

The President's Radio Address

October 9, 1993

Good morning. For many Americans today is the beginning of a long weekend, a time to bring out the wool sweaters and coats, our security against the change of seasons. In this remarkable period of our history, our Nation is facing changes longer lasting than fall and winter. But these changes require a certain security, too.

Throughout the campaign for this office and since I became your President, I've been asking that we have the courage to change, to compete in the world economy, and to bring prosperity back home. But we can't embrace change fully unless our own people feel a high level of personal and family security, a security about our place in the world. I'm happy to report that we're making real progress on that, too. Our first job was to address economic security with a budget that seriously cuts the Federal deficit, that has led to record lows in long-term interest rates and that has led to good news in increasing bank lending and housing starts and business investments.

Since I became President, our economy has created more than a million private sector jobs, more jobs in 8 months than all those created in the previous 4 years. But it's just a beginning. Many of our people are still struggling, and we won't quit fighting for them. As long as the economy isn't working for working people, we'll be working to fix it.

We took on the issue of medical security because true security for our families and for the economy is clearly incomplete without it. Our administration's plan for health care reform will reduce waste and cost, and most importantly, will give our citizens health care that's always there, that can't be taken away.

And the blanket of security for Americans has another side to it: personal security. Our people have the right to feel safe where they live, work, play, and go to school. But too many of our people are denied that right. I've talked with parents who were afraid to send their children to schools where other kids carry guns. I've talked with children who were so afraid of becoming caught up with gangs, they didn't ever want to leave their homes. I've talked with police officers who felt anger and frustration at

trying, sometimes against overwhelming odds, to stem an epidemic of violence, especially from children, better armed than police, who shoot other children. And most important, I've talked with the victims.

Yesterday, I visited a trauma center in New Jersey and saw what people with guns can do to other people. I met a woman who couldn't speak anymore because her husband shot her in the throat. I met a man who took a bullet in his chest during a robbery attempt. I met a child whose mother was killed by an assault rifle. It was heartbreaking, and it was an outrage.

These kind of attacks happen too often. They shatter lives. They destroy families. And more and more, they kill children. Violent crime crowds our emergency rooms and drains our medical resources. And it is siphoning away our humanity. Gunshot wounds are now the major cause of death among teenage boys.

My visits with these victims yesterday made me more determined than ever to win passage of our crime bill. This bill will help to restore a system where those who commit crimes are caught, those who are found guilty are convicted, those who are convicted are punished, sometimes by imposition of the death penalty for especially serious crimes. I support that.

Two months ago I asked Congress to pass a tough crime bill. This month, your lawmakers will consider it. And they should pass it this year. But what really makes this crime bill effective and different is this: more police, fewer guns. Our bill would help to prevent crime by putting 50,000 more police officers on the street in America and by expanding community policing.

Here in Washington recently, a beautiful 4-year-old girl was caught in the line of fire, and she died from a bullet wound. Her name was Launice Smith. All she was doing was watching other children at play. How did that become the wrong place at the wrong time? The fact is, with so many handguns and assault weapons flooding our streets, a lot of places can be the wrong place at the wrong time. That's why we have to pass the Brady bill. It requires a 5-day wait before a gun can be purchased, time

enough for a real background check to stop guns from getting into the hands of convicted criminals. And we can't go on being the only country on Earth that lets teenagers roam the streets with assault weapons better armed than even the police.

Our crime bill also gives a young person who took a wrong turn a chance to reclaim his life by learning discipline in a boot camp. Every major law enforcement group in our country supports these measures: more police, boot camps, and alternative punishment for young people, the Brady bill, and a ban on assault weapons.

The men and women on the front lines know our country needs this kind of action on school grounds, on streets, in parking lots and homes in our biggest cities and smallest towns. The silliest of arguments, arguments that might have ended in a fist fight in bygone days, now they're too easily ended with the sound of a gun. And often, the sound of a gun leads to death.

A gunshot wound is three times more likely to lead to death today, in part because there are so many assault weapons, and the average victim of a gunshot wound now has over two bullets in him or her. It's getting hard to find a family that hasn't been touched by this epidemic of violence. Often, it means another empty chair in a classroom, an empty place at a dinner table, an empty space in the hearts of those who lost the loved ones.

Tell your Representatives on Capitol Hill you want the crime bill, and you want it now because it's important; it's long overdue. I guarantee you this: The minute I get it, I'll sign it. For we can never enjoy full economic security in our professional lives without real personal security in our homes, on our streets, and in our neighborhoods. I pledge to you today that we'll keep working to restore both.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut

October 9, 1993

Thank you very, very much. To my good friends Guido and Anne Calabresi, President and Mrs. Levin, to Mr. Mandel, and to all the people at the head table. Let me say a special word of thanks to the artist who did that wonderful portrait, unduly flattering, also a gifted flack. You see, he's got me holding Stephen Carter's book "The Culture of Disbelief." We now know he took no money from Yale because Carter took care of him. [*Laughter*] Actually I'm deeply honored to be holding that book. I read it. I loved it. And the dean said that a person ought to be painted with a book he's read, since no one is very often.

I thank Mr. Laderman for that wonderful fanfare for Hillary and for me. I enjoyed it very much. As far as I know, it's the first piece of music ever written for someone who is a mediocre musician but loves music greatly. I want to say, too, to all of my former professors, to my classmates, and to my friends here, I thank each and every one of you for the contributions

you made to my life and to Hillary's and for the work you did to make it possible for me to be here today. I thank you, Dean, for mentioning our friend Neal Steinman, who doubled the IQ of every room he ever walked into. And I thank all my classmates who are here who contributed to the last campaign in so many and wonderful ways.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the people who taught me in class and to the people I just knew in the halls who were on the faculty in Yale Law School. It was a rich experience for me that I still remember very vividly. I was especially glad to see my fellow southerner Professor Myres McDougal out there. I'm delighted to see you here, sir. Thank you for coming today.

My wife did a magnificent job today, as she always does. This is our 20th reunion, and Monday will be our 18th anniversary. It's been a humbling experience, you know. I mean, she was so great talking about health care on tele-