

sex offenders and violent sex offenders that move into their neighborhoods.

But that wasn't enough, and last month I signed Megan's Law that insists that States tell a community whenever a dangerous sexual predator enters its midst. Too many children and their families have paid a terrible price because parents didn't know about the dangers hidden in their own neighborhood. Megan's Law, named after a 7-year-old girl taken so wrongly at the beginning of her life, will help to prevent more of these terrible crimes.

Now we must take the next step. Senator Biden and Senator Gramm have introduced bipartisan legislation to develop a national registry to track sexual offenders and child molesters across the country. They're on the right track, but we have to move forward now, and we can. Today I'm directing the Attorney General to report back in 60 days with a plan to guarantee our police officers this information right away. We must make sure police officers in every State can get the information they need from any State to track sex offenders down and bring them to justice when they commit new crimes. The police officer in Cleveland should be able to get information on all known sex offenders in Cleveland, whether they committed their crimes in New York or Los Angeles. Every bit of information we have about the people who commit these crimes should be available to law enforcement wherever and whenever they need it.

The crime bill laid the foundation for this national registry by requiring States to track sexual offenders within their borders. Megan's Law

makes sure parents get this information so they can take steps to watch out for their children. Now I want the Attorney General to work with the States and the Congress to link this information together to make it available to law enforcement at every level in every State. Police officers will be able to prevent more crimes and catch more criminals if they can share and compare the latest information we have.

We respect people's rights, but there is no right greater than a parent's right to raise a child in safety and love. That's why the law should follow those who prey on America's children wherever they go, State to State, town to town.

We'll never be able to eliminate crime completely. But as long as crime is so commonplace that we don't even look up when horror after horror leads the evening news, we know we've got a long way to go. Yes, the crime rate is coming down for 4 years in a row. And, yes, our strategies of 100,000 police, the Brady law, the assault weapons ban, the domestic violence law, the youth prevention programs, these things are helping. But I won't be satisfied until America is once again a place where people who see a report of a serious crime are shocked, not numb to it.

We can make that America real. We know we can if we work together and put our children first.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:23 p.m. on June 21 at McCormick Place in Chicago, IL, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 22.

Remarks to the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Cleveland, Ohio *June 22, 1996*

Thank you very much, Mayor Rice. His speaking's improved now that he's getting so much practice out there on the stump. [*Laughter*] I'm delighted to be here with you. I thank you for your great year as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. I'm looking forward to working with Mayor Daley this year. And I'm glad the Democrats are going to give him a little boost in the local economy in Chicago in

a few weeks, try to get his term off to a good start.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the mayor of Chicago for the City Livability Awards that he presents every year at this conference, along with Phillip Rooney of Waste Management. I think that's a very good thing to do, and I've always been impressed with the achievements that earn the awards.

I'm delighted to be here with the other mayors on the platform: Mayor White and my long-time friend Mayor Helmke, Mayor Rhea. I was glad to see Congressman Stokes this morning and Congressman Sherrod Brown. And Reverend McMickle, I got prayed over from a distance; I thank you. I heard it and needed it more than the others here. I appreciate it very much. *[Laughter]*

I enjoyed all of the music in advance, and I want you to know that Mayor Rice and I were out there trying to sing along with Glenn Burks. I didn't make the low notes, and he did. But I appreciated it very much.

I want to thank Mayor Lanier from Houston for his hosting me yesterday in Houston. And we flew up today, and I know that he is the head of the Rebuild America Coalition; that's an important part of your efforts. And we're glad to work with him and looking forward to it.

I also want to thank all the mayors here for the work you did yesterday on the Habitat house. I saw the picture in the local paper when I got here, and I think it's a wonderful thing that you did. I appreciate that. I'm sure that many of you know that I signed an appropriation this year for the first time ever to Habitat for Humanity so that they could buy larger tracts of land in our urban areas and build more houses at one time in one place. And I hope that that will enable a lot of you to cooperate with them and meet the housing needs of your people. And I think you sent a great message to America yesterday. And I thank you, Mayor White, for making that opportunity possible for them, and I thank all of you for doing it.

I would like to say a special word of thanks, too, to Tom Cochran, because he works for you full time and he has to work with us. And I think sometimes we overlook—I know I was in the Governors' association and the attorney generals' association, and we showed up for our conferences and we got credit for whatever we were doing. Most of the time the staff had done it, and we just stood in the way of the camera. So I thank Tom Cochran for what he does every day for you as well.

Mayor, I want to say thank you for welcoming us to Cleveland. I heard what you said outside about the remarkable progress of Cleveland, and I've had an opportunity to see a lot of it myself over the last several years. You remember, it wasn't so many years ago that I came here,

I think, for the Democratic Leadership Council in the eighties and then when I was running for President. I have seen this remarkable city's turnaround under your leadership and with the partnership of the private sector and with the enormous spirit of the community here. I have been in all sections of this community, and I have loved every opportunity I have had to be here.

I liked throwing out the ball at your stadium. Somebody told me Mayor Riley was going to throw the ball out tomorrow. Is that true? Mayor Riley can't throw a baseball. *[Laughter]* Better practice, Joe, wherever you are. *[Laughter]* And thank you for welcoming me to Charleston the other night.

I also—I'll tell you one thing you can all do; you can go home and you can get one great story out of this conference. You can go home and tell everybody that, after all, Elvis is alive—*[laughter]*—in Cleveland at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He's packing them in as never before. *[Laughter]* I'm going to see how many times I can run that out before people figure out what I'm talking about. *[Laughter]*

If I can get Willie Brown to laugh at my jokes, I'm doing well. *[Laughter]* I've got a real future in this business if I can do that.

I'd like to begin on a serious note, if I might, now. I was thinking about Cleveland coming in here and the remarkable amount of partnership in reaching across the lines that too often divide us that made possible the revitalization of this city in the last few years. And I was thinking about all the different people that I had met over the years in Cleveland who had been, in my mind, heroes of this country of ours because of the work they've done in their churches, in their housing projects, on the streets trying to prevent crime, trying to help rebuild their communities. And it reminds me of what I've been doing the last couple of days.

I'm sure some of you saw the press reports that Hillary and I were privileged to welcome the Olympic torch into the White House the other night. And it burned on the White House lawn for a night, and then we saw it off the next day. The torch was brought into the White House by a nun who had devoted her life to community service and by Dr. I. King Jordan, who is the president of Gallaudet University. He's the first deaf president of our Nation's deaf university. He's—I don't know how old King is, but he's a couple of years older than

I am, and this week he's going to run a 100-mile race. So he's in reasonably good shape as well. [Laughter]

And then the next day, the people who brought the flame out of the place where it was sitting in the White House and then ran it out of the White House as we saw it off the next morning—it was a man named Lang Brown, who has devoted his life to trying to save the lives of troubled children. He's an African-American man of about, oh, I don't know, maybe a little older than I am. And he walked up the way at the White House there with 12 kids. They were white, Hispanic, African-American, all walks of life, kids who were in desperate trouble. He helped them to put their lives back together again. He spends his whole life doing that.

One of the people that carried the Olympic torch is a 74-year-old woman in Nevada who has taken in, at a rather advanced age now, 100 children who were abandoned. And she tried to give them their lives back. The young woman that carried the torch out of the White House was a young woman named Carla McGhee, who was a highly recruited high school basketball player. She went to the University of Tennessee, seemed destined for a streaking career. And she was in a terrible accident, almost died; her body was totally crushed. And by sheer dint of will she pulled herself back to the point where she recovered her mobility first and then she recovered her ability to play basketball. And within a couple of years she had gone back to the University of Tennessee and helped them to win a national championship. And now she's leading our women's Olympic basketball team. A miraculous story. And they were carrying this Olympic torch like—thousands and thousands of our fellow citizens have done that. That's the flame I want America to be remembered by.

And then we've been bedeviled, as I heard someone mention, I think the pastor mentioned in the prayer, by another sort of flame. We've had more than a tripling of church burnings in our country in the last year and a half. That's the opposite side of the coin. But we still have some people in our country that give into what seems to be—if you look at Bosnia, if you look at the Middle East, if you look at Northern Ireland, if you look at the problems between the tribes in Burundi and Rwanda, it seems to be an almost universal impulse of human

nature that there is this dark part of our soul that can be revved up so that we define ourselves not in terms of our common humanity and what we can do and what we can be for and what our good qualities are but in terms of who we can hate and who we can put down and who we can be different from. And that's really what the racially motivated impulses in the church burnings that have been racially driven represent. And it is the antithesis of everything that makes our American cities great.

We've had an enormous number of black churches burned, unfortunately. We've also had at least one mosque and another Islamic center burned. We've had several synagogues desecrated in this country in the last couple of years. And unbelievably enough, we've—even though there haven't been as many of them, we've had a substantial increase in the number of white churches that have been burned. People are sort of looking at our houses of worship as targets now.

And I just want to say to all of you that that's the opposite of what makes you successful as mayors. And it's also the opposite of what it means to be an American in the finest sense. A lot of these churches have been burned out in the country where people can't catch them, but there have also been burnings in sizable cities, in Knoxville and Sacramento and Tucson. And just this past Thursday, the Emmanuel Christian Fellowship in Portland was added to the list of suspicious fires.

So I just want to say to you, I want you to keep speaking out against this. I know that Mayor Menino has sponsored a resolution that you're going to pass, and I thank you for that. But this country has the largest number of houses of worship per capita of any nation in the world. We got started by people coming to our shores searching for religious liberty. It is the first amendment to the Constitution. And so I say to you, your lives and your successes are living examples of what is best in this country. You bring together people every day that are like those folks carrying the torch to Mayor Campbell's city. And I hope before you leave here you will issue the strongest possible statement saying this church burning is not America and we're not going to tolerate it. We're going to stand up to it.

For nearly 4 years now, we have worked together on a strategy that I called in 1992 "Putting People First." I ran for this job because

I wanted to see our country go into the 21st century with great vigor and purpose and determination, meeting our challenges and protecting our values in a way that would enable us to achieve three things: one, to keep the American dream of opportunity available for every person in this country who would assume the responsibility necessary to achieve it; two, to see this country come together as a community over all the lines of our diversity and not be divided; and three, because of this particular moment in history, to make sure that America continued to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity.

Now, while no one could say we solved all the problems in this country, and none of you would assert that you have done that in your cities, we are plainly better off than we were 4 years ago. We are clearly moving in the right direction. And the thing that has underpinned a lot of the successes that we have had in other areas has been the revitalization of the American economy.

Our strategy was very straightforward: Cut the deficit in half so you can get interest rates down and the private sector can invest again and create jobs; continue to work to invest in our people, in their education, in their skills, in technology and research; expand trade so that America can sell more of its products and services abroad.

Well, 4 years later we have had the deficit reduced, they say now, by more than 50 percent, from over \$290 billion to about \$130 billion by the end of this year. We have negotiated 200 separate trade agreements, and our trade is at an all-time high now. In the 21 areas we negotiated with Japan, American exports are up 85 percent in 3½ years. We have continued to expand opportunities in education. And to continue to invest, we have increased our investment in infrastructure by about 10 percent while reducing the deficit, something that I know is important to all of you. And the American people have produced 9.7 million new jobs in 3½ years.

Now, to give you some idea, I'm about to leave next week to go to the annual conference of the G-7, the big seven industrial nations, in Europe. The G-7 nations, in total in the last 3½ years, have produced 10 million jobs, 9.7 million in America. That's something to be proud of our fellow citizens for. They have done

a good job. We've done a good job of bringing this country back.

We also see that the welfare rolls have been reduced by 1.3 million. Food stamp rolls are down a million. The poverty rate has dropped for the first time in many years. And, thank goodness, for the first time in 10 years, for the last 2 years average wages are finally going up again in America instead of going down. So we are moving in the right direction.

We've also worked together on some other things. We passed the national service law, and I know a lot of you have made good use of the AmeriCorps volunteers. I want to thank Mayor Ashe for his willingness to serve on the AmeriCorps board; I'm going to appoint him formally next week.

We passed some other very important legislation for America, the family and medical leave law. We now know from a bipartisan study that 12 million Americans have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law in the last couple of years, to take a little time off when they had a family member sick or a baby born or an elderly parent in trouble, without losing their jobs. And it may be, in some ways, the most immediately impactful law that I've had the privilege to sign as President, because I hear—everywhere I go, people come up to me and talk to me about how their children were sick and they couldn't have taken care of them and kept their job if it hadn't been for that. So I feel good about that.

I think we all know we've got more to do and that we can never, never succeed in getting opportunity to all of our people as we move into this information age in this global society unless we have a strategy to make sure that our cities are strong and vibrant. If America's cities can go into the 21st century flourishing, then America will do very well.

We have sought to forge a partnership with you. Mayor Rice talked about it, talked about our early meetings, the accessibility of the Cabinet. I must tell you, I think it's been made a lot easier by this remarkable generation of mayors in the room. I was talking this morning about how I'm amazed that the mayors seem to get more and more and more talented and more innovative with each successive year. And I thank you. You're very easy to work with, practical, people-oriented, flexible, interested in solving problems and working and going forward. I also think it's been made a lot easier

because I have been privileged to have the service of the person I believe will go down in history as the finest HUD Secretary in the history of the United States, Henry Cisneros.

We have worked to establish a comprehensive approach with you to deal with jobs issues; to deal with housing issues; to deal with environmental issues; to deal with the issues of education, the school-to-work program, expanded Head Start, aid to the public schools in Chapter 1; to deal with transportation issues. We've tried to put this program into our community empowerment agenda. And I want to thank the Vice President for the work he's done in leading that effort along with Henry. You have made it possible.

We now have 105 communities that have qualified to be empowerment zones or enterprise communities. We have seen some remarkable transformations in those communities. Here in Cleveland, dozens of new businesses are moving into or expanding in the city zone. One of them is Bearings, a Fortune 1000 company that will build a new \$28 million world headquarters here and employ more than 300 workers. Mayor White has taken action to make sure that the local workers will be trained for these jobs and for other jobs that will come into the zone, so that we won't have a purported advantage that doesn't really benefit the people it was supposed to benefit. So I'm pleased about that.

We've got to build on our successes, and I have made some very specific proposals to the Congress which I intend to take into this campaign if they are not enacted in this session of Congress. First, I've asked Congress to create a second round of empowerment zones. My goal will be eventually to get to the point where we can have an empowerment zone of some scope in every community in the country that needs it. That's really what the rule ought to be, and if it works, we'll generate more investment, more jobs, more incomes, and there won't be any loss to the Treasury.

So I think we have to keep going on this. This approach is working. And it's working because it requires the communities to come up with a strategy to make the most of the opportunity and then lets the communities drive their future, not some Federal rule or regulation.

Second, as all of you know, I have asked Congress to enact a new \$2 billion incentive to encourage the cleanup and redevelopment

of abandoned industrial sites, our so-called brownfields initiative. This one thing could do as much to bring jobs back to urban America as any other thing that we've talked about in a long time. And I want you, regardless of your party, to help me get this passed in Congress. This is good for America; it's good economics.

Congressman Lou Stokes has been a leader in this effort. I want to thank him and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois; Congressman Charles Rangel of New York, who will be introducing the community empowerment legislation this week.

We also fought to preserve the low-income housing credit. And I'm pleased that the Local Initiative Services Corporation, LISC, is prepared to announce that it has raised \$410 million from corporations to build 8,500 housing units and create another 12,000 jobs. That will benefit a lot of your areas.

We have to do more. Particularly, we have to recognize that there are places in our country where the free enterprise system simply hasn't reached yet. And we have got to do more to provide jobs and opportunities.

I recently signed two Executive orders to address this issue. The first one created a new empowerment contracting program which will offer special incentives for Government contracting awards for companies that locate in distressed communities in all parts of America. I also signed an Executive order directing Federal agencies that are building facilities or relocating to give first priority to the historic districts of our central cities, instead of running away from them. The Government should be investing in America's future where it's most needed.

I think one of the great success stories of urban America in the last couple of years is the success that so many of you have made in lowering the rate of crime and violence. And we have to build on it, because we are nowhere near where we need to be. But we are a lot better off than we were just a few years ago. I have tried to be a good partner in that regard. We have worked to help you put 100,000 new police officers on the street with the crime bill of 1994. I can tell you that we are ahead of schedule and under budget there. We have funded almost half of the 100,000 police already.

The assault weapons ban is making a difference. The Brady bill is making a huge difference. We have now seen, since the Brady bill became law, 60,000—I'll say that again—

60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers who were prevented from buying guns simply because we took a few days to check their eligibility. It was the right thing to do.

We have worked to try to help communities give our children something to say yes to, to support your preventive programs and your role models that keep children out of drugs and gangs and violence in the first place. We cannot jail our way out of this crisis. We have to find ways to change the culture of America, to give more of our kids a chance to stay on the right path in the first place.

All of you know that I have not had as much success as I wanted with this Congress in preserving the prevention aspect of the '94 crime bill. But all of you know, and so do your law enforcement officials know, that this is a critical aspect of the strategy. We need to do more in this area, not less. These programs can work. They save children's lives every single, solitary day. And again I say, I hope you will help me to bring some balance, more balance back into the approach that Congress is taking. We are fighting to preserve every single dollar for prevention we can, but we need all the help we can get.

We have also tried to help cities to implement their own strategies. Long Beach, California, led the country in implementing the school uniform policy. They found that it reduced the vulnerability of their children to gangs and that it increased learning and reduced the dropout rate and it increased a sense of cohesion, that even the upper income kids wound up liking it because people began to be identified by what they were inside rather than what they were wearing outside. We helped them, and we have helped others now through the Justice Department, the Education Department, do that in a way that is legal and constitutional and avoids the hassles.

We are supporting cities like New Orleans and many others that have curfew policies that have led to dramatic drops in the juvenile crime rate, to do so in a way that, at least based on anything that we can find through the Justice Department, is likely to be most effective and most positive.

I see Mayor Pat Hays from North Little Rock out there. He's the first mayor, my mayor, that actually introduced a curfew policy. We had a terrible problem in his community. I think most of the mayors that have done it believe that

it's a smart thing and a good thing to do. We want to make sure that, at least that if you're interested in it, you know what everyone's experience is, what seems to work best, and how to avoid any potential pitfalls that we have determined around the country.

Here in Cleveland I know the murder rate has been down 12 percent in the last 2 years alone. We see this nationwide. And I guess one of the things that I want to make sure that all of us are doing together, and I would like to help on, is I want the folks back home to know that we can do something about the crime rate. I want people to believe that we can do something about the crime rate. It wasn't so very long ago that I think people had more or less given up. And that would be a terrible thing in this country. It would be a terrible thing. If people gave up on our ability to provide common security, then within 10 or 20 years those of us who could afford it would be living behind walls with our own private security systems and everybody else would be living in a jungle.

So this crime issue is critical to the economic issue; it's critical to the welfare issue; it's critical to all these other issues. We have got to convince our people that in common we can bring the crime rate down, we can restore order and civility and decency and safety to our children's lives. And it's very, very important.

Let me say that in the last few months especially, we have been very active in dealing with those who commit crimes against children, especially those who commit sexual offenses against children. And I wanted to mention that just a moment today.

In the crime bill, we required every State to compile a registry of sex offenders and gave the States the power to notify communities about child sex offenders or violent sex offenders that moved into neighborhoods. And then last month I signed Megan's Law, to insist that States tell a community whenever a dangerous sexual predator is in the midst of the people. Too many children and their families have paid a terrible price because of what their parents didn't know. Megan's Law was named after a 7-year-old girl from New Jersey who was taken at the beginning of her life. And I believe it will help to prevent further Megans.

But there is one other step we have to take. Senator Biden and Senator Gramm have introduced a bipartisan bill to develop a national

registry to track offenders and child molesters across the country. That is the right thing to do, but I believe we can move forward now. Today I directed the Attorney General to report back to me in 60 days with a plan to guarantee that police officers can get this information right away, to make sure that police officers in every State get the information they need from any State to track sex offenders. A police officer in Cleveland ought to know about somebody in Cleveland, whether the crime was committed in Los Angeles or New York. These things have to be shared, and we need a system to share it. So we are working very, very hard on that, and I hope you will support us in that endeavor as well.

Let me just say one last thing about crime. Unless someone finds a magic formula to transform human nature, we will never eliminate crime completely from America. But we can go back to the time when it's the exception, not the rule. And I think that the test that I always say that I will follow is I will believe we're on the right side of the crime problem when I can turn on the evening news at night, and if the lead story is a horrible crime I'm absolutely shocked, instead of numb to it; I don't expect the lead story to be the biggest, latest crime story.

So I say, again, you have proven—mayor after mayor, most of the mayors in this room have seen a drop in the crime rate for 3 or 4 years in a row now. And it's very important that our people believe we can do this. We cannot allow the people to believe that we cannot do this.

I think the resurgence of our cities—and I predict to you that it will continue—driven by new economic strategies and more jobs coming in, driven by innovative housing strategies and more affordable housing—we're going to make Secretary Cisneros' goal: We're going to have more than two-thirds of the American people in their own homes by the end of this decade for the first time in American history. We're going to do that.

The marrying of our attempts to improve the environment and to direct the economy—to develop the economy, as embodied in the brownfields initiative; the continued assault on crime; the continued commitment to invest in

our infrastructure, these things will develop a strategy not only to rebuild urban America but to make America great as we move into the next century.

The main thing I would say again, we have to have a vision. You have to imagine, what do you want this country to look like? When these children grow up and they're raising their children, I want this to be a country in a world that is so full of possibility it's unimaginable to us. But I want those possibilities available to every child who will work for them, without regard to their race or the station they start out in life or where they happen to live in the United States.

And I want our diversity to be the crown jewel of our assets in the global society. I want us to revel in the racial and ethnic and religious diversity of America, and I want us to still be standing up for peace and freedom and prosperity for all the people of the world. And if you want that, you have to lead the way. And we have to do it by working together. When I look at this crowd I am very optimistic that that is the future that these children will have.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. in the Cleveland Renaissance Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to the following U.S. Conference of Mayors officials: Mayor Norman B. Rice of Seattle, WA, outgoing president; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL, incoming president; Mayor Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN, advisory board chair; Mayor Betty Jo Rhea of Rock Hill, SC, trustee; and J. Thomas Cochran, executive director. The President also referred to Phillip Rooney, president and CEO, WMX Technologies, Inc.; Rev. Marvin A. McMickle, who gave the invocation; Glenn Burks, who sang the national anthem; and Mayors Michael R. White of Cleveland, OH, Bob Lanier of Houston, TX, Joseph R. Riley, Jr., of Charleston, SC, Willie Brown of San Francisco, CA, Thomas Menino of Boston, MA, Bill Campbell of Atlanta, GA, and Victor Ashe of Knoxville, TN. The Executive orders of May 21 on empowerment contracting and on locating Federal facilities on historic properties in central cities are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.