

they're gay. And I think this is important for America and important for our leadership at home and around the world.

What do I spend my time on around the world? If I'm trying to deal with peace in Ireland, what am I trying to do? Get people over their religious -- if we try to make peace and avoid another Rwanda in Africa, what are we trying to do? Get people of different tribes not to kill each other.

If we're trying to make peace in Kosovo and Bosnia, what are we trying to do? Trying to get people over their ethnic and religious hatreds. And on and on and on. This is a deep thing in the human psyche that has been with us since the dawn of time. And of course the most stunning example of all is the struggle we are still making to harmonize and reconcile the people of the Middle East, in the very heart of the place that gave birth to all three of the worlds great religions that hold there is one creator, God.

Now, when America is a force in all these places but at home, you have to read that a guy that hates people that aren't just like him shoots a bunch of kids at a Jewish community center and then drives around and kills a Filipino post man working for the Federal Government -- he got a two-for -- the guy was an Asian and a federal government employee. And you read there is a guy that belongs to something in the middle west that he called a church -- even though they don't believe in God, they believe in the supremacy of white people -- and he shoots a fine young man who was a basketball coach at Northwestern and then toodles down the road again and kills a young Korean Christian coming out of his church; and you see all these things happening.

It seems to me very hard to make the case that America, for our own sanity and our own humanity, and for what we owe to the rest of the world, should not pass strong hate crimes legislation and do it without delay this year. (Applause.)

So again let me say to every proposal someone can raise the objection this will not solve every problem. If we did that no one would ever do anything constructive. That's like saying if you decided to go on a diet and you stay on it three days you won't lose the 20 pounds you want to lose. That's like saying, don't do this because even though you should do this, even when you do it there are three other things you can do.

I mean, all these arguments don't make any sense. Look, I'm proud of the fact that I had the chance to be President when Americans believed we could lower crime again, and where we have a 26-year low in the crime rate. But we have the highest murder rate of any civilized country in the world, still. The rate of

-MORE-

accidental deaths of children by gunshots is nine times higher than the rate of the next 25 industrial economies combined.

What I'm trying to do with this PSA is to mobilize the American people to save our children, so the next President can say America is the safest big country in the world. Why don't we have a big goal here? It's nice to say that we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years; maybe by the time I leave office we can say it's the lowest in 30 years. Maybe we'll really be chugging along here.

But don't you want to really be able to say, every time you look at a young person like this fine young boy here, in this beautiful red sweater -- (laughter) -- that this child should grow up in the safest big country on the face of the Earth? Let's have a goal worth fighting for, for our children. And let's mobilize people to do what can be done now, in their families, and let's have nobody run and hide from the responsibility we all have to give that gift to our children in the new millennium.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

2:04 P.M. EDT